

# *A Study of Revelation*

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# Revelation 1:1-1:9 – Outline and introduction

## [Revelation 1:1-9](#)

[Revelation 1:1](#) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified [it] by His angel to His servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. <sup>3</sup> Blessed [is] he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time [is] near.

<sup>4</sup> John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, <sup>6</sup> and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him [be] glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>7</sup> Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

<sup>8</sup> "I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the] Beginning and [the] End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

<sup>9</sup> I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 1:1-9 NKJV](#)

The name of the book is a word that describes the purpose of it, as is stated in the first verse. The first chapter identifies the author as John, but unfortunately without any additional distinction. [Verse 3](#) calls it a book of prophecy. The location of the writing is given in [verse 9](#).

The use of the word Revelation in the English language is in line with the name and purpose of the book. It is commonly used by a person in expressing that they have just learned something they didn't know before. The interesting thing is that the Greek word from which it is translated, immediately brings to mind another word which has a vastly different meaning. [ἀποκάλυψις, apokalypsis](#)<sup>1</sup>, immediately brings to mind the word Apocalypse, which most hearers would associate with great disaster or war. The interesting thing is that this meaning is not conveyed at all in the Biblical usage of the word, which is:<sup>2</sup>

1. laying bare, making naked
2. a disclosure of truth, instruction
  - a. concerning things before unknown
  - b. used of events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all
3. manifestation, appearance

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G602&t=NKJV>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G602&t=NKJV>

Also:

disclosure:—appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation.

From this I would conclude that the modern definition of the word, apocalypse draws at least part of it's meaning from the contents of the book of Revelation.

It is commonly accepted that the author, who is stated to be his bond servant John, is the Apostle John the son of Zebedee. However, the authorship has and continues to be much more debated by scholars.<sup>3 4</sup> It is my belief that the author is the Apostle John.

This book of the Bible was the last to be added to the Christian Bible canon, but through history, it has not been universally accepted as canonical by all Christian denominations. The Eastern Orthodox Church doesn't include it. The Western Church flipped back and forth on its stance. Some of the Protestant reformers such as Luther and Calvin had doubts about it. But today it remains part of the Canon of the Bible for both the Catholic and Protestant denominations.<sup>5</sup>

The location where the writing was done is also given in [verse 9](#) of the first chapter:

[Revelation 1:9](#) I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 1:9 NKJV](#)

Patmos was a prison island, where it is believed John was exiled by the Emperor Domitian, who was known to have been a persecutor of the early Christians.<sup>6 7 8</sup>

Wikipedia gave a nice summary of the different interpretations of this book as a whole.

Most Christian interpretations fall into one or more of the following categories:<sup>9</sup>

- **Historicism**, which sees in Revelation a broad view of history;
- **Preterism**, in which Revelation mostly refers to the events of the apostolic era (1st century) or, at the latest, the fall of the Roman Empire;
- **Amillennialism**, which contends that the millennium has already begun and is identical with the current church age;
- **Futurism**, which believes that Revelation describes future events (modern believers in this interpretation are often called "millennialists"); and
- **Idealism/Allegoricalism**, which holds that Revelation does not refer to actual people or events, but is an allegory of the spiritual path and the ongoing struggle between good and evil.

<sup>3</sup> Young, L H. *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*. New Haven, 1836, p323.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA323>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Revelation#Title,\\_authorship,\\_and\\_date](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation#Title,_authorship,_and_date)

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Revelation#Canonical\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation#Canonical_history)

<sup>6</sup> Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the Church*. Hartford, F. J. Huntington, 1835, p32.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patmos>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Patmos/@35.1087288,5.2220815,5z>

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Revelation#Eschatological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation#Eschatological)

C Mervyn Maxwell, in his book, *God Cares*, gave a really good explanation, based at least partly on the organization as a chiasm. Chiastic structure is known to occur frequently in the Bible. It is a literary style where there is a sort of mirroring of ideas and points between the first half and the second half. For example if the points A, B, C are made in that order in the first half of the chiasm, then the points C', B', A', in that order, would be made in the second half. A and A', B and B' and C and C' are related either by words or idea.<sup>10</sup> This literary style is well known to occur over and over in the Bible.<sup>11</sup>

Maxwell presented a chiastic organization of the whole book of Revelation that I believe aids in the understanding and interpretation of the book. For me, this organization is one of the most compelling reasons for my beliefs in the interpretation of Revelation. Since they were so helpful to me, I will reproduce the side-by-side chiasms in table form, then combining them at the end as he did.<sup>12</sup>

<b>Prologue (1:1-8)</b>	<b>Epilogue (22:8-17)</b>
Introduction	Conclusion
Testimony of Jesus 1:2	I, Jesus, sent this testimony 22:16
Blessed is he who reads 1:3	Blessed is he who keeps 22:7
Behold, He is coming 1:7	Behold, I am coming soon 22:12,20
I am the Alpha and the Omega 1:8	I am the Alpha and the Omega 22:13

<b>7 Churches (1:10-3:22)</b>	<b>New Jerusalem (21:9-22:9)</b>
Christ counsels His church, at war, scattered in many cities	Christ rewards His church, at peace, gathered into one city
Christ walks among seven lamps. 2:1	Christ is the eternal Lamp. 21:23
Tree of life. 2:7	Tree of life. 22:2
Open door. 3:8	Gates never closed. 21:25
Christ sits on His Father's throne. 3:21	Throne of God and of the Lamb. 22:1,3
New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. 3:12	New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. 21:10
I am coming soon. 3:11	I am coming soon. 22:7

<b>7 Seals (4:1-8:1)</b>	<b>Millennium (19:11-21:8)</b>
Christ shields His afflicted people	Christ encourages His resurrected people
Heaven opened. 4:1	Heaven opened. 19:11
Rider on white horse followed by riders on colored horses. 6:2-8	Rider on white horse followed by riders on white horses. 19:11-16
Souls of martyrs, under alter, ask for judgment. 6:9,10	Souls of martyrs, resurrected, are enthroned as judges. 20:4-6
White robes. 6:11; 7:9-14	White robes. 19:14
Kings, generals, etc., ask to be killed. 6:15,16	Kings, captains, etc., are killed. 19:17-21

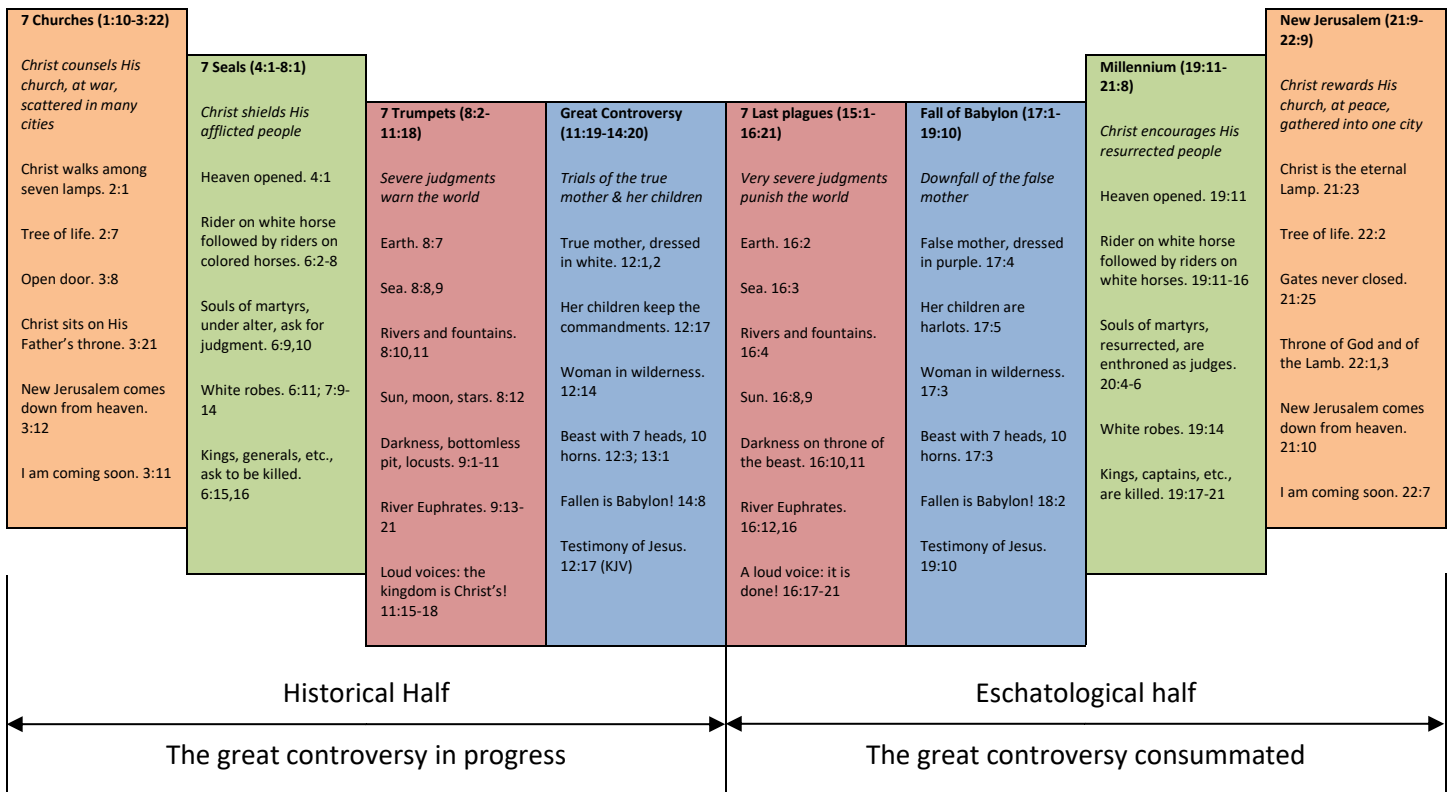
<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic\\_structure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic_structure)

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic\\_structure#Use\\_in\\_Hebrew\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic_structure#Use_in_Hebrew_Bible)

<sup>12</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p54-62.

7 Trumpets (8:2-11:18)	7 Last plagues (15:1-16:21)
Severe judgments warn the world	Very severe judgments punish the world
Earth. 8:7	Earth. 16:2
Sea. 8:8,9	Sea. 16:3
Rivers and fountains. 8:10,11	Rivers and fountains. 16:4
Sun, moon, stars. 8:12	Sun. 16:8,9
Darkness, bottomless pit, locusts. 9:1-11	Darkness on throne of the beast. 16:10,11
River Euphrates. 9:13-21	River Euphrates. 16:12,16
Loud voices: the kingdom is Christ's! 11:15-18	A loud voice: it is done! 16:17-21

Great Controversy (11:19-14:20)	Fall of Babylon (17:1-19:10)
Trials of the true mother & her children	Downfall of the false mother
True mother, dressed in white. 12:1,2	False mother, dressed in purple. 17:4
Her children keep the commandments. 12:17	Her children are harlots. 17:5
Woman in wilderness. 12:14	Woman in wilderness. 17:3
Beast with 7 heads, 10 horns. 12:3; 13:1	Beast with 7 heads, 10 horns. 17:3
Fallen is Babylon! 14:8	Fallen is Babylon! 18:2
Testimony of Jesus. 12:17 (KJV)	Testimony of Jesus. 19:10



The idea is that the first half of the book should be interpreted historically, meaning the first half of the book represents a high-level view of the history of the church from the time of Christ until the end. The second half of the book describes things that will happen just prior to Christ's return and are all in the future at this point. The symmetry really appeals to me and will guide my study and influence my interpretation of the book. SDA's are fairly united on some of the

interpretation of the book, I think largely due to the writings of Ellen White, but in areas where she is relatively silent, there is much less consensus. Possibly the area where Adventists vary the most is the seven trumpets.

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What do you believe?

- Who do you think wrote the book of Revelation?
- When you hear the book of Revelation, do you think of revealing or war and destruction?
- Maybe you don't have any idea yet, but if you do, which category of interpretation do you fall into?

# Revelation 1:10-3:22 – Seven churches

## Preface – seven golden lampstands

### [Revelation 1:10-20](#)

[Revelation 1:10](#) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send [it] to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven lampstands [One] like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. <sup>14</sup> His head and hair [were] white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> His feet [were] like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; <sup>16</sup> He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance [was] like the sun shining in its strength. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> "I [am] He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. <sup>19</sup> "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. <sup>20</sup> "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

### [Revelation 1:1-20 NKJV](#)

[Verse 8, 17, 18](#) identifies the source of the vision as:

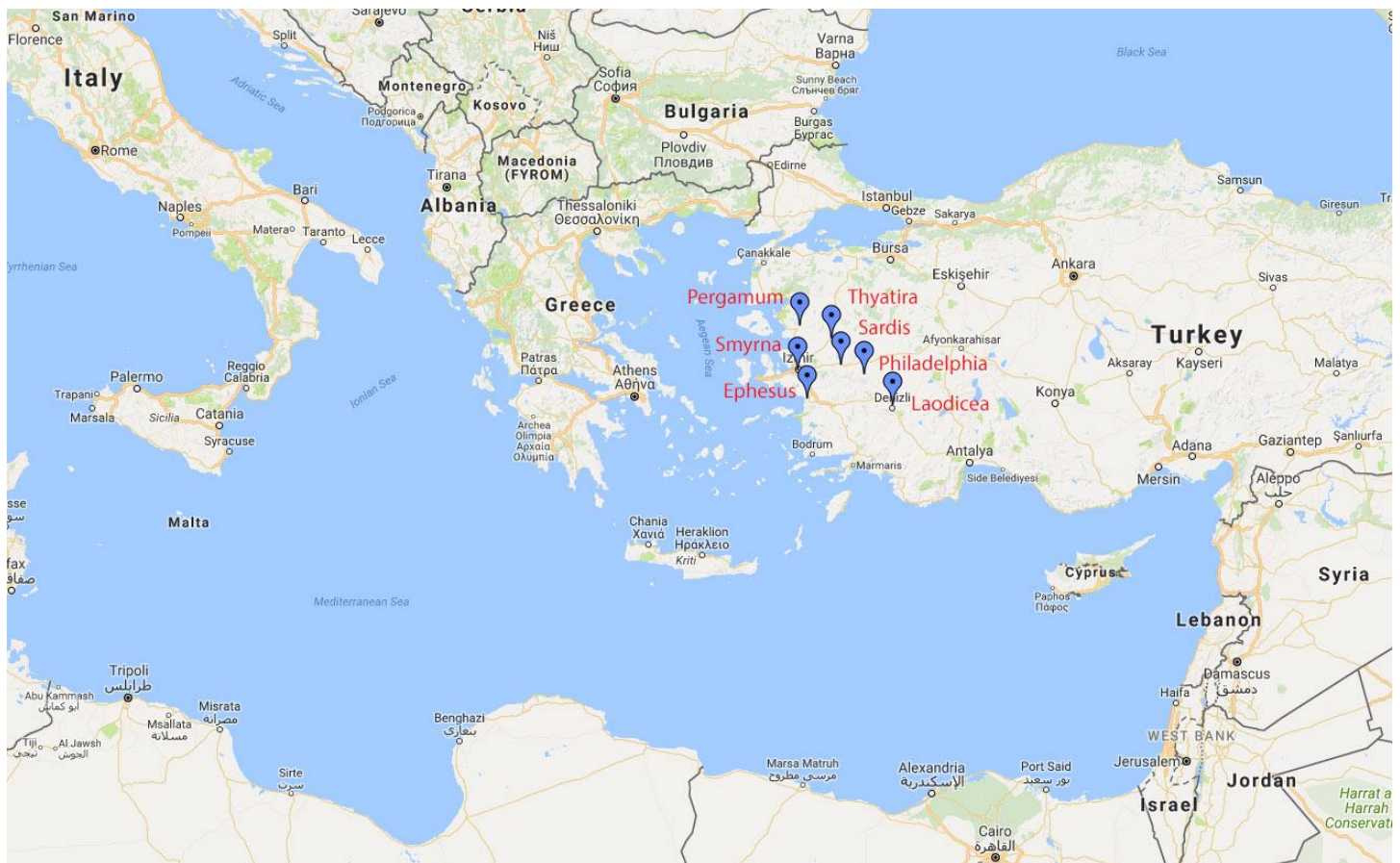
1. The Alpha and Omega
2. The Lord God
3. The one who was, is and is to come
4. The Almighty
5. The first and last
6. The living one who was dead and is not alive forevermore
7. The one who has the keys of death and Hades

Because of the sixth description, this can be none other than Jesus. That then automatically associates all the other characteristics with Jesus, some of which some have typically been attributed to God the Father.

The seven churches to which the revelation was to be sent were apparently actual cities in which were located Christian churches who were to receive the message. There seems to be a fair amount of agreement on the geographical



locations of these cities.<sup>13 14 15</sup> But whether these messages were only intended for the seven physical churches, or if the churches were symbols, has been a subject of debate for as long as this book has been studied.



John heard the voice speak to him, and on turning to see who it was, he was overwhelmed and fainted. [Verses 12-16](#) describes what he saw before he passed out and I find it much more than mere coincidence that Daniel, in one of his visions described seeing a similar being and experiencing the same physical response.

[Daniel 10:2](#) In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. <sup>3</sup> I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

<sup>4</sup> Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that [is], the Tigris, <sup>5</sup> I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist [was] girded with gold of Uphaz! <sup>6</sup> His body [was] like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

<sup>7</sup> And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. <sup>8</sup> Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. <sup>9</sup> Yet I heard the

sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

<sup>10</sup> Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and [on] the palms of my hands. [Daniel 10:2-9 NKJV](#)

The following table shows the parallels in what they each saw and the immediate effect that followed.

Daniel	Revelation
Dressed in linen	Clothed in a robe reaching His feet
Waist girded with a belt of pure gold	Girded across His chest with a golden sash
Eyes like flaming torches	Eyes like a flame of fire
Arms and feet like polished bronze	Feet like burnished bronze
Sound of his voice like the sound of a tumult	Voice like the sound of many waters
Daniel fell into a deep sleep with his face to the ground	John fell at His feet like a dead man

[Revelation 1:19](#) gives an indication that some of the things John will be seeing in vision that he is to write down apply to what was happening presently at that time, but some will refer to future events. [Verse 20](#) begins to give John some keys to understand and interpret what he has seen so far.

Symbol	Interpretation
Seven lampstands	Seven churches
Seven stars	Seven angels of the seven churches

But what does an angel of the church represent? Why are there distinctly seven of each? We already made the claim that there were seven literal churches in those cities at the time of John. Does the message apply only to the people in those churches at that time?

I began by looking up the word angel in the Bible. There were many occurrences of angels delivering messages from God. Angels were also mentioned as defending His people, such as the slaying of the first born in Egypt, driving out and destroying the Canaanites, destruction of the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time and others. Angels also executed judgment or punishment from God such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when David took a census, and when Herod accepted the people's worship as a god. But the majority of uses of the word angel were in the context of bringing messages from God. So, in the context of the angel of the church, the one that matches best would be the messenger, which would probably look like a leader, shepherd, pastor or prophet of the church.

Next, I looked up the word seven. The terms "seven days," "seven times," and "seven years," accounted for 174 of the 461 times the word was found in the NKJV translation of the Bible. There were many occurrences in conjunction with the Sanctuary and the laws of Moses. As I scanned these search hits, the ones that caught my attention were:

- Pharaoh's dream of seven cows and seven ears of corn
- Nebuchadnezzar's seven periods of time that he was like a beast

I believe that the seven churches were literal churches, and that the vision could have possibly applied to them. The application of the seven churches to seven consecutive time periods of the Christian era is a pretty popular Protestant interpretation. There is even a lot of agreement on the dates for the early eras, but divergence on the latter. The seven stars in the literal sense would apply to the leader, pastor or bishop of each church, and in the symbolic sense could apply to the leader of the entire church, or a prophet or significant leader during that time period.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the Beings that Daniel and John saw were the same?
- Who or what do you believe the seven churches represented?
- What do you think the sharp two-edged sword coming out of the mouth represents?

## Message to the Church in Ephesus

### [Revelation 2:1-7](#)

[Revelation 2:1](#) "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: <sup>2</sup> "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; <sup>3</sup> "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. <sup>4</sup> "Nevertheless I have [this] against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup> "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. <sup>6</sup> "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." ' [Revelation 2:1-7 NKJV](#)

### History and geography

The ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus are a major tourist attraction in the modern country of Turkey. According to Wikipedia and its sources, it was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC by Attic and Ionian colonists. During the classical Greek period it was one of the twelve cities of the Ionian League. The city was famed for the Temple of Artemis, (completed around 550 BC), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It flourished after it came under the control of the Roman Republic in 129 BC. The city was destroyed by Goth's in 263, and although rebuilt, the city's importance as a commercial center began to decline as the harbor grew shallower as it was gradually filled by silt from a river.<sup>16</sup>

### Biblical mention

The city's Christian significance came from several factors. [Acts 19](#), tells of a couple experiences of the Apostle Paul in Ephesus. On traveling there, he found some disciples who had been baptized by John the Baptist but had no knowledge of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus, then laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Paul preached boldly in the Jewish Synagogue for three months, but when there was much opposition, he stopped. Then he started meeting with the believers daily in the school of Tyrannus. God performed many extraordinary miracles through Paul, and he continued teaching there for two years. It is not too much of a stretch to think that this was the start of the Christian church in Ephesus. It is not entirely clear whether he was planning to leave or left and came back when the next incident occurred. Demetrius the silver smith and his fellow craftsmen started a riot, motivated by the fact that Paul's preaching was hurting their business of selling idols of the goddess Artemis (also known as Diana). After the mob was dispersed without casualties, Paul left Ephesus.<sup>17</sup> Later, the Apostle

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<sup>16</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>

<sup>17</sup> Young, p542. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA542>

Paul wrote a letter to the church there which is part of the Canon of the Bible. In addition, there is pretty broad consensus that the Apostle John lived a significant portion of his latter life there.<sup>18 19 20 21</sup>

### Message summary

- They toiled and persevered
- They tested prophets and teachers and rejected the false
- Left their first love
- Hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans
- Whoever has an ear let them hear what the Spirit says
- Whoever overcomes will eat from the tree of life in Paradise

### Interpretation

Most who believe the message to the Church in Ephesus was a message to the entire Christian Church over a span of time known as the apostolic era. This was essentially the time when the Apostles were still alive, which roundly extended to the year 100. It is not known exactly when John, the last living apostle died, but it must have been around that time. It is quite clear from the Gospels and the book of Acts, that by the time the Jewish rulers succeeded in crucifying Jesus, there was not much of a popular following left. In fact, at the cross, only John and a few women were mentioned to have been there with Jesus at the end. In the time between the resurrection and the ascension, Jesus met with at most around five hundred people [[1 Corinthians 15:6](#)]. From that small beginning, there was clearly a lot of toil and perseverance involved in arriving at the multi-cultural, geographically diverse church at the turn of the century.

In Acts, Luke wrote the following observation of Paul:

[Acts 11:10](#) Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily [to find out] whether these things were so. [Acts 11:10-11 NKJV](#)

In his letters, Paul warned his readers to beware of false witnesses, brethren, apostles, signs and wonders. Peter warned that false prophets and teachers would arise [[2 Peter 2:1](#)]. Of course, it helped having the Apostles, and the first generation of those who walked and talked with Jesus among them, to help them detect and identify errors. John wrote the following as one of the ways to detect false teachers and teachings:

[1 John 4:1](#) Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the [spirit] of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. [1 John 4:1-3 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> Young, p309. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA309>

<sup>19</sup> Briscoe, Richard. *History of the Acts of the Apostles*. Oxford, University Press, 1840, p312. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA312>

<sup>20</sup> Zahn, T. *John the Apostle*, in Schaff, Philip. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. VI: Innocents - Liudger*, p.203. <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encyc06/htm/iii.lvii.lviii.htm>

<sup>21</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_the\\_Apostle#Extrabiblical\\_traditions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_the_Apostle#Extrabiblical_traditions)

I would conclude that the church of that first generation was not free of false prophets and teachers, but with the Apostles, they were able to identify them.

Next, what is the first love that the Church of that generation left? What is first love? Is it fair to describe the love between a dating couple through the beginning of marriage as first love? Many have spoken of how that phase of love is so blind to the faults and shortcoming of each other. It is the stage where those in love are so eager and willing to inconvenience themselves and to go out of their way to show their love to each other. I think it is natural for that kind of love to dissipate, but in a successful relationship, it should be replaced by a more deep, committed, and stable love. I don't know if this is what Jesus meant, but at the very beginning, the entire church was like a commune, which obviously didn't last.

[Acts 2:43](#) Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 4 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. [Acts 2:43-45 NKJV](#)

Then there were the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which the church of that generation hated. I think most believe these detestable deeds to be sexually immoral practices. They were also thought to be guilty of incorrect beliefs on the nature of God and Jesus. That is not to say that everyone rejected the teachings and hated the deeds, but the church as a whole, must have considered them heretics and false teachers. There is more speculation about who these Nicolaitans were in the [Appendix I – Who were the Nicolaitans](#).

Lastly there is the admonition to listen to what the Spirit (I believe the Holy Spirit) says. Then the promise that those who overcome will be taken to heaven where they will be able to eat from the tree of life which will allow them to live forever.

What do you believe?

- If you believe the message was prophetic, do you also think it applied to the literal Church of Ephesus?
- What do you think it means for the church to leave its first love?
- Do you think God want's the church to lovingly accept into membership those who have immoral practices, but hate the deeds, or to keep the church pure by not accepting such people as members?

## Message to the Church in Smyrna

### [Revelation 2:8-11](#)

[Revelation 2:8](#) "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: <sup>9</sup> "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and [I know] the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but [are] a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw [some] of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

<sup>11</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." ' [Revelation 2:8-11 NKJV](#)

## History and geography

Smyrna, like Ephesus was a port city with a sheltered harbor. The location of the ancient city is in modern day Turkey and is now called Izmir. When speaking of the ancient city, there are actually two sites of interest. Old Smyrna is thought to have been settled in the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC by Aeolians. Smyrna proper, which residents moved to as of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC was inspired by Alexander the Great. As one of the principal cities of Roman Asia, Smyrna vied with Ephesus and Pergamum for the title "First City of Asia."<sup>22 23</sup>

## Biblical mention

The Bible makes no other mention of Smyrna, so we have to look to early Christian writers and historians to learn more of its Christian significance. Saint Ignatius of Antioch visited Smyrna and later wrote letters to its bishop, Polycarp. Polycarp was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna by the Apostles in Asia. According to Wikipedia [Cross]<sup>24</sup>, a mob of Jews and pagans abetted the martyrdom of Polycarp in AD 153. Goodrich said that Polycarp was burnt at the stake in 166 under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.<sup>25</sup> Saint Irenaeus, who heard Polycarp as a boy, was probably a native of Smyrna. Another famous resident of the same period was Aelius Aristides.<sup>26 27 28</sup>

## Message summary

- Suffered tribulation and poverty (but are rich)
- Blasphemed by those who claim to be Jews but are not
- Some will be cast into prison
- Will suffer tribulation for ten days
- Whoever has an ear let them hear what the Spirit says
- Whoever overcomes will not be hurt by the second death

## Interpretation

It seems that tribulation was the main theme of the message to Smyrna. From a historical perspective, what followed the apostolic period, was a time of intense persecution by Roman Emperors. This is not to say that the apostolic period did not suffer persecution by Roman Emperors as well, but we can split the era into two by drawing a line at the death of the last Apostle. I found several websites that tabulated the seven eras with some slight differences in dates.<sup>29 30 31 32</sup>

All the sources mentioned above were in agreement that the period of persecution ended around 313, when the Edict of Milan legalized Christianity. This occurred during the reign of Constantine the Great.<sup>33 34 35</sup> One thing that can clearly be

<sup>22</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna>

<sup>23</sup> Rolleston, George. Report on Smyrna. London, George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1856, p15.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=licAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA15>

<sup>24</sup> Cross, F. L., ed. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. New York: Oxford University Press. 2005, article *Smyrna*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna#References> [10]

<sup>25</sup> Goodrich. p35. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA35>

<sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna#Roman\\_and\\_Byzantine\\_period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna#Roman_and_Byzantine_period)

<sup>27</sup> Goodrich. p32. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>28</sup> Briscoe. p287. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA287>

<sup>29</sup> [http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Revelation\\_seven-churches\\_love\\_idolatry](http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Revelation_seven-churches_love_idolatry)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/related-topics/representative-of-seven-stages-of-church-history.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://cgi.org/the-seven-churches-of-the-apocalypse/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://christianitybeliefs.org/revelation-timeline-decoded/the-seven-churches-of-revelation-2-and-3/>

<sup>33</sup> Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire – Vol II*. New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1876, p252. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA252>

<sup>34</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution\\_of\\_Christians\\_in\\_the\\_Roman\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians_in_the_Roman_Empire)

<sup>35</sup> Goodrich. p50. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA50>

stated is that persecution kept the church pure and true to its core beliefs and practices. After all, only those truly committed would join and embrace Christianity if they knew they were doing it at the peril of their own life.<sup>36 37</sup> It has been said, that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” I don’t know if he was the first to have said this, but Tertullian wrote this in his most famous work, *Apologeticus*, around the year 200.<sup>38 39</sup>

Regarding being rich in spite of tribulation and poverty, the message to this same church assured them that if they were faithful until death, they would receive a crown of life [[Revelation 2:10](#)]. Tribulation and poverty in this relatively short earthly life, are far outweighed by everlasting life with God.

Who were those who blasphemed the church, claiming to be Jews but were not? I came across several possible answers to this. In his book *Daniel and Revelation*, Uriah Smith first quotes Paul from Romans stating that being a Jew is not just outward, based genealogy, circumcision or following certain rites and rituals.

[Romans 2:28](#) For he is not a Jew who [is one] outwardly, nor [is] circumcision that which [is] outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but [he is] a Jew who [is one] inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise [is] not from men but from God. [Romans 2:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 3:28](#) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you [are] Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [Galatians 3:28-29 NKJV](#)

In this case, I think Smith is saying that Jew is used in the true, follower of God sense, and not the lineage or cultural sense. So those who claim to be Jews but are not could be those who claim to be Christians but inwardly are not, and thus are hypocrites and of the synagogue of Satan.<sup>40</sup>

If one were to argue that persecution would keep people from accepting or claiming Christianity insincerely or for the wrong reason, then you might not be comfortable with Smith’s explanation. It would be accurate however to point out that during this era, though the persecution was intense, it was interrupted by Emperors who were less anti-Christian than others.<sup>41</sup> In fact, there were distinct periods of peace and growth followed by intense persecution. The very nature of this cycle gave much opportunity for those insincere Christian who had joined during a lull in the persecution, to turn on their former friends when the persecution picked up again. In fact, it was noted that during the latter half of the third century without the threat of persecution, the discipline and also the zeal of the Church had become exceedingly low.<sup>42</sup>

Matthew Henry takes a different approach, by focusing on the statement “synagogue of Satan.” He says that even as God has true followers, Satan has followers as well which could be referred to as the synagogue of Satan. Anyone opposing God’s true church could be considered of the synagogue of Satan. And if they claim to be true and in the right, it would be no less than blasphemy.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Goodrich. p51. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA51>

<sup>37</sup> Goodrich. p56. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA56>

<sup>38</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologeticus>

<sup>39</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologeticus#Date>

<sup>40</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel and the Revelation (The response of history to the voice of prophecy)*. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p352. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/352/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/352/mode/2up)] [Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1897, p429 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA429>]

<sup>41</sup> Goodrich. p34. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA34>

<sup>42</sup> Goodrich. p38-43. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA38>

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev\\_002.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev_002.cfm)

There are even more possible explanations for this passage. Some have proposed that perhaps these were Gentile Christians, who "Judaized," because that religion was more accepted by the Roman Empire than Christianity.<sup>44</sup> Although, I would tend to discount this because I think at some point during this era, there was a reversal on this level of acceptance. This came about as true Christianity showed itself to be a peaceful religion, while the Jews were continually rebelling against Rome. In fact, this is one of the explanations given for the change of the holy day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, to differentiate themselves from the rebellious Jews.

It goes without saying that during this period many were cast into prison and many were tortured and killed.<sup>45 46 47</sup>

Then, we have the message to the Church that it would suffer for ten days. Since none of the persecutions were known to last for ten days, and this was important enough to mention in the prophecy, Smith argues that the day for a year principle of prophetic time [see [Appendix B](#)] applies in this case making it ten years.<sup>48</sup> Going back to the start of the Christian church there were ten noted cycles of peace and persecution for the church. Possibly the worst of which was the tenth and last persecution by the Roman Empire under Diocletian, which lasted ten years.<sup>49 50</sup>

Lastly there is the admonition to listen to what the Spirit (I believe the Holy Spirit) says. Then the promise that those who overcome will be taken to heaven where they will overcome the second death, meaning they will live forever.

What do you believe?

- What do you think the blasphemy of those who claim to be Jew but are not refers to?
- Do you think the ten days is symbolic of ten years or ten cycles?
- Do you think you would be a Christian under constant threat of torture and death?

## Message to the Church in Pergamum

### [Revelation 2:12-17](#)

[Revelation 2:12](#) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: <sup>13</sup> "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne [is]. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas [was] My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Rev/Message-Smyrna>

<sup>45</sup> Goodrich. p36. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA36>

<sup>46</sup> Gibbon. p65. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA65>

<sup>47</sup> Gibbon. p80. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA80>

<sup>48</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel and the Revelation (The response of history to the voice of prophecy)*. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p352-353. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/352/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/352/mode/2up)] [Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1897, p429 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA429>]

<sup>49</sup> Goodrich. p44. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA44>

<sup>50</sup> Gibbon. p70. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA70>



<sup>17</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives [it]." ' [Revelation 2:12-17 NKJV](#)

## History and geography

The earliest mention of the city of Pergamum also known as Pergamon, was by the historian Xenophon who briefly captured it from the Persians in 399 BC, after which it was immediately retaken. It is located north of Smyrna and about 16 miles inland from the coast of the Aegean Sea. During the struggle for supremacy among Alexander the Great's generals, the city was taken by Lysimachus of Thrace in 301 BC. His lieutenant Philitaeus enlarged the town, but when the Kingdom of Thrace collapsed 20 years later, he began a new dynasty over the Kingdom of Pergamon. Rule passed from him to his nephew Eumenes I (263-241 BC), who was succeeded by his cousin Attalus I (241-197 BC). The Attalids ruled Pergamon with intelligence and generosity. They allied themselves with the Romans during the Macedonian wars and at this time expanded both the capital city and the kingdom. When Attalus III died in 133 BC without an heir, he bequeathed the kingdom to Rome.<sup>51 52</sup>

## Biblical mention

There is no other mention of the city of Pergamum in the Bible aside from the messages to the seven churches. However, it is the capital city of the kingdom that directly succeeded the collapse of one of the four divisions of Greece represented by the four horns of the goat and four heads of the Leopard in Daniel [see [Daniel's dreams of world kingdoms](#)]. Lysimachus who was mentioned in the previous paragraph was one of Alexander's generals and one of the four prophesied kingdoms that Greece was split into.<sup>53</sup>

## Message summary

- Held fast to the name of Jesus even though dwelling where Satan's throne is
- Did not deny the faith even when Antipas the faithful one was killed where Satan dwells
- Some hold to the teachings of Balaam, eating things sacrificed to idols and committing acts of immorality
- Some hold to the teachings of the Nicolaitans
- Repent or I will come and make war against them with the sword of My mouth
- Whoever has an ear let them hear what the Spirit says
- Whoever overcomes will receive hidden manna and a white stone with a new name that only they will know

## Interpretation

The Christian Church era that immediately followed the last, was the period which began with the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. The edict of Milan which in many eyes, ended the period of persecution, also ushered in a new era in the year 313.<sup>54</sup> Though the conversion of Constantine must have been slow if it was a true conversion at all, as it was not until his final illness that he was baptized,<sup>55</sup> it was during this era, that persecution stopped<sup>56</sup> and Christianity became the religion of the state. One could have hoped that as the message and teaching of Christ were spread and accepted by many, the peace, love and purity of Christ would spread along with it. Unfortunately, this was far from the case, and as its popularity and growth exploded, so did the disagreements and struggle for power. The edict of Milan

<sup>51</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pergamon>

<sup>52</sup> *New International Encyclopædia – Volume 18*. New York, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1917, p334.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=O45IAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA334>

<sup>53</sup> World Digital Library. <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/11739/>

<sup>54</sup> Goodrich. p50. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA50>

<sup>55</sup> Gibbon. p249. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA249>

<sup>56</sup> Gibbon. p252. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA252>

gave each individual the freedom to choose their own religion, but as soon as the Roman world was under his power, Constantine sent letters exhorting all his subjects to embrace the divine truth of Christianity.<sup>57 58</sup> As such anyone with political ambitions found it to their advantage, if not a necessity, to become a Christian.

As for the first bullet of the message to the church, I think perhaps holding fast to the name of Jesus could be a reference to the general council at Nicaea in 325. The council was called by Constantine in an attempt to resolve the disputes among Christianity, foremost of which was the debate about the divinity of Jesus. Constantine also wished for a consensus for computing the date of Easter.<sup>59 60 61 62 63 64</sup> I believe Satan's throne is a reference to the dangerous place the Church found itself in as it was accepted and promoted by the Empire as the official religion of the state. The idea that God values free will is made evident by the current existence of sin and evil doers. If Satan is thought of as the opponent and opposite of all that God stands for, then a religion endorsed and enforced by civil power takes away free will. Even though the edict of Milan, granted religious freedom as stated above, the church had started down a dangerous path when it became the official religion of the state. I found the language of Satan in the messages to the last two churches interesting. To the Church of Smyrna, was a mention of hypocrites who were of the synagogue of Satan, or one might say where He worships. The church of Pergamum was said to dwell where Satan's throne is, and Antipas was killed where Satan lives. So, in effect we have Satan's church, palace and home. In the first case, we had people who claimed to be Jew is in the "true" sense (God's true followers), but were not, and hence were said to be hypocrites and members of Satan's church, I would say not literally but in the "true" sense (Satan's true followers). In the second case, Satan's throne and palace seem to be an implication of the church using civil power to do Satan's work. The last place, home would seem to have something to do with where your most intimate relationships are, where you can let your guard down, and rest and rejuvenate.

According to church tradition, there was a bishop of Pergamum named Antipas that was martyred in 92 by being roasted alive in a brazen bull shaped image.<sup>65</sup> This happened to be around the time that may think the book of Revelation was written. My first inclination toward nonbiblical church tradition is skepticism, and since I am going down a more symbolic path of interpretation, I would also question why a literal statement would be placed in the middle of a prophetic message. Smith, quoting William Miller says that the name could be split into two parts, as "anti," and "papas." The point being that opposition to power of bishops and eventually popes who were called Fathers, was gradually being killed.<sup>66</sup> Maybe, this transition was gradual and with the end of persecution, the church was relaxed and comfortable, with their guard down, like one is at home. Regarding the statement, "did not deny the faith," I could add that even as bishops were jockeying for power, the position on the divinity of Jesus as equal and eternal with the Father was what was enforced.

The third point of the message was "Some hold to the teachings of Balaam, eating things sacrificed to idols and committing acts of immorality." The teachings of Balaam as we discussed in [Appendix I – Who were the Nicolaitans](#), were that he seduced the Israelites into idolatry and sexual immorality most likely though the use of Temple prostitutes.

<sup>57</sup> Goodrich. p51. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA51>

<sup>58</sup> Gibbon. p257. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA257>

<sup>59</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Council\\_of\\_Nicaea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea)

<sup>60</sup> Goodrich. p54. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA54>

<sup>61</sup> Gibbon. p317. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA317>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Council-of-Nicaea-Christianity-325>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11044a.htm>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum01.htm>

<sup>65</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipas\\_of\\_Pergamum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipas_of_Pergamum)

<sup>66</sup> Smith. [p355. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/354/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/354/mode/2up)] [p434.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA434>]

This is not to say that there was no literal sexual immorality at the time, but symbolically in the Bible, a prostitute or a sexually unfaithful woman represents a false or impure church. Given the path I am following, I believe it is more likely that this is a reference to the incorporation of some of the pagan rituals into Christianity. Lewis wrote an entire book on the ways that paganism survives in Christianity. He went as far as to say that Constantine was more of a corruptor of Christianity than a defender.<sup>67</sup> It is not difficult at all to find how most of the current Christian Holidays have corresponding pagan ones. Another way that one could look at the idolatry or immorality is that over this period, the Church pursued or embraced the power of the state.<sup>68</sup>

Next, we have the teachings of the Nicolaitans mentioned again. Clearly, the purpose for the council of Nicaea was that there were some who were promoting ideas that were thought heretical. One of the most prominent was the teachings of Arius, which did not dispute that Jesus, the Son created all things, but that there was a time He did not exist before being created by or begotten of Father.<sup>69</sup> I have already speculated that this error was one that the Nicolaitans were allegedly known for [[Appendix I – Who were the Nicolaitans](#)].

Then there is the warning to repent or else God will wage war against them with the sword of His mouth. Smith says that those who were admonished to repent were the ones with heretical doctrines.<sup>70</sup> Gibbon has a whole chapter dedicated to the dealing with and persecution of heresy within the church. As was mentioned above, dealing with heretical beliefs in the church was the whole purpose of the council of Nicaea in 325.<sup>71</sup> God said that He would wage war against them with the sword of His mouth. So, what is the sword of His mouth? Paul wrote:

[Ephesians 6:17](#) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; [Ephesians 6:17 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 4:12](#) For the word of God [is] living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [Hebrews 4:12 NKJV](#)

I believe the sword can be a symbol of the Word of God, or the Bible, and even more specifically, the two-edged sword could represent the Old and New Testaments. It seems quite logical that the best weapon against heresy is the Bible.

Finally, there is the promise of eternal life again, but stated in yet a third manner, hidden manna and a white stone with a secret new name. I don't have an online link to the original source, but Smith references H. Blunt with the following explanation that in my opinion seems to fit very well.

In primitive times, when traveling was rendered difficult from want of places of public entertainment, hospitality was exercised by private individuals to a very great extent, of which indeed we find frequent traces in all history, and in none more than the Old Testament. Persons who partook of this hospitality, and those who practiced it, frequently contracted habits of friendship and regard for each other; and it became well-established custom both among the Greeks and Romans, to provide their guests with some particular mark, which was handed

<sup>67</sup> Lewis, Abram Hebert. *Paganism Surviving in Christianity*. London, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892, p216. <https://books.google.com/books?id=AfEKAQAAIAAJ&pg=PA216>

<sup>68</sup> Smith. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p356. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/356/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/356/mode/2up)] [p435 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA435>]

<sup>69</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius>

<sup>70</sup> Smith. [p355. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/354/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/354/mode/2up)] [p434. <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA434>]

<sup>71</sup> Gibbon. p317. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA317>

down from father to son, and ensured hospitality and kind treatment whenever it was presented. This mark was usually a small stone or pebble, cut in half, upon the halves of which the host and guest mutually inscribed their names, and then interchanged with each other. The production of this tessera was quite sufficient to insure friendship for themselves or their descendants whenever they traveled again in the same direction; while it is evident that these stones required to be privately kept, and the names written upon them carefully concealed, lest others should obtain the privileges instead of the persons for whom they were intended.

“How natural, then, is the allusion to this custom in the words of the text, ‘I will give him to eat of the hidden manna;’ and having done so, having made him partaker of my hospitality, having recognized him as my guest, my friend, I will present him with the ‘white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, save he who receiveth it.’ I will give him a pledge of my friendship, sacred and inviolable, known only to himself.”<sup>72</sup>

What do you believe?

- What do you think the teachings of Balaam and eating things sacrificed to idols referred to?
- Many commentators believe that sexually immoral practices were part of the sins of the Nicolaitans, so why do you think that their teaching were called out in addition to those practices?
- Can you explain why the union of church and state is a dangerous practice, even if the religion represents God’s true church?

## Message to the Church in Thyatira

### [Revelation 2:18-29](#)

[Revelation 2:18](#) "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:<sup>19</sup> "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and [as] for your works, the last [are] more than the first.<sup>20</sup> "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.<sup>21</sup> "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.<sup>22</sup> "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.<sup>23</sup> "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.<sup>24</sup> "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.<sup>25</sup> "But hold fast what you have till I come.<sup>26</sup> "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—<sup>27</sup> 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'--as I also have received from My Father;<sup>28</sup> "and I will give him the morning star.

<sup>29</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' [Revelation 2:18-29 NKJV](#)

<sup>72</sup> Blunt, Henry. *A Practical Exposition of the Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia*, pp. 116-119. [Smith. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p357-358. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/356/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/356/mode/2up)] [p436-437 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA436>]]

## History and geography

I didn't find very much on the origins of the city of Thyatira. Like the first three cities, the current location of the ancient city is in the country of Turkey, south of Istanbul and about 50 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. It seems that most of the references on the Wikipedia page were religiously rather than historically based.<sup>73</sup>

## Biblical mention

The only direct mention of Thyatira aside from the messages to the churches in Revelation is in Acts.

[Acts 16:14](#) Now a certain woman named Lydia heard [us]. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. [Acts 16:14 NKJV](#)

The verse, read in context does not imply that this meeting occurred in Thyatira but in Phillipi, where it seems Lydia had a house and provided hospitality for Paul and Silas.

## Message summary

- Deeds of love, faith, service and perseverance are greater than at first
- You tolerate Jezebel,
  - who calls herself a prophetess,
  - but leads My servants into immorality and idolatry
  - she was given time to repent, but didn't,
  - so she will become sick,
  - and those who commit adultery with her will go through great tribulation
  - and her children will be killed with pestilence
- To the rest, who do not hold to this teaching, and who do not know the deep things of Satan, no other burden is placed
- Whoever overcomes and keeps My deeds:
  - Will receive authority over the nations
  - Shall rule them with a rod of iron, as vessels of the potter are broken to pieces
  - And I will give him the morning star
- Whoever has an ear let them hear what the Spirit says

## Interpretation

The time period associated with this church should roughly begin with the end of the last. It seems that a good place to mark the end of the last era would be the fall of the Roman Empire which most agree to be the year 476 [for references see [The little horn](#)]. However, if you consider the following period the era of Papal dominance, I don't think there is an easily identifiable date or year when this occurred. There are some events and a timeline that are used by some to mark the period of Papal power, but I would say, the power of the papacy must have already been on the rise before the fall of the Empire, but did not fully mature until a little later. This era of papal dominance was prophesied by both Daniel, and later on in the book of Revelation, to be 1260 years. But I don't think era of the church necessarily has to line up exactly with the full period of papal dominance. I think that there is a range of a hundred or more years surrounding 538, that could be chosen to mark the start of this period [see references and logic for 538 presented here: [The little horn](#)]. An example of the type of power that was sought and exercised by papal power can be seen in some of the following quotes.

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<sup>73</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thyatira>

For twenty-seven years, as Pope Gregory once wrote, Rome was continually in imminent peril of Lombard conquest (572-599), and obliged to provide for itself. In this time of stress and storm the Popes won their first secular authority over Rome and its vicinity, and reduced the civil magistrates to a place of quite secondary importance.

The man to whom the increase in the power of the Papacy was mainly due was Pope Gregory the Great, whose sway of fourteen years (590-604) covers the second half of the reign of Maurice and the first two years of Phocas. ...

It was as statesman and administrator, and fosterer of missionary work that Gregory was truly great. In Rome he ruled as a temporal governor rather than a bishop. It was he who provided against the attacks of the Lombards, arrayed soldiers for the defense for the walls, fed the starving people from the funds of the church, and negotiated with the chiefs of the enemy in behalf of the people of the Ducatus Romanus. ...

... Gregory's most striking feature was his extraordinary self-confidence and conviction in the absolute wisdom and righteousness of his own ideas. The legend, started by his admirers not long after his death, to the effect that he was actually inspired by the Holy Ghost, who visited him in the form of a dove, very adequately represents his own notion of his infallibility. ...

His successors were, for many generations, not men of mark, but by his work he had gained for them a temporal authority and a spiritual precedence which they were never again to lose. When he died, in 604, he left the Roman See exalted to a pitch of greatness which it had never before known, revered by all the Teutonic peoples of Europe, and half-freed from its allegiance to the rulers of Constantinople. [Oman. \*The Dark Ages 476-918\*. p200-203.](#) <sup>74</sup>

On the bleak height of Canosa, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, 1077 Henry IV., the Emperor of Germany, stood between the two outer walls of the Countess Mathilde's castle, barefoot and in the garb of a penitent. Within the castle was Hildebrand, Gregory VII., the Pope of Rome. Nearly a year before, the Pope had publicly cursed the Emperor, and had released his subjects from their allegiance. After standing for three days in the snow, Henry was at last admitted to the Pope's presence, and on humiliating terms, which placed him absolutely under the control of Gregory, received forgiveness and absolution.

It is not to the tragical pathos of this incident that its prominence in history is due. It is rather that the incident is the climax of a movement covering nearly seven centuries; the full flower of an idea which owed its first realization to Hildebrand—the idea of universal papal absolutism. The idea meant the freedom of the church in all things, and the elevation of its power above every other power. It meant that the head of the Roman Church should be the real Emperor of the world, and every king the creature and puppet of the Pope. These meanings are expressed in the "Dictates," drawn up by Hildebrand himself or under his direction, which contain the following propositions: The Roman Church was founded by the Lord alone. Only the Pope may wear the imperial insignia. All princes are to kiss the Pope's feet only. His name stands alone in the world. He can be judged by no one. No one can pass sentence on the one who appeals to the apostolic throne. The Roman Church has never

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<sup>74</sup> Oman, Charles. *The Dark Ages 476-918*, London, Rivingtons, 1901, p200-2031.  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=3kEQAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA200>

erred, and, according to the testimony of Scripture, never will err. The Pope can depose the Emperor. Only the Roman bishop is rightly styled universal. [Vincent. \*The Age of Hildebrand\*. p1-2.](#)<sup>75</sup>

We come now to one of the darkest pages in the history of the Papacy, and to the foulest blot on the character and administration of Innocent III.—the crusade against the Albigenses. In the study of this episode, every right-thinking reader rises above theological and ecclesiastical differences into the region of common human rights and natural humane instincts. The movement was the legitimate outcome of the Hildebrandian idea, and was instinct with its spirit.

The essential facts of the case, succinctly stated, are these: A large, peaceful, and prosperous province, governed by a generous and tolerant prince, embraced in its population large numbers of sectaries. Although later Christian thought condemns some of their tenants as erroneous, they were industrious, loyal, and orderly. Their pure morality was in strong contrast with that of the licentious, avaricious, and lazy clergy of the established church, and the fervor of their devotion with the idle and heartless ceremonies of the papal worship. Upon this community Innocent fixed his eye, and determined to bring it, by force if necessary, into conformity with Romish dogma and practice. Upon this peaceful and moral population his mandate let loose all the power of the secular arm, and encouraged, by promises of papal indulgence, bands of freebooters—men without conscience and without pity, and stained with every crime—to act as his agents in enforcing submission. The Vicegerent of God, the man who delighted to represent himself as commissioned by the God-man, precipitated upon these unoffending and defenseless people all the horrors of murder, rapine, and unbridled lust, for the glory of God and the honor of the church of Christ. [Vincent. \*The Age of Hildebrand\*. p337-338.](#)<sup>76</sup>

For a thousand years the temporal has been associated with the spiritual power of the Papacy, and, since the arrogant assertion of Hildebrand, 'The Pope is the sun, the Emperor the moon which shines with borrowed light,' it has remained, though not unchallenged, a cardinal feature of Papal rule. Allied to the spiritual power of the Pontiff, it is held to have conferred a dignity and lustre upon the Court of Rome to which no secular power could aspire, and to have justified the exclamation attributed to a successor of Hildebrand, 'How profitable hath this fable of Christ been to us.' [Legge. \*The Growth of the Temporal Power of the Papacy\*. p2.](#)<sup>77</sup>

As can be seen from the above quotes, it was over one hundred years before the Papacy had evolved to the point of superseding monarchs and commanding armies. It seemed to not be a bad thing at first with Rome in much need of a strong leader at the time that Gregory stepped in to fill the void. It would be unfair to say that the entire era or every Pope abused their power over the lives and consciences of men, but as is usually the case, the power once acquired leads to corruption, followed by extreme measures taken to retain that power. Back to the point of power over conscience, one of the roles of civil governments is to enforce laws. When a religion assumes the role of the government in enforcing laws, it will most naturally want to enforce its religious laws alongside the civil. This has a couple major problems. 1) Freedom of choice is God given, and when government tries to enforce moral laws, they are restricting that God-given gift. 2) Secondly, whose religion is being enforced? Though taking away moral choice, I think most would agree that enforcing a good religion, that promotes peace, and love would be better than a violent or oppressive one. One final point about governments trying to retain their power is that the more oppressive a government is, the more opposition it will have and hence, the more measures it must take to retain its power. This

<sup>75</sup> Vincent, Martin R. *The Age of Hildebrand*. New York, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909, p1.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA1>

<sup>76</sup> Vincent. p337. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA337>

<sup>77</sup> Legge, Alfred Owen. *The Growth of the Temporal Power of the Papacy*. London, Macmillan & Co., 1870, p2.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA2>

often leads to the vicious cycle of more oppression and opposition. One frequently employed method of controlling opposition is to suppress knowledge and education. I believe this is one of the factors that led to the Dark Ages during this era.

After the things I just wrote, and what I believe about this era of the church, I was puzzled about the first part of the message to the church. The church was commended for deeds of love, faith, service and perseverance that are greater than at first. Do you think the comparison to "at first," applies to later as opposed to earlier in the era, or do you think it is comparing this entire era with one of the prior ones? I think the way I choose to interpret this is that as corruption and compromise crept into the organized church, there must have been some that stayed true. As enforcement of corrupt moral law grew, the true church had to go into hiding in order to continue practicing the truths it believed. To a degree this must have begun in the prior era, but as religious freedom was restricted more and more, the true church had to exercise faith and perseverance to survive the persecution. In essence, the true church was again entering a period of persecution, but the perpetrators were now the corrupt church instead of the governments. Interestingly it was a form of the Roman government in both cases doing the persecution. If you are not comfortable with this interpretation, since it seems to only cover faith and perseverance, you could think of the church establishment now with greater power and resources, showing deeds of love, faith and service. Recall from the first quotation above, how Gregory the Great used the resources of the church to feed the starving people under his protection. The problem with this interpretation is that I think the caring for the poor and needy decreased rather than increase during the period, as the church used superstition and force to exploit the public for its own gains.

The next part of the message was about the toleration of Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess but led the church into immorality and idolatry. Choosing the symbolic interpretation as I did for Antipas in the church of Pergamum, Jezebel, a woman must represent a church, except that since she called herself a prophetess, perhaps she represents the leadership of the church. In the Old Testament, the symbol of God as husband to His people is very apparent, and their going after other gods is represented as immorality.

[Jeremiah 3:20](#) Surely, [as] a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 3:20 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 3:6](#) The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. <sup>7</sup> "And I said, after she had done all these [things], 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. <sup>8</sup> "Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. <sup>9</sup> "So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. <sup>10</sup> "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 3:6-10 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 3:1](#) Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman [who is] loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love [the] raisin cakes [of the pagans]." [Hosea 3:1 NKJV](#)

There are many more Old Testament passages that use this symbolism. So, while the church of this era didn't literally worship false gods, as Israel did, there was corruption creeping into the church. They had already forsaken God's chosen Holy day of rest, and instead worshipped on Sunday. They were essentially bowing down to images of



saints and the Virgin Mary.<sup>78</sup> They began to accept payment for the sale of forgiveness of sins.<sup>79</sup> They tortured and killed as heretics, those who opposed these and other practices, just as Jezebel of old, killed the true prophets of God.<sup>80</sup>

[1 Kings 18:4](#) For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) [1 Kings 18:4 NKJV](#)

So, if Jezebel is claiming to be a prophetess, and is leading God's people astray, she could symbolize the Papacy during this era. This was a long period, and she did not repent, in fact I think there was also a long period of time which could be considered an overlap between what this period and the next are known for. When she didn't repent, she became sick which could symbolize the event that ended the era, which was the capture and imprisonment of the Pope in 1798.<sup>81 82 83 84 85</sup> Taking a peek forward to chapter 13, we see that there was one who appeared to have received a deadly wound but was healed.

[Revelation 13:3](#) And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. [Revelation 13:3 NKJV](#)

If Jezebel and this head are referring to the same thing, then I think it is possible that the sickness and the deadly wound could be referring to the same incident.

Taking a peek a little further forward to Revelation 17, we read of Babylon, the great harlot, which also seems to be a symbol of the same thing based on the similarities in the way she is described.

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,<sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."<sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.<sup>4</sup> The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.<sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.<sup>6</sup> I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.<sup>7</sup> But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. [Revelation 17:1-7 NKJV](#)

<sup>78</sup> Gibbon. p454. <https://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA454>

<sup>79</sup> Clare, Israel Smith. *Illustrated Universal History: Being a clear and concise history of all nations*. J. C. McCurdy & Co. Philadelphia, PA; Cincinnati, OH; Chicago, IL, St. Louis, MO, 1881, p199. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA197>

<sup>80</sup> Clare. p134. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA134>

<sup>81</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Catholic\\_Church#1700-1799](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Catholic_Church#1700-1799)

<sup>82</sup> Legge. p150. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA150>

<sup>83</sup> Thiers, M.A.; Shoberl, Frederick. *The History of the French Revolution - Volume V*. London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1838, p204. <http://books.google.com/books?id=imkEAAAQAQAJ&pg=PA204>

<sup>84</sup> De Montor, Artaud. *The Lives and Times of the Popes*. New York, The Catholic Publication Society of America, 1911, p275. <http://books.google.com/books?id=kr8jAQAIAAJ&pg=PA275>

<sup>85</sup> Clare. p327. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA327>

The great harlot sat on many waters, which would symbolize many people. Kings of the earth committed acts of immorality with her. Drunk with the blood of the saints (God's true followers who were persecuted and killed).

Those who committed adultery with her would go through great tribulation. From 1798-1799 the country of France went through a revolution, where the monarchy and virtually every one of privilege was not only thrown out of power, but also executed by a mob. Wikipedia stated that the French Revolution profoundly altered the course of modern history, triggering the global decline of absolute monarchies, while replacing them with republics and liberal democracies.<sup>86</sup> Based on this statement, it seems quite logical to me that the monarchies, most or many of which were in league with the Church (committing adultery with her) did indeed suffer great tribulation.

The final point was that her children would be killed with pestilence. I already discussed how the woman in the Bible is used as a symbol of a church or a religion. But I have also mentioned above that Jezebel, claiming to be a prophet, was most likely a symbol of the leadership of the corrupt church. So, carrying the symbolism forward, her daughters would seem to be leaders of corrupt churches that came out of the mother church. The only problem with this is that the thing most closely resembling churches that came out of the fallen mother church are the numerous protestant churches. Wasn't the point being that those daughter churches were reformed? If the great harlot in Revelation 17 was the same entity, then clearly she is said to be the mother of harlots. If these associations are correct, then it would seem to be saying that many of the Protestant churches are symbolized as harlots, and hence corrupt as well. It is difficult as a Protestant Christian to draw that connection, but if this is the correct interpretation, it seems the judgment on her children has not been carried out yet because many Protestant denominations still exist today. Perhaps that judgment will not happen until the end of time. Ultimately, I think that in the end, people will not be saved because they belong to an organization, they will be saved because of their own relationship with God. I am in no way saying that all organizations are equal and that the teachings of all prepare their members equally for eternal life with God, because I do not believe that. I am only saying that someone will not be saved just because they are a member of a particular organization.

Now, to the rest, I presume who do not follow Jezebel, it seems there is no warning for them. However, to the overcomer, there is a promise. They will receive authority over the nations, rule with a rod of iron, and will receive the morning star. The language of the first two points is very similar to things that were said about the Messiah.

[Psalm 2:9](#) You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' " [Psalm 2:9 NKJV](#)

Then in Revelation 12 and again in 19, we can read the same language which in both cases are referring to the Messiah.

[Revelation 12:5](#) She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. [Revelation 12:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:15](#) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [Revelation 19:15 NKJV](#)

So, it seems that Jesus intends to share His power and authority with those who overcome. The question in both cases is when is this power and authority given? The Jews interpreted it to mean that the Messiah would destroy their enemies and elevate them to absolute dominance in the world, which obviously didn't happen with Jesus.

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<sup>86</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution)

Does that mean the language is symbolic of something else, or has it not happened yet? In either case, I think it is fair to say that the same could be said of the language in this prophecy.

In closing the chapter on this era, I would like to make a comment about the morning star. Symbolically, in the Bible, a star can represent a leader. The morning can be symbolic of the end of darkness or bad times and the beginning of better times. Hence, the morning star in this case could represent the some of the leaders of the reformation, such as Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, and more.

What do you believe?

- How do you interpret the first statement of the message to this church, that it was commended for “Deeds of love, faith, service and perseverance are greater than at first,” in light of the negativity associated with this era?
- Do you agree or disagree with my association of Jezebel in this message with the Papacy?
- How do you interpret the death of Jezebel’s children?

## Message to the Church in Sardis

### [Revelation 3:1-6](#)

[Revelation 3:1](#) "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup> "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. <sup>3</sup> "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. <sup>4</sup> "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

<sup>6</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' [Revelation 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

### History and geography

According to Wikipedia, the ancient city of Sardis was the Capital of the kingdom of Lydia around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was captured by the Cimmerians in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Persians in the 6<sup>th</sup>, Athenians in the 5<sup>th</sup>, Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup>, and Antiochus III the Great at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Finally, they gave themselves up to the protection and rule of the Romans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>87 88 89 90 91</sup>

The early Lydian kingdom was very advanced in the industrial arts and Sardis was the chief seat of its manufactures. The most important of these trades was the manufacture and dyeing of delicate woolen stuffs and carpets. The stream Pactolus which flowed through the market-place "carried golden sands" in early antiquity, which was in reality gold dust out of Mount Tmolus. It was during the reign of King Croesus that the

<sup>87</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sardis>

<sup>88</sup> Clare. p33. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA33>

<sup>89</sup> Clare. p45. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA45>

<sup>90</sup> Clare. p55. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA55>

<sup>91</sup> Rees, Abraham. *The Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature – Volume XXXI*. London, 1819, p522.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=qERRAAAACAAJ&pg=RA27-PA522>

metallurgists of Sardis discovered the secret of separating gold from silver, thereby producing both metals of a purity never known before. [Wikipedia](#)<sup>92</sup>

### Biblical mention

Sardis is not mentioned in the Bible outside of the message to the seven churches. Multiple sources of early Christian history mention a father and bishop of Sardis named Melito,<sup>93</sup> who wrote a letter to the Emperor Marcus Antonius sometime between 170 and 180, on behalf of persecuted Christians.<sup>94 95</sup>

### Message summary

- You have a name that you are alive, but are dead
- Wake up, strengthen the things that remain that were about to die
- Your deeds before God are not complete yet
- Remember what you have received and heard and repent
- If you do not wake up, you will not be ready when He comes, but will be surprised as by a thief in the night
- There are a few who have not soiled their garments
- He who overcomes will be clothed in white, and Jesus will mention his name before the Father and the angels

### Interpretation

First, let us begin by discussing the start of this period of church history. The last one was the era of Papal dominance which I believe ended in 1798 [for references see [The little horn](#)]. If the next era is that of reformation, then should we begin the period when the reformation started, or when the Papacy ended? Obviously, reformation was not something that happened overnight or even in a year. John Wycliffe was a reformer as early as the mid thirteen hundreds. Huss and Jerome spread their message and were killed as heretics in the early fourteen hundreds. Possibly most notable was the public posting of the ninety-five theses in 1517 by Martin Luther<sup>96 97</sup> which was nearly 300 years before the Pope was captured and imprisoned. Luther was protesting against the practice of selling indulgences and about the Biblical model of repentance and forgiveness of sins. What was started by him and other reformers both before and after him that led to the fall of the Papacy, is known as the Protestant Reformation.

The reformation did force the Roman Catholic Church to make some changes, but largely ended up creating an umbrella of Protestant Christian church denominations that were mostly united on the following three premises.<sup>98 99</sup>

- Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone, not the Pope, pastor, church, or tradition should be the basis for your beliefs and practices.
- Sola Gratia – Grace alone. Salvation is a free gift from God, there is nothing we can do to earn it.

<sup>92</sup> [A. Ramage, P. Craddock, King Croesus' Gold: Excavations at Sardis and the History of Gold Refining. Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, Arch. Expl. Sardis (2001)] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sardis#History>

<sup>93</sup> Cruttwell, Charles Thomas. *A Literary History of Early Christianity*. London, Charles Griffin & Co., 1893, p95. <https://books.google.com/books?id=NvcOAQAIAAJ&pg=PA95>

<sup>94</sup> Platts, John. *A New Universal Biography*. London, Sherwood, Jones and Co., 1825, p166. <https://books.google.com/books?id=x05LcArWCWAC&pg=PA166>

<sup>95</sup> Miall, James Goodeve. *Memorials of Early Christianity*. Boston, Gould & Lincoln, 1853, p185. <https://books.google.com/books?id=xdsNAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA185>

<sup>96</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin\\_Luther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther)

<sup>97</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five\\_Theses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five_Theses)

<sup>98</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_solae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_solae)

<sup>99</sup> Dau, W. H. T.. *Four Hundred Years – Commemorative Essays on the Reformation*. St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1916, p97. <https://books.google.com/books?id=F1gMAAAIAAJ&pg=PA97>

- Sola Fide – Faith alone. We are justified by faith alone, not by any works or merit on our part.

I think that while the reformation had a huge impact on the world with regard to the corrupt practices of the church of that era, Revelation's message to the church of this era didn't paint a very glowing picture. I think I lean toward thinking of this period of the church as starting with the reformation in the 1500's, but many of my points and interpretation of the message to Thyatira took that era all the way up to 1798 and possibly even a little beyond. Ultimately, I think I don't have a problem with there being an overlap in the periods if the messages to the church seems to indicate that.

"You have a name that you are alive, but are dead." The reformers still considered themselves Christians, followers of the living Christ, but their religion was still as dead as the mother church. I think each reformer, who ultimately ended up being the head of a different Protestant Denomination, rightfully protested certain practices of the mother church but possibly wrongfully changed others. While they didn't sell forgiveness for sins though indulgences, a portion of the Reformation movement, adopted a theology that today we call double predestination, which included the idea that many people were created with no choice but to end up tortured forever in everlasting hell fire.<sup>100 101 102</sup> In addition to that reformers in power were known to have killed and even tortured heretics and Catholics.<sup>103 104</sup> While the reformation was a good thing, it was apparently not enough for Jesus to call the church of this period alive, because two more of the message points were about the church needing to wake up. I think the next point was to wake up and strengthen or maybe revitalize some of the beliefs that had died away. The fifth point was that if you don't wake up you will not be ready. This point is illustrated by several parables Jesus told.

[Matthew 25:1](#) "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> "Now five of <sup>3</sup> them were wise, and five [were] foolish. <sup>4</sup> "Those who [were] foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>5</sup> "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>6</sup> "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. <sup>7</sup> "And at midnight a cry was [heard]: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' <sup>8</sup> "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>9</sup> "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us [some] of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>10</sup> "But the wise answered, saying, '[No], lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' <sup>11</sup> "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. <sup>12</sup> "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' <sup>13</sup> "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' <sup>14</sup> "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. [Matthew 25:1-13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:42](#) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>44</sup> "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. [Matthew 24:42-44 NKJV](#)

Apparently being prepared and ready is an important if not necessary ingredient of salvation at the second coming. In both parables, the point being stressed is to be awake and ready at all times because you do not know when Jesus

<sup>100</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology\\_of\\_John\\_Calvin#Predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology_of_John_Calvin#Predestination)

<sup>101</sup> Calvin, John. *Calvin's Calvinism*. London, Wertheim and Macintosh, 1856, p185.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=BcQCAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA185>

<sup>102</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination#Double\\_predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination#Double_predestination)

<sup>103</sup> Wylie, J. A.. *The History of Protestantism*. London, Cassell & Company, p333.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ib4GAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA333>

<sup>104</sup> Unity. Chicago, Unity Publishing Company, 1908, p44. <https://books.google.com/books?id=WWxJAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA42>

will come back. But I did find it very interesting that even the bridesmaids that were ready, were sleeping almost up to the time of His arrival. Apparently, in spite of the reforms started in this period, the majority of the church was still in need of repentance and awakening to be ready for the second coming of Jesus. In fact, I think that the sleeping bridesmaids in the parable in [Matthew 25](#) has a direct correlation to the condition of the church of this era.

The third point was that "Your deeds before God are not complete yet." It seems that there was something Jesus wanted His people to do, that they had not done yet. Perhaps this deed was to awaken the world the idea of the second coming? Or perhaps, in spite of the reformation, it was still to portray a more accurate picture of God to the world?

Finally, Jesus lets it be known that though they be few, there are still true followers of His, who have not soiled their robes with the corrupt ways of the church. I know I sounded a little down on the reformation probably because the message to the church of this era let it be known that there was still more to be done. But I do believe that the church and even the civilized world owes a debt of gratitude to the reforms that were started by these incredibly brave and God led people, which I believe are counted among the few true followers of His. Having gone through the main points of the message to this church, it doesn't seem necessary to have an overlap in the periods as I discussed earlier.

What do you believe?

- Do you have any ideas what Jesus meant when He said, "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead"?
- In what way do you think the church was asleep?
- What does it mean to you personally to be awake so you will be ready when Jesus comes?

## Message to the Church in Philadelphia

### [Revelation 3:7-13](#)

[Revelation 3:7](#) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': <sup>8</sup> "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. <sup>9</sup> "Indeed I will make [those] of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup> "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. <sup>12</sup> "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And [I will write on him] My new name.

<sup>13</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' [Revelation 3:7-13 NKJV](#)

### History and geography

The location of the ancient city of Philadelphia, like all the other churches, is in modern day Turkey. According to Wikipedia,

Alaşehir began as perhaps one of the first ancient cities with the name Philadelphia. It was established in 189 BC by King Eumenes II of Pergamon (197–160 BC). Eumenes II named the city for the love of his brother, who would be his successor, Attalus II (159–138 BC), whose loyalty earned him the nickname, "Philadelphos", literally meaning "one who loves his brother". [Wikipedia](#)<sup>105</sup>

Gibbon mentions the city a couple times in connection with the Crusades, during 12<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>106 107</sup>

### Biblical mention

There is no other mention of a city by this name in the Bible that I could find.

### Message summary

- Jesus placed before them an open door which no one can shut because
  - They have a little power
  - Have kept His word
  - Not denied His name
- Those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews but are not, will bow down at your feet and realize that God loves you
- Because you persevered and kept My word, you will be kept from the hour of testing that is coming on the whole world
- I am coming soon, hold on
- Whoever overcomes
  - Will become a pillar in God's temple
  - Will never leave
  - and will have the following written on him
    - God's name
    - The New Jerusalem
    - Jesus' new name

### Interpretation

In trying to determine the start of this next era of church history, I considered the transitions of the prior periods. First was the apostolic and persecuted church, which transitioned to the church that was declared the official religion of the state. This was followed, after the fall of the state, by the head of the church assuming the role and power of the state. Leading up to and after the fall of the church/state figure head, there was a period of many sub groups within the church, each of which shared some common Christian beliefs but disagreed on others. But the message to that church emphasized a need to wake up and finish the reforms that were started. This is where the different interpretations based on the timeline of church era's starts diverging.

What was the door that was placed in front of this church that no one could shut? I heard Ty Gibson once say something to the effect that if Christianity was to survive, the reformation was inevitable, otherwise everyone would have rejected the distorted picture of God. But the reformation was a primary characteristic of the prior church, so we must look further. I'm not sure how widespread it was outside of the United States, but from my perspective as a Seventh-Day Adventist, the great disappointment was a significant event. Maybe just as the reformation was necessary to correct people's view of God, the Second Advent movement was necessary to awaken people to an

<sup>105</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ala%C5%9Fehir#Ancient\\_Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ala%C5%9Fehir#Ancient_Philadelphia)

<sup>106</sup> Gibbon. p557. <https://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAYAAJ&pg=PA557>

<sup>107</sup> Gibbon. p564. <https://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAYAAJ&pg=PA564>

anticipation of His Second Coming. I believe the first generation of Christians were anxiously expecting the soon return of Jesus, but I believe the anticipation lessened with each passing generation.

The second point of the message was kind of strange, "Those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews but are not, will bow down at your feet and realize that God loves you." The first question that could be asked is, who Jesus was referring to by "the synagogue of Satan." Did He mean Jews or not? He said they claimed to be Jews but were not. The traditional Christian interpretation is that when the Jews rejected Jesus, the Christians became true Jews and children of Abraham.

[Romans 2:28](#) For he is not a Jew who [is one] outwardly, nor [is] circumcision that which [is] outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but [he is] a Jew who [is one] inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise [is] not from men but from God. [Romans 2:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 3:6](#) just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." <sup>7</sup> Therefore know that [only] those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. [Galatians 3:6-7 NKJV](#)

People who claim to be Jews but were not, could have been Ethnic Jews who didn't accept Jesus, but it seems like it could also apply to anyone who claimed to be a Christian but was not truly converted. The questions still remain, whether this should be applied to the actual church at the time John wrote or to the symbolic church of the era? On my own, the best I could come up with was perhaps more Jews were converted to Christianity or a belief in Jesus as the Messiah in literal Philadelphia at the time, or in this era of church history. I do not have historical data to support either at this time.

The second characteristic in the message is, "Because you persevered and kept My word, you will be kept from the hour of testing that is coming on the whole world." The first thing that came to me, from a Seventh-Day Adventist point of view, was about the Sabbath. If the keeping of the Law of God is to be a test, including the fourth commandment about the seventh day Sabbath, those keeping that day would have already passed that test.

A couple things that seemed to be common in many of the interpretations for the church of Philadelphia was foreign missionaries, and the Bible society. A Bible society was formed in 1779 to distribute Bibles to soldiers and seamen. Another Bible society movement started in 1804 to provide affordable Bibles to Welsh speaking Christians. In fact, Bible societies flourished in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States.<sup>108</sup> I don't know enough to say whether there was an increase in missionary activity in this time period, but one could see how the combination of printed Bibles in many languages, and the absence of the Papal power to suppress the spread of the written Word of God, could lead to it. I found a Wikipedia page that listed Christian missionary activity from the beginning ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Christian\\_missions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Christian_missions)).<sup>109</sup> I do not reference this page for the purpose of showing an increase or spike in activity nor in an attempt to choose a start date for this era.

The following is a uniquely Seventh-Day Adventist view, which is understandable considering the origin of the Church. In looking for an awakening and unity, I think we can find both of these in the Second Advent movement spearheaded by William Miller,<sup>110</sup> starting small around 1830, and expanding greatly in 1840's.<sup>111</sup> As you can

<sup>108</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible\\_society#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_society#History)

<sup>109</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Christian\\_missions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Christian_missions)

<sup>110</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Miller\\_\(preacher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Miller_(preacher))

<sup>111</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millerism>



imagine, churches are not big on embracing change and new beliefs, so this message was accepted by individuals who separated from their churches and came together in unity around the message of the soon coming of Jesus.<sup>112</sup>

I'm a little reluctant to choose dates, but if I had to, I would combine several of the ideas above and maybe start this era in 1800. Then I would choose an end date in the mid 1900's, perhaps after the last founders of the Advent movement had died, and enough time had passed so that members might start to wonder whether Jesus was really coming back.

What do you believe?

- What do you think is referred to by the "Synagogue of Satan?"
- Do you think the direction I lean in the interpretation for this church is only believable by SDA's?
- Why do you think there is less consensus on the interpretation of this church than the prior ones?

## Message to the Church in Laodicea

### [Revelation 3:14-22](#)

[Revelation 3:14](#) "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: <sup>15</sup> "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—<sup>18</sup> "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, [that] the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. <sup>19</sup> "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. <sup>21</sup> "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

<sup>22</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' " [Revelation 3:14-22 NKJV](#)

## History and geography

The location of the ancient city of Laodicea, is in modern day Turkey. According to Wikipedia,

Laodicea is situated on the long spur of a hill between the narrow valleys of the small rivers Asopus and Caprus, which discharge their waters into the Lycus. The town was originally called Diospolis, "City of Zeus", and afterwards Rhodas. Laodicea, the building of which is ascribed to Antiochus II Theos in 261-253 BC in honor of his wife Laodice, was probably founded on the site of the older town. It was approximately 17 kilometres (11 mi) west of Colossae, and 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) south of Hierapolis. It was approximately 160 kilometres (99 mi) east of Ephesus and, according to Strabo, it was on a major road. It was in Phrygia, although some ancient authors place Laodicea in differing provincial territories – not surprising because the precise limits of these

<sup>112</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation*. [p366. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/366/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/366/mode/2up)] [p434. <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA445>]

territories were both ill-defined and inconstant; for example, Ptolemy and Philostratus call it a town of Caria, while Stephanus of Byzantium describes it as belonging to Lydia.

At first, Laodicea was not a place of much importance, but it soon acquired a high degree of prosperity. In 220 BC, Achaeus was its king. In 188 BC, the city passed to the Kingdom of Pergamon, and after 133 BC it fell under Roman control. It suffered greatly during the Mithridatic Wars but quickly recovered under the dominion of Rome. Towards the end of the Roman Republic and under the first emperors, Laodicea, benefiting from its advantageous position on a trade route, became one of the most important and flourishing commercial cities of Asia Minor, in which large money transactions and an extensive trade in black wool were carried on.

[Wikipedia](#)<sup>113</sup>

## Biblical mention

In the Bible, outside of Revelation, the city is mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Colossians.

[Colossians 2:1](#) For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and [for] as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, [Colossians 2:1 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 4:12](#) Epaphras, who is [one] of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup> For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. <sup>14</sup> Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. <sup>15</sup> Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that [is] in his house. <sup>16</sup> Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the [epistle] from Laodicea. [Colossians 4:12-16 NKJV](#)

Apparently, Paul wrote a letter to the Church in Laodicea which didn't find its way into the Canon of the Bible. From the way it was mentioned, it seems that the cities of Colossae and Laodicea must have been near to each other.

## Message summary

- Your deeds are neither hot nor cold
- Because you are lukewarm, I [Jesus] will spit you out of My mouth
- You think you are rich and have need of nothing, but you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked
- Advised to buy from Jesus:
  - Gold
  - White garments
  - Eye salve
- Those I love I reprove and discipline, be zealous and repent
- I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears and opens, I will come in and dine with him
- Whoever overcomes
  - Will sit with Me on My throne
  - Even as I sat with My Father on His throne

## Interpretation

This church, like Philadelphia, has much more variation in interpretations regarding the starting time than the earlier churches. Continuing with my admittedly Seventh-Day Adventist interpretation based on the great disappointment, I would start this church when the previous one started getting complacent, after its founders had all died, and it

<sup>113</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laodicea\\_on\\_the\\_Lycus#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laodicea_on_the_Lycus#History)

began to lose the anticipation that Jesus might come at any time. Ellen White, one of the last original members, died in 1915. Give a couple decades so that there are adults in the church who never personally saw or met her, and that lands you in the mid 1930's.

The message to the church is not a glowing one. They are said to be lukewarm, where Jesus would prefer hot or cold. They think they are rich and in need of nothing, but are in the words of Jesus, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. The difficulty with this interpretation is that you would think the church would need a better assessment from Jesus in order to usher in His coming, but it isn't and it's the last. So, does this tell us something about the state of the church when Jesus returns? One thing you could possibly take away from it is that there are going to be a lot of people who think they are ready but are not. Backing up just a bit, why is it better to be cold than lukewarm? Isn't lukewarm warmer than cold? What good can possibly come from being cold?

There were a couple different approaches in the commentary on this topic. Probably the more common one focused on the condition of the actual water supply in the city at the time. It seems that Laodicea didn't have a good water supply of their own and had to pipe water in. Apparently, they were known for their lukewarm water, as opposed to cities that had access to cold refreshing mountain streams, or natural hot water mineral baths. In this context the rebuke could be stated as "good for nothing."<sup>114</sup> So, rather than looking at the hot and cold as two extremes on the spectrum between good and evil, look at them as usefulness, as opposed to lukewarm water which can be used to induce vomiting. The second recurring commentary that I came across did apply the spectrum between good and evil to the hot and cold water. The general idea was that the lukewarm person doesn't think they are in need, whereas the cold person could be brought to see theirs. But even though lukewarm is halfway to hot on the spectrum, Jesus made it clear that it is not good enough for salvation, because He said He would spew them out of His mouth. So that state would lead people to think they were good enough, thinking they were rich and in need of nothing, but in reality, they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. It might also lead to people who claim to be Christians but misrepresent Christ, but an evil person would not be in a position through association or claims to misrepresent God.

I also found interesting the idea that Jesus recommended that this church buy things from Him. Does this imply that in some way we purchase our salvation? Also interesting was that first on the list was gold which was often a medium of exchange for purchasing. How does one purchase gold when gold is usually what is used for buying things? First, it is important to remember that Jesus said the Laodiceans were poor. So obviously He was not looking for a fair exchange purchase. I think He was asking for them to exchange their wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked state for one that was rich in heavenly currency. Jesus said to lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven:

[Matthew 6:19](#) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [Matthew 6:19-20 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- Does the negative state of this last church cause you to go back and rethink the timeline interpretation of the seven churches?

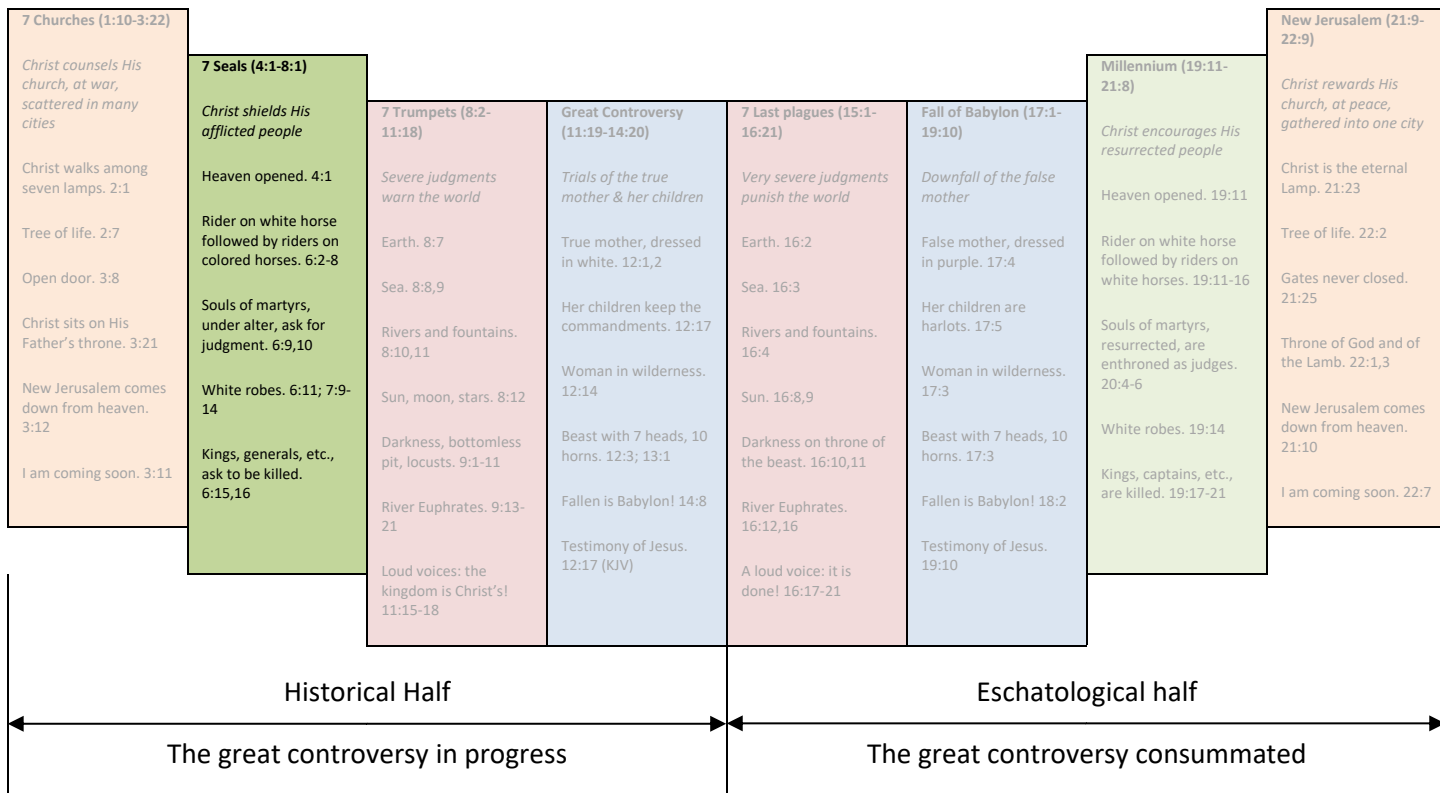
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<sup>114</sup> Conder, Josiah. *The Harmony of History with Prophecy*. London, John Farquhar Shaw, 1849, p45-46.  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=U\\_Y\\_AAAAcAAJ&pg=PA45](https://books.google.com/books?id=U_Y_AAAAcAAJ&pg=PA45)

- Do you think there are not enough visible correlations between the message and the church of this era?
- How do you think this last church will be ready for the second coming if they are lukewarm?

# Revelation 4:1-8:1 – Seven seals

As you can see from the outline below, we are starting into the second of eight sections as organized below.



## Preface – throne of God and worthiness of the lamb

### Description of the room

#### [Revelation 4:1-11](#)

[Revelation 4:1](#) After these things I looked, and behold, a door [standing] open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard [was] like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

<sup>2</sup> Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and [One] sat on the throne. <sup>3</sup> And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and [there was] a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. <sup>4</sup> Around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. <sup>5</sup> And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire [were] burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

<sup>6</sup> Before the throne [there was] a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, [were] four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. <sup>7</sup> The first living creature [was] like a lion, the second

living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> [The] four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

<sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: <sup>11</sup> "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." [Revelation 4:1-11 NKJV](#)

In the Old Testament, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision where he saw something amazingly similar yet different. For your convenience, the full chapter follows.

[Ezekiel 1:1](#) Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth [month], on the fifth [day] of the month, as I [was] among the captives by the River Chebar, [that] the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. <sup>2</sup> On the fifth [day] of the month, which [was] in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, <sup>3</sup> the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

<sup>4</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness [was] all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. <sup>5</sup> Also from within it [came] the likeness of four living creatures. And this [was] their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. <sup>6</sup> Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. <sup>7</sup> Their legs [were] straight, and the soles of their feet [were] like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. <sup>8</sup> The hands of a man [were] under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. <sup>9</sup> Their wings touched one another. [The creatures] did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

<sup>10</sup> As for the likeness of their faces, [each] had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. <sup>11</sup> Thus [were] their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two [wings] of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. <sup>12</sup> And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

<sup>13</sup> As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance [was] like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. <sup>14</sup> And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

<sup>15</sup> Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel [was] on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. <sup>16</sup> The appearance of the wheels and their workings [was] like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings [was], as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. <sup>17</sup> When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. <sup>18</sup> As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims [were] full of eyes, all around the four of them. <sup>19</sup> When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. <sup>20</sup> Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, [because] there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures [was] in the wheels. <sup>21</sup> When those went, [these] went; when those stood, [these] stood; and when those were lifted up

from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures [was] in the wheels.

<sup>22</sup> The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures [was] like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads. <sup>23</sup> And under the firmament their wings [spread out] straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. <sup>24</sup> When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. <sup>25</sup> A voice came from above the firmament that [was] over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.

<sup>26</sup> And above the firmament over their heads [was] the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne [was] a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. <sup>27</sup> Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so [was] the appearance of the brightness all around it. This [was] the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw [it], I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking. [Ezekiel 1:1-28 NKJV](#)

Let's start by listing the similarities.

Revelation	Ezekiel
Flashes of lightning	Raging fire
Seven fire burning lamps around one like jasper and sardius sitting on the throne	Throne like sapphire, one the color of amber above the waist with fire and brightness all around
Four living creatures	Four living creatures with the likeness of a man
Full of eyes in front and back	Each had four faces facing front, behind, left, and right
First creature was like a lion	All four had the face of a lion to the right
Second was like a calf	All four had the face of an ox to the left
Third had a face like a man	All four had the face of a man (presumably forward)
Fourth was like a flying eagle	All four had the face of an eagle (presumably backward)
Each had six wings	Had outstretched wings and wings covering their bodies
A throne	Likeness of a throne
There was a rainbow around the throne	The brightness around the throne appeared like a rainbow

As for the differences, only John mentioned the twenty-four elders. He also wrote about the creatures and the twenty-four elders bowing down and worshipping Him who sits upon the throne. Ezekiel only described two sets of wings, but he added something he described as a wheel within a wheel, which seemed to be controlled or connected to the four beings. In Ezekiel, the throne was above the heads of the four beings, whereas in Revelation the four creatures surrounded the throne. In Ezekiel, the whole thing was mobile, controlled by the Spirit of God, but John described no motion.

Overall, I don't have a problem believing that John and Ezekiel both saw the same thing. Two people seeing the same thing in different contexts and at different times could easily give descriptions as varying as these. Each would also have had to find earthly words to describe heavenly things in terms that their readers would be familiar with.

This is speculation on my part, but the twenty-four elders that John described seemed to be human beings. That would mean that they were people that were taken to heaven before the resurrection of the righteous and second coming of Jesus. But there were only three, Enoch, Moses and Elijah, named in the Bible who were taken to heaven. I think it is more likely that they could be the unnamed group of people that were resurrected when Jesus died and then went to heaven with Him as the first fruits of His victory over death.

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:8](#) Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."  
[Ephesians 4:8 NKJV](#)

The first verse of the chapter says, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." I wondered what things the angel was talking about that would be followed by the next thing John would see? The two previous chapters were the messages to the seven churches? Is that the event that would be followed by what John would see next? Chapter 1 was an introduction to the whole book, a description of the glorified Jesus, and a lead into the messages to the seven churches. Or was the era of the church of Laodicea what was to be followed? If so, does that mean that the Laodicean era doesn't go all the way to the second coming? Matthew Henry suggests that after John had seen the first vision, written and sent the letter to the seven churches, he would now receive the next revelation.<sup>115</sup> Uriah Smith says something similar, "It means only that after the prophet had seen and heard what is there recorded, he had the new view which he now introduces."<sup>116</sup>

Something else I noticed that seemed interesting to me is that in chapter 1, it seemed that John saw Jesus, not next to the throne and presumably there on the island with him, and there were seven lampstands around Him. In that scene the lampstands were said to be the seven churches, which I interpreted to be seven eras of the church. In this chapter he described seven fire burning lamps before the throne, which were said to represent the seven Spirits of God. I wondered if these lamps seen in the two different contexts were the same? If so, how are the seven churches correlated with the seven Spirits of God? Commentators have written that the seven Spirits of God are the Holy Spirit. Now it doesn't specifically say this, but I assume that Jesus was next to the throne of God where He is many times, in the New Testament, described to be. In fact, I think the shining being that Ezekiel described was Jesus, and there is some similarity to how John described Him in the first chapter. So that made me wonder, do the seven Spirits of God or the Holy Spirit surround Jesus all the time, or go wherever He goes? In this case it is interesting that the Spirits of God are portrayed or described by something impersonal.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the four creatures were angels or something else?
- Do you have any ideas about the significance of the lion, calf or bull, and eagle features on the four creatures?
- Do you believe that the seven lamps, the seven Spirits of God are the Holy Spirit?

<sup>115</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev\\_004.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev_004.cfm)

<sup>116</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p463 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA463>



## The Lamb is worthy to open the book with seven seals

### Revelation 5:1-5

[Revelation 5:1](#) And I saw in the right [hand] of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" <sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on the earth or <sup>4</sup> under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. <sup>4</sup> So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. <sup>5</sup> But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." [Revelation 5:1-5 NKJV](#)

This whole chapter is about the worthiness of the Lamb to open the book with seven seals, and to be worshipped and treated the same as God sitting on the throne. So, the chapter opens with John describing God, who sits on the throne, holding a book with seven seals. The first question should be what this book that is sealed shut with seven seals.

John Wesley in his commentary on Revelation describes this "book" as a scroll with seven volumes rolled up in one roll, with each volume sealed and the next rolled on top or around the prior one.<sup>117</sup> The English translation makes it seem like there is writing on both sides, or inside and out, but Uriah Smith suggests that the comma is misplaced and should read "written inside, and on the back sealed up."<sup>118</sup> Personally I don't see any significance in whether there is writing on the outside or not. As for the contents of the scroll, that will be discussed in the coming chapters.

Then an angel spoke with a loud voice asking, who is worthy to open the book? Enough time must have passed with no response to the angel's question that John began to assume that no one was worthy. Does that mean that even God the Father, who sat on the throne was not worthy to open the book? How is God not worthy of anything? Maybe that doesn't include God the Father because He asking if anyone else can open it? No one in heaven, would seem to include Himself, the Holy Spirit and all the angels. No one on earth of course would include all humanity. And no one under the earth I think would represent any human being who has ever lived.

[Philippians 2:10](#) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [Philippians 2:10 NKJV](#)

Paul wrote something similar and perhaps related regarding who Jesus was worthy of being worshipped by, which included those in heaven, on earth and under the earth. I believe "under the earth," refers to fallen angels.<sup>119</sup>

I guess my main question here is whether Jesus is the only one worthy because He died which disqualifies the Father and Holy Spirit? But I don't think so, because God is all powerful. So, if you believe in the Trinity and worthiness to open the scroll is based on being God, then the Holy Spirit should also have been worthy, but where was He? I guess at this point I don't know if Jesus was worthy because He died or because He is God.

<sup>117</sup> Wesley, John. Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, p679, Commentary on Revelation 5:1. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/notes-on-the-revelation-of-jesus-christ/#Chapter+V>

<sup>118</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p471 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA471>

<sup>119</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev\\_005.cfm?a=1172003](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev_005.cfm?a=1172003)

Finally, I have assumed the Lion to be Jesus, but where does this come from? I believe it to come from Jacob's prophecy of his sons, and the tribes of Israel.

[Genesis 49:9](#) Judah [is] a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? [Genesis 49:9 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Do you believe Jesus was worthy because He died and came back to life, or because He is God?
- Do you think there is any other reason the Lion is a symbol for Jesus?
- Why do you think John wept greatly when no one was found to open the book?

### **The Lamb with seven horns, seven eyes, and seven Spirits of God**

#### [Revelation 5:6](#)

[Revelation 5:6](#) And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. [Revelation 5:6 NKJV](#)

It is interesting that in the immediately preceding verse, Jesus is introduced as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Then John sees Him but not as Lion but as a Lamb, but not just a lamb but one with an apparent mortal wound.

I was thinking about the meaning of the horn in this verse, so I did a word search in the NKJV for 'horn.' There were a lot of hits for ram's horn as an instrument (like a trumpet playing taps), used for announcing or calling. There were also a lot of hits for the horn used as a container for oil to anoint. In Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving for her son, she used the word a couple times and the NKJV footnoted it with the word strength [[1 Samuel 2:1-10](#)]. Following are a few more possibly relevant hits.

[2 Samuel 22:3](#) The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the **horn** of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. [2 Samuel 22:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 18:2](#) The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the **horn** of my salvation, my stronghold. [Psalm 18:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 132:17](#) There I will make the **horn** of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed. [Psalm 132:17 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 48:25](#) The **horn** of Moab is cut off, And his arm is broken," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 48:25 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 29:21](#) 'In that day I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth, and I will open your mouth to speak in their midst. Then they shall know that I [am] the LORD.' " [Ezekiel 29:21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:69](#) And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, [Luke 1:69 NKJV](#)

Then of course we can't forget Daniel, where in prophecy the horn represents a king or kingdom or civil power. Recall that Alexander the Great was represented by a large horn and his successors by four lesser horns.

[Daniel 8:21](#) "And the male goat [is] the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that [is] between its eyes [is] the first king. <sup>22</sup> "As for the broken [horn] and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power. [Daniel 8:21-22 NKJV](#)

In Daniel there were other horns, also apparently representing civil powers or governments. So, if you put all of this together, the horn represents power and strength, as it relates to a governing body.

The number seven is used in the Bible many times and has been said to be a number of completion or perfection, perhaps because of how many times it is used to describe attributes of God. So, perhaps we can say that the seven horns on the lamb represent complete or perfect power.

Following this line of reasoning, one might then assume the seven eyes represents His complete or perfect knowledge or vision of all things. But the verse itself tells us what the seven eyes are, which brings us to the seven Spirits of God. This is the fourth different mention of the Seven Spirits of God in Revelation.

[Revelation 1:4](#) John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the **seven Spirits** who are before His throne, [Revelation 1:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 3:1](#) "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the **seven Spirits** of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. [Revelation 3:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:5](#) And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire [were] burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits** of God. [Revelation 4:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:6](#) And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits** of God sent out into all the earth. [Revelation 5:6 NKJV](#)

In chapter 1, there are seven Spirits before the throne. In chapter 3 they weren't connected with anything. Chapter 4 identified them as seven lamps of fire, and this chapter seven eyes. I guess this is a good time to ask the question what the seven Spirits of God are. The word seven seems to be very significant in the Bible occurring 461 times<sup>120</sup> in the NKJV. The seventh day of creation completed the week and was made a Holy day. Probably most relevant though is the Sanctuary described in Exodus which was made after a pattern in heaven. In the Holy place of the Sanctuary was to be a seven-branch candlestick or lampstand. Being in the Sanctuary meant that it represented something in the heavenly temple. So, are the seven lamps of fire in chapter 4 what the seven-branch lampstand is a copy of? Or does the seven-branch lampstand more generally represent the seven Spirits of God?

With two out of the four mentions of the seven Spirits of God coming in conjunction with the throne of God and the last specifically mentioning the one on the throne (God the Father), and the Lamb (the Son), one would kind of expect the Holy Spirit to be present. The main issue with associating the Seven Spirits of God in Revelation with the Holy Spirit is that they are all either inanimate as in the burning lamps or portrayed as some attribute or characteristic of God or Jesus.

<sup>120</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=seven&t=NKJV#s=s\\_primary\\_0\\_1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=seven&t=NKJV#s=s_primary_0_1)

Isaiah mentions something that seems somewhat related.

[Isaiah 11:2](#) The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,  
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
The Spirit of counsel and might,  
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. [Isaiah 11:2 NKJV](#)

Counting the Spirit of the LORD, there are a total of seven spirits mentioned. The website <http://beginningandend.com/spirits-god/> assembled many examples where the Bible stated that the Spirit of the Lord came upon people and enabled them to do certain things. I did a phrase search for "spirit of the lord" and came up with 28 hits in the NKJV. I have assembled a portion of them and as you can see the Spirit of the Lord enabled various abilities.

[Judges 3:10](#) The **Spirit of the LORD** came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. [Judges 3:10 NKJV](#)

[Judges 6:34](#) But the **Spirit of the LORD** came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. [Judges 6:34 NKJV](#)

[Judges 11:29](#) Then the **Spirit of the LORD** came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced [toward] the people of Ammon. [Judges 11:29 NKJV](#)

[Judges 14:6](#) And the **Spirit of the LORD** came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though [he had] nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. [Judges 14:6 NKJV](#)

[Judges 14:19](#) Then the **Spirit of the LORD** came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes [of clothing] to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. [Judges 14:6 NKJV](#)

[Judges 15:14](#) When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the **Spirit of the LORD** came mightily upon him; and the ropes that [were] on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. [Judges 15:14 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 10:6](#) "Then the **Spirit of the LORD** will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. [1 Samuel 10:6 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 16:13](#) Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the **Spirit of the LORD** came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. [1 Samuel 16:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 61:1](#) "The **Spirit of the Lord** GOD [is] upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to [those who are] bound; [Isaiah 61:1 NKJV](#)

[Micah 3:8](#) But truly I am full of power by the **Spirit of the LORD**, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin. [Micah 3:8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:18](#) "The **Spirit of the LORD** [is] upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to [the] poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to [the] captives  
And recovery of sight to [the] blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed; [Luke 4:18 NKJV](#)

Here are some verses that specifically mention the Spirit of God giving wisdom, insight, understanding and knowledge.

[Exodus 28:3](#) "So you shall speak to all [who are] gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the **spirit of wisdom**, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. [Exodus 28:3 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 31:3](#) "And I have filled him with the **Spirit of God**, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all [manner of] workmanship, [Exodus 31:3 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 34:9](#) Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the **spirit of wisdom**, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. [Deuteronomy 34:9 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:11](#) "There is a man in your kingdom in whom [is] the **Spirit of the Holy God**. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father--your father the king--made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, [and] soothsayers. [Daniel 5:11 NKJV](#)

[Acts 6:3](#) "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of [good] reputation, full of the **Holy Spirit and wisdom**, whom we may appoint over this business; [Acts 6:3 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:8](#) for to one is given the word of **wisdom through the Spirit**, to another the word of **knowledge through the same Spirit**, [1 Corinthians 12:8 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 1:17](#) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the **spirit of wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of Him, [Ephesians 1:17 NKJV](#)

I didn't find a verse that specifically said the Spirit of the Lord brought the fear of the Lord, but I think it can be implied by the connection that I found many times between the fear of the Lord and wisdom.

[Job 28:28](#) And to man He said, 'Behold, the **fear of the Lord, that [is] wisdom**, And to depart from evil [is] understanding.' " [Job 28:28 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 111:10](#) The **fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom**; A good understanding have all those who do [His commandments]. His praise endures forever. [Psalm 111:10 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 1:7](#) The **fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge**, [But] fools despise wisdom and instruction. [Proverbs 1:7 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 9:10](#) "The **fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom**, And the knowledge of the Holy One [is] understanding. [Proverbs 9:10 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:33](#) The **fear of the LORD [is] the instruction of wisdom**, And before honor [is] humility. [Proverbs 15:33 NKJV](#)

It probably doesn't need to be said, but fear in this case doesn't mean to be frightened or afraid. It has to do with awe, respect and admiration.

Having gone through all of that, there is another way we could go with the seven Spirits of God. Paul in Galatians mentions seven fruits of the Spirit.

[Galatians 5:22](#) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [Galatians 5:22 NKJV](#)

But that's not all. Paul talks about the gifts of the Spirit in another place, where he mentions wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, effecting of miracles, prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

[1 Corinthians 12:1](#) Now concerning spiritual [gifts], brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: <sup>2</sup> You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup> There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. <sup>7</sup> But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit [of all]: <sup>8</sup> for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another [different] kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. [1 Corinthians 12:1-11 NKJV](#)

In the third set of gifts of the Spirit, there are more than seven, and there is some overlap with the ones from Isaiah. What I am beginning to comprehend is that if all good gifts come from God as James said, that we cannot limit God's gifts or fruit of the Spirit just to what has been mentioned.

[James 1:17](#) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. [James 1:17 NKJV](#)

I think then that the seven Spirits of God that John saw represent all the gifts that God can give through His Spirit. I think that we cannot limit the spiritual gifts of God to only seven, so maybe in this case, the seven Spirits of God can represent the perfect gift(s) of God for each one of us.

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What do you believe?

- If Jesus has the seven horns representing power, why is he represented as a lamb and not a ram?
- If the seven eyes on the Lamb represent the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit as some say, does that mean the Lamb doesn't have perfect vision without the Holy Spirit?
- Isaiah 11 appears to be about Jesus, the Messiah. Does that mean He needs the Holy Spirit to have those characteristics, or are they from His own Spirit, the Spirit of God?

## Worthy is the Lamb

### [Revelation 5:7-14](#)

[Revelation 5:7](#) Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

<sup>8</sup> Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

<sup>13</sup> And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power [Be] to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

<sup>14</sup> Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. [Revelation 5:7-14 NKJV](#)

Each of the twenty-four elders was holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense. The incense, we are told represents the prayers of the saints. I think this connects with the sanctuary service where there was an altar on which incense was burnt. In that case the altar was right in front of the curtain between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, which allowed the incense to rise up over the screen or veil.

[Exodus 40:5](#) "You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. [Exodus 40:5 NKJV](#)

Does that mean the twenty-four elders play some intercessory role with our prayers to God? I don't think so, but I think that they are a subset of the saints on earth and hence represent us.

Do the harps represent something or are they just instruments for creating praise music before God?

Verse 9 clarifies something here that I wondered at the start of the chapter? The Lamb is worthy to break the seals and open the book because He was slain. So, if He is equal to the Father and can only open the book because He was slain, does that mean the Father who was sitting on the throne holding the book was unworthy to open it? Somehow, I have a hard time accepting that God the Father is unworthy of doing anything, although there is something the Son did that He did not do. Maybe the answer to this will become clear when we learn what the contents of the book are and what it symbolizes.

What does it mean that those who are saved by the Lamb's sacrifice will be a kingdom and priests to God? The first chapter of Revelation used similar language.

[Revelation 1:6](#) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him [be] glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. [Revelation 1:6 NKJV](#)

At the time of the Exodus, see what God told the young nation of Israel.

[Exodus 19:1](#) In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came [to] the Wilderness of Sinai. <sup>2</sup> For they had departed from Rephidim, had come [to] the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

<sup>3</sup> And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: <sup>4</sup> 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. <sup>5</sup> 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth [is] Mine. <sup>6</sup> 'And you shall be to Me a **kingdom of priests** and a holy nation.' These [are] the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." [Exodus 19:1-6 NKJV](#)

He wanted them to be a kingdom, and a nation, but not just that, I believe God wanted them to act as priests to the rest of the world. That got me to thinking, what was the role of a priest and who could become one? In the Old Testament, priests were the only people who could enter the tabernacle or temple. They were to perform the tasks associated with the temple that were a repeating symbol of how God would ultimately deal with sin. They also lead out in the national feasts and worship services that God had instructed. Even as sinners cannot enter heaven and go before the presence of God, so people who were not priests could not enter the sanctuary. Even though priests were no less sinful, they were symbols of Jesus who though no less human, could stand before God on our behalf. As there was only one Priest who could enter the most holy place, a symbol of the throne room of God, the one and only Son of God would go before the throne of God on our behalf. As priests facilitated the animal sacrifices, both they and the blood of animals were symbolic of Jesus and His blood shed for the actual atonement for sin. As for who could become a priest, only direct descendants of Aaron could be priests. That is not to be confused with the entire tribe of Levi, Aaron's tribe, who were selected by God to be in charge of the entire Sanctuary structure, especially including the transportation of it. The ritual of animal sacrifices, representing the death of Jesus was introduced shortly after sin. That means it was not only a Jewish ritual. By the time the Israelite priesthood was established, I believe that the meaning of animal sacrifices had been completely distorted. God needed someone to set the record straight and I believe the Israelite nation was originally intended to do that. I don't know if God originally intended the whole nation to have full access to the Sanctuary or not, but I think He must have wanted them to at least be able to explain to the rest of the world the concept of God's sacrifice to save humanity.

So, then, what would be the purpose of having a kingdom of priests in heaven, after sin has been eradicated? Well, the direct correlation to the Jewish sanctuary would be that they would serve in the Temple in heaven, after all it did say in Revelation that they would be "priests to our God." This next reason could perhaps be an argument in favor of other created beings, but extending the analogy from Old Testament Israel, maybe those redeemed from sin would educate the rest of God's creation about how they were saved from sin.

This whole chapter has made such a big emphasis on the worthiness of the Lamb. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." [\[Verse 12\]](#) I feel like there is an underlying assumption, that everyone already knows God is worthy of everything, but there is an emphasis on saying that the Lamb is equally worthy of everything that God is worthy of. [Verse 9](#) even seems to indicate that part of the worthiness of the Lamb is tied up in the fact that He died to save humanity for God.



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What do you believe?

- Do you think the Lamb is worthy of something that God the Father is not?
- Do you think the Lamb is worthy because He was slain or because He is God?
- What do you think it means that those who are redeemed will be priests to our God?

## The first seal

### [Revelation 6:1-2](#)

[Revelation 6:1](#) Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." <sup>2</sup> And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. [Revelation 6:1-2 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Voice like thunder*

When the Lamb broke the first seal several things happened. First, one of the four living creatures that we read about in [chapter 4](#) spoke with a voice of thunder. This is a little interesting because it seems we have heard of God speaking with a voice of thunder.

[Job 37:2](#) Hear attentively the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling [that] comes from His mouth. [Job 37:2 NKJV](#)

[Job 40:9](#) Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? [Job 40:9 NKJV](#)

### *Horse*

It should be obvious that the horse and rider also known as cavalry in war can provide a significant advantage in war. The strength, speed, size, weight, and flying hooves of the horse alone were a huge advantage to the cavalryman. But in addition to that, they had the height advantage giving them better visibility and their body and head were virtually out of reach of the foot soldier.

What else does the bible tell us about cavalry?

[Exodus 15:1](#) Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! [Exodus 15:1 NKJV](#)

[Job 39:18](#) When she lifts herself on high, She scorns the horse and its rider. [Job 39:18 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 33:17](#) A horse [is] a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver [any] by its great strength. [Psalm 33:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 76:6](#) At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep. [Psalm 76:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 147:10](#) He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. [Psalm 147:10 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 21:31](#) The horse [is] prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance [is] of the LORD. [Proverbs 21:31 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:21](#) With you I will break in pieces the horse and its rider; With you I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider; [Jeremiah 51:21 NKJV](#)

[Amos 2:15](#) He shall not stand who handles the bow, The swift of foot shall not escape, Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself. [Amos 2:15 NKJV](#)

[Joshua 24:12](#) 'I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, [also] the two kings of the Amorites, [but] not with your sword or with your bow. [Joshua 24:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 44:6](#) For I will not trust in my bow, Nor shall my sword save me. [Psalm 44:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 46:9](#) He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. [Psalm 46:9 NKJV](#)

What I see in these verses is that, yes the horse is known to give advantage in war but it matters not if going against God. He repeatedly let the Israelites know that He could give them victory even against insurmountable odds.

### *Bow*

But in addition to the horse, John mentioned a bow. Logically, one of the best equalizers against cavalry was the bow and arrow.

First off, bow can mean two completely different things, one being used to shoot an arrow, but the other to kneel down before someone or a god. The Hebrew word that was translated to bow, the instrument to shoot arrows is [קֶשֶׁת, qesheth](#)<sup>121</sup>. This word was translated to bow 68 times in the KJV. The earliest use in this context is translated bowshot in the story of Hagar and Ismael, referring to a distance that an arrow can be shot.

[Genesis 21:16](#) Then she went and sat down across from [him] at a distance of about a **bowshot**; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite [him], and lifted her voice and wept. [Genesis 21:16 NKJV](#)

The second is from the story of Isaac planning to give the birthright blessing to Esau.

[Genesis 27:3](#) "Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your **bow**, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. [Genesis 27:3 NKJV](#)

The bow was mentioned symbolically in Jacob's final blessing on Joseph.

[Genesis 49:22](#) "Joseph [is] a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall. <sup>23</sup> The archers have bitterly grieved him, Shot [at him] and hated him. <sup>24</sup> But his **bow** remained in strength, And the arms of his hands were made strong By the hands of the Mighty [God] of Jacob (From there [is] the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), <sup>25</sup> By the God of your father who will help you, And by the Almighty who will bless you [With] blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb. <sup>26</sup> The blessings of your father Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers. [Genesis 49:22-26 NKJV](#)

Bronze bows were mentioned a few times in symbolism. Even as bronze weapons would be better than ones made with wood or other weaker material, in theory, a bronze bow would be better than the alternative, if one could draw it.

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=H7198&t=NKJV>

[2 Samuel 22:35](#) He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. [2 Samuel 22:35 NKJV](#)

[Job 20:24](#) He will flee from the iron weapon; A bronze bow will pierce him through. [Job 20:24 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 18:34](#) He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. [Psalm 18:34 NKJV](#)

Though the bow gives an advantage in war, it is still nothing compared to the power of God.

[Psalm 46:9](#) He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. [Psalm 46:9 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 76:3](#) There He broke the arrows of the bow, The shield and sword of battle. Selah [Psalm 76:3 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 49:35](#) "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, The foremost of their might. [Jeremiah 49:35 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 50:29](#) "Call together the archers against Babylon. All you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around; Let none of them escape. Repay her according to her work; According to all she has done, do to her; For she has been proud against the LORD, Against the Holy One of Israel. [Jeremiah 50:29 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:56](#) Because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon, And her mighty men are taken. Every one of their bows is broken; For the LORD [is] the God of recompense, He will surely repay. [Jeremiah 51:56 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 1:5](#) It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." [Hosea 1:5 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 2:18](#) In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And [with] the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely. [Hosea 2:18 NKJV](#)

[Amos 2:15](#) He shall not stand who handles the bow, The swift of foot shall not escape, Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself. [Amos 2:15 NKJV](#)

God doesn't need the bow to give his people victory.

[Hosea 1:7](#) Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the LORD their God, And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses or horsemen." [Hosea 1:7 NKJV](#)

In the New Testament, the word bow is translated from [τόξον, toxon](#)<sup>122</sup>, and only used this once.

In summary, the bow is an instrument of war. Symbolically it is often mentioned in connection with strength, power and victory. However, in contrast with the power of God, the bow is useless.

### **Crown**

Crown was translated from the word [στέφανος, stephanos](#)<sup>123</sup>, which was used 18 times in the KJV and always translated to crown. Strong's definition is:

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G5115&t=NKJV>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4735&t=NKJV>

from an apparently primary στέφω stéphō (to twine or wreath); a chaplet (as a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor generally; but more conspicuous and elaborate than the simple fillet, G1238), literally or figuratively:—crown.<sup>124</sup>

Even though a golden crown worn by a king might be the first thing that comes to mind, that may not have been the more common use of the word. Perhaps a king's crown would be specified as a golden crown, or a bejeweled crown. 4 of the 18 times were in reference to the crown of thorns that Jesus wore. This type of crown seems to be consistent with the definition given except that the material was thorny and not green and leafy.

[Matthew 27:29](#) When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put [it] on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" [Matthew 27:29 NKJV](#)

There was definitely the idea that the saved would wear crown's in heaven.

[1 Corinthians 9:25](#) And everyone who competes [for the prize] is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a perishable crown, but we [for] an imperishable [crown]. [1 Corinthians 9:25 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 2:19](#) For what [is] our hope, or joy, or **crown** of rejoicing? [Is it] not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? [1 Thessalonians 2:19 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 4:8](#) Finally, there is laid up for me the **crown** of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. [2 Timothy 4:8 NKJV](#)

[James 1:12](#) Blessed [is] the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the **crown** of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. [James 1:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 5:4](#) and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the **crown** of glory that does not fade away. [1 Peter 5:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:10](#) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw [some] of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the **crown** of life. [Revelation 2:10 NKJV](#)

The following verse from a couple chapters earlier specifically describes crowns of gold.

[Revelation 4:4](#) Around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. [Revelation 4:4 NKJV](#)

It seems the crown, whether made of greenery or gold was generally worn by those who were victorious.

## Conclusion

We finally get to see what was hidden by the first seal. A conquering rider with a crown riding on a white horse. My first thought is that the white must represent something good. If the white horse symbolizes something good and pure, it would make sense that what is being conquered is the opposite or at least not good.

There are many different interpretations for the seven seals of Revelation.

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4735&t=NKJV>

Now a question that came to mind was whether the seven seals predict a timeline of events? I believe the messages to the seven churches covers the entire history of the church. So, does it make sense to have another symbol also cover some or all of the same time? If you look at Daniel, there is no question that there were three different dreams that covered the same world history. In fact, it essentially covered the history of the world from his time to the end. I believe that Revelation is essentially doing the same thing from a different perspective. Maxwell pointed out the following:

But whereas the seven letters deal almost exclusively with the Christian church and the seven seals deal mainly with Western Christianized civilization, the seven trumpets are concerned with all three of the great world religions that worship the God of the Bible.<sup>125</sup>

Having just gone through the seven churches, it should not be difficult to see the parallel of this first symbol with the message to the church of Ephesus. Recall that we associated that message with the apostolic period, from the ascension of Christ up to the death of the last apostle John, around the year 100. The act of conquering is an appropriate symbol of the rapid growth of the Church during that period, and white a symbol of the purity of the church under the first generation of leaders who walked and talked with Jesus. I believe the horse and bow could represent advantages or increased odds the apostolic church possessed to accomplish their mission. I think the ability to perform miracles could also be seen as an advantage.

What do you believe?

- Do you think when a voice of thunder is heard from the throne it is always one of the creatures acting as a spokesperson for God?
- If I am correct in the historical timeline interpretation again, why go back to the beginning and start again with another symbol?
- Can you think of any other advantages the apostolic church had in spreading the Gospel?

## The second seal

### [Revelation 6:3-4](#)

[Revelation 6:3](#) When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." <sup>4</sup> Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that [people] should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. [Revelation 6:3-4 NKJV](#)

Continuing the timeline interpretation seems really easy when comparing the red, the sword and the slaying with the persecution of the second church. I reference the same sources I used in [Message to the Church in Smyrna](#), which show that the period of persecution ended around 313, when the Edict of Milan legalized Christianity. This occurred during the reign of Constantine the Great.<sup>126 127 128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p225.

<sup>126</sup> Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire – Vol II*. New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1876, p252. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA252>

<sup>127</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution\\_of\\_Christians\\_in\\_the\\_Roman\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians_in_the_Roman_Empire)

<sup>128</sup> Goodrich. p50. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA50>

## Examining the symbols

### *Red horse with a sword*

We have the symbol of a horse again but a sword instead of a bow. So, what about the symbol of the sword? The word was used more than 400 times in the NKJV in a variety of ways.

- Literally as the most basic instrument of war
- Symbolically as an instrument of death
- Literally or as a symbol of someone's power over others
- Even though they had been promised protection or victory over the sword of their enemies, if they disobeyed, they would be punished (subjugated) by the sword of their enemies
- Angels of God wielded swords to block a path (tree of life in Eden [[Genesis 3:24](#)], Balaam [[Numbers 22:23](#)])
- Hidden or disguised instrument of death (Ehud [[Judges 3:16](#)], implied Joab [[2 Samuel 3:26-30](#)])
- In a census, men who were of fighting age were said to be those who could draw a sword
- When the Israelites were in subjugation to the Philistines in the time of king Saul, this was partly accomplished by keeping them from having access to swords [[1 Samuel 13:22](#)]
- A symbol of civil authority [[Romans 13:4](#)]
- Symbol of death
- Symbol of God's power [[Psalm 17:13](#), [Isaiah 27:1](#)]
- Symbol of the tongue when people speak rashly or say hurtful or deceitful things [[Psalm 57:4](#), [Proverbs 12:18](#), [Proverbs 25:18](#)]
- Symbol of the tongue speaking truth [[Isaiah 49:2](#)]
- Symbol of the Word of God or the Bible [[Ephesians 6:7](#), [Hebrews 4:12](#)]
- Sticking out of Jesus' mouth in John's vision, presumably symbolizing the word of God [[Revelation 1:6](#), [Revelation 2:12,16](#)]

In this case the sword could symbolize the beginnings of the written Word of God, which helped Christianity to continue conquering in spite of the persecution.

### *Take peace from the earth*

In this seal, it says peace was taken from the earth by the horse. So, if the horse represented the side of Christianity, then how was it responsible for taking peace from the earth? Well, by standing firm for what they believed, in opposition to the Empire, they were taking peace from the earth. Jesus also said that He did not come to bring peace but a sword.

[Matthew 10:34](#) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

[Matthew 10:34 NKJV](#)

But I don't think Jesus literally meant that He or His followers should wield it, because He later told Peter to put his sword away. I believe He meant that the spread of the Gospel would be revolutionary, and as a result the sword would be brought against them.

### *Kill one another*

But how were the opposing sides killing each other? In this period, I don't believe that Christianity was literally killing anyone. But in the first seal, the conquering horse was a symbol of the spread of Christianity. I also considered the symbolism of the red horse to still be conquering, which would also include killing (of course symbolically). But does it make sense to take the killing one another symbolically in one direction and literally in the other? Maybe I don't

have to. If both sides are killing each other in a literal battle, and being militarily successful symbolized the growth for Christianity, then the successes on the opposing side could represent some victories for them, and setbacks for the Church.

## Conclusion

Does the horse symbolize an advantage for the church again? It's hard to think of persecution as an advantage, but as I mentioned in the Message to the Church in Smyrna, it kept the church pure. But which way should the horse advantage be assigned, because the persecuting side had the advantage of the Roman Empire. It probably makes the most sense to apply the horse symbol in the same way as the first seal.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the sword is mentioned so many times in a book such as the Bible?
- How would you explain the spread of Christianity in this era as taking away peace?
- Do you have a different explanation for the symbolism of both sides slaying each other?

## The third seal

### [Revelation 6:5-6](#)

[Revelation 6:5](#) When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." [Revelation 6:5-6 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Pair of scales*

What can be said about the pair of scales? The type of scale spoken of here is a balancing counterweight scale. In other words, if you wanted to weigh one pound of something, a known one-pound weight would be used on one side and the material being weighed would be piled on the other side until the two sides balanced. Let's take a look at what the Bible says about scales.

[Proverbs 20:23](#) Diverse weights [are] an abomination to the LORD, And dishonest scales [are] not good. [Proverbs 20:23 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 46:6](#) They lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship. [Isaiah 46:6 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 16:11](#) Honest weights and scales [are] the LORD'S; All the weights in the bag [are] His work. [Proverbs 16:11 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 40:12](#) Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance? [Isaiah 40:12 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 32:10](#) "And I signed the deed and sealed [it], took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. [Jeremiah 32:10 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 5:1](#) "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass [it] over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the [hair]. [Ezekiel 5:1 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:27](#) "TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; [Daniel 5:27 NKJV](#)

[Amos 8:5](#) Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit, [Amos 8:5 NKJV](#)

[Micah 6:11](#) Shall I count pure [those] with the wicked scales, And with the bag of deceitful weights? [Micah 6:11 NKJV](#)

First of all, is there something special meant by a "pair" of scales? Does the word scale include both sides of the balance and hence scales or a pair of scales mean multiple of those?

Four of the nine references were concerned with fairness and honesty and not cheating people with the scale. Three more are used in a pretty literal sense of simply weighing something. The last two are symbolic, which is possibly where we should look for the meaning. Isaiah seems to be about the omniscience of God, and how He just knows every detail of our world. Daniel was literally quoting the words of God that were used in passing sentence on king Belshazar. It was essentially like a sentence being passed on a defendant by a judge. But what was the counterweight that he was weighed against and did he know what was expected of him? Let's see what Daniel said to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar before he was also judged by God.

[Daniel 4:27](#) Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by [being] righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to [the] poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity." [Daniel 4:27 NKJV](#)

It seems that for those who have been placed in a position of power over others, showing mercy to their subjects is not only pleasing to God, but possibly expected as well. I think that civil powers are in a position of enforcing laws over their subjects which also includes passing judgment in a court of law. So, the scales could represent the merging or even balancing of church and state.

### *Wheat and barley*

Next, what about the wheat and barley? What does the bible say about wheat and barley and also their cost? Wheat flour was obviously the primary ingredient for bread, which was considered a main staple of the diet. In fact, the words bread and water were found 38 verses in the NKJV, and I would say they were mostly used in the context of food, survival and hospitality. The word wheat was used 49 times in the NKJV starting with Jacob in Genesis. A quarter of them seemed to be associated with the wheat harvest.

- Reuben found madrakes at the time of the wheat harvest [[Genesis 30:14](#)]
- In the plague of hail that fell on Egypt, but not the Israelites, the barley harvest was ruined but not the wheat because it's harvest was later (logically it would seem the wheat shouldn't even have been planted yet if it wasn't destroyed) [[Exodus 9:32](#)]
- The Feast of Weeks was celebrated at the time of the first fruits of the wheat harvest [[Exodus 34:22](#)]
- An angel came to Gideon when he was beating out the wheat [[Judges 6:11](#)]
- Samson visited his wife at the time of the wheat harvest [[Judges 15:1](#)]
- Ruth gleaned barley then wheat in the fields of Boaz [[Ruth 2:23](#)]
- The Ark of the Covenant was returned by the Philistines at the time of the wheat harvest [[1 Samuel 6:13](#)]
- The Israelites asked for a king at the time of the wheat harvest [[1 Samuel 12:17](#)]



- Israel was punished by a plague because David had taken a census at the time of the wheat harvest [[1 Chronicles 21:20](#)]
- Jesus used the wheat harvest as a symbol of taking the saved to heaven [[Matthew 3:12](#), [Matthew 13:30](#), [Luke 3:17](#)]

Wheat or wheat flour were one of the offerings accepted at the sanctuary [[Leviticus 14](#)]. Wheat or flour was one of the forms of payment from Solomon to king Hiram for lumber and services [[1 Kings 5:11](#), [2 Chronicles 2:10](#)].

Barley was mentioned 36 times in the NKJV, and 13 of them with wheat in the same verse. One can assume from the following two verses that barley was cheaper than wheat.

[2 Kings 7:16](#) Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was [sold] for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. [2 Kings 7:16 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:6](#) And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." [Revelation 6:6 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 4:28](#) mentions barley being brought for horses. Some have said that since barley was cheaper than wheat, it was used as food for animals, which may be true, but I found many mentions of it being used as food for people as well. Perhaps the poor tended to use it more for human consumption than the wealthy. The verse in Kings quoted seems somewhat relevant because it talks about wheat and barley being sold. In that case there was a famine in Samaria in the Northern Kingdom of Israel because the city was under siege by the Arameans. People were starving and terrible things were going on including a mother killing her own child for food. Elisha predicted that on the next day that flour and barley would be sold for apparently much less than it was costing during the famine and his prediction came true. From the parable of Jesus about the laborers in the vineyard, a denarius was commonly accepted as a day's wages [[Matthew 20:2-3](#)]. Paying a day's wages for a quart of wheat seems pretty expensive, so maybe a food shortage is being communicated in this verse in Revelation. The author of an article on christianstogether.net did some caloric computations and showed that it would take 100% of a common laborer's wages to feed a family of 3.5.<sup>129</sup>

But if the wheat and barley are symbolic, as the horse and scales, then we should not necessarily assume this prophecy predicts literal famine, but a shortage of whatever the two symbols represent. I have shown that wheat is kind of synonymous with bread which Jesus equated with His body, which He sacrificed for our salvation [[Matthew 26:26](#), [Mark 14:22](#), [Luke 22:19](#)]. But what is barley symbolic of? It was symbolic of something in a dream when God used Gideon to free the Israelites from Midianite oppression.

[Judges 7:9](#) It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. <sup>10</sup> "But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, <sup>11</sup> "and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who [were] in the camp. <sup>12</sup> Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. <sup>13</sup> And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: [To my] surprise, a loaf of **barley** bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." <sup>14</sup> Then his companion answered and said, "This [is] nothing else but the sword of

<sup>129</sup> [https://www.christianstogether.net/Articles/111739/Christians\\_Together\\_in/Christian\\_Life/Is\\_there\\_any/A\\_quart\\_of.aspx](https://www.christianstogether.net/Articles/111739/Christians_Together_in/Christian_Life/Is_there_any/A_quart_of.aspx)

Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." [Judges 7:9-14 NKJV](#)

Barley meal was part of a strange ceremony called a grain offering of jealousy. If a man suspected his wife of cheating on him but did not have any evidence, he could bring an offering of barley meal to the Sanctuary and the priest would perform some ritual that I believe God Himself must have intervened in to affect the judgment.

[Numbers 5:11](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, <sup>13</sup> 'and a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed that she has defiled herself, and [there was] no witness against her, nor was she caught—<sup>14</sup> 'if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she has not defiled herself—<sup>15</sup> 'then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, because it [is] a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

<sup>16</sup> 'And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD. <sup>17</sup> 'The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put [it] into the water. <sup>18</sup> 'Then the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD, uncover the woman's head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which [is] the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. <sup>19</sup> 'And the priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness [while] under your husband's [authority], be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. <sup>20</sup> "But if you have gone astray [while] under your husband's [authority], and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you"—<sup>21</sup> then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman—"the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh rot and your belly swell; <sup>22</sup> "and may this water that causes the curse go into your stomach, and make [your] belly swell and [your] thigh rot." Then the woman shall say, "Amen, so be it."

<sup>23</sup> 'Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape [them] off into the bitter water. <sup>24</sup> 'And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her [to become] bitter. <sup>25</sup> 'Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, shall wave the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar; <sup>26</sup> 'and the priest shall take a handful of the offering, as its memorial portion, burn [it] on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. <sup>27</sup> 'When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her [and become] bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people. <sup>28</sup> 'But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she shall be free and may conceive children. [Numbers 5:11-28 NKJV](#)

I know some of you may be thinking, how awful is this that any man could just accuse his wife of being unfaithful without any evidence. But the way that I chose to look at this is that in that time and culture, women were often treated like property and before this law, any man could have accused his wife of being unfaithful and probably just act on his jealousy without any mediation or judgment. What I see here is that every time this ceremony was performed, there was a miracle from God that caused the right outcome. In effect, God was literally coming to the aid and protection of women who were innocently accused. But this has been quite a digression from the main subject.

Is there any significance to the barley in this ceremony? To initiate the accusation, the man was to bring some barley meal but not put any oil or frankincense on it. This distinction was made because normally the grain offering was to be made with oil and frankincense in it.

[Leviticus 2:1](#) 'When anyone offers a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be [of] fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. [Leviticus 2:1 NKJV](#)

But why the distinction? Oil can represent the Holy Spirit. Frankincense was used in the incense that was burned in the Sanctuary. Perhaps the grain represented what the person brought to the equation, but the oil and frankincense were needed to make it acceptable to God.

### *Oil and wine*

Oil was used 222 times in the NKJV, surprisingly the words olive(s) and oil only occurred 12 times in the same verse. Oil is a very useful commodity today, and possibly even more so in Bible times. Oil was used for cooking, fuel for light, medicinally, cosmetically, ceremonially (anointing), to mention a few.

### Cooking or baking

[Exodus 29:23](#) "one loaf of bread, one cake [made with] oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that [is] before the LORD; [Exodus 29:23 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 7:12](#) 'If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. [Leviticus 7:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 17:12](#) So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I [am] gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." [1 Kings 17:12 NKJV](#)

### Fuel for light

[Exodus 25:6](#) "oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; [Exodus 25:6 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 27:20](#) "And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. [Exodus 27:20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 25:3](#) "Those who [were] foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. [Matthew 25:3-4 NKJV](#)

Ceremonially (anointing) was probably the most common use of oil mentioned in the Bible. The following are just a few examples.

[Genesis 28:18](#) Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. [Genesis 28:18 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 29:7](#) "And you shall take the anointing oil, pour [it] on his head, and anoint him. [Exodus 29:7 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:13](#) And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed [them]. [Mark 6:13 NKJV](#)

[James 5:14](#) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [James 5:14 NKJV](#)

### Medicinally

[Luke 10:34](#) "So he went to [him] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [Luke 10:34 NKJV](#)

### Cosmetically

[Deuteronomy 33:24](#) And of Asher he said: "Asher [is] most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil. [Deuteronomy 33:24 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 14:2](#) And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. [2 Samuel 14:2 NKJV](#)

[Esther 2:12](#) Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. [Esther 2:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 104:15](#) And wine [that] makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make [his] face shine, And bread [which] strengthens man's heart. [Psalm 104:15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:37](#) And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that [Jesus] sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, [Luke 7:37 NKJV](#)

### Payment or tribute

[1 Kings 5:11](#) And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand kors of wheat [as] food for his household, and twenty kors of pressed oil. Thus Solomon gave to Hiram year by year. [1 Kings 5:11 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 2:10](#) And indeed I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut timber, twenty thousand kors of ground wheat, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil. [2 Chronicles 2:10 NKJV](#)

[Ezra 3:7](#) They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia. [Ezra 3:7 NKJV](#)

But maybe more interesting is to look at the places where oil and wine were mentioned in the same verse which occurred 38 times. The following are a few of them and interestingly there are even several that mention grain or wheat as well.

[Leviticus 23:13](#) 'Its **grain** offering [shall be] two-tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with **oil**, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering [shall be] of **wine**, one-fourth of a hin. [Leviticus 23:13 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 18:12](#) "All the best of the **oil**, all the best of the new **wine** and the **grain**, their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. [Numbers 18:12 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 7:13](#) "And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your **grain** and your new **wine** and your **oil**, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. [Deuteronomy 7:13 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 9:29](#) [Some] of them [were] appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary, and over the fine **flour** and the **wine** and the **oil** and the incense and the spices. [1 Chronicles 9:29 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 32:28](#) storehouses for the harvest of **grain**, **wine**, and **oil**; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. [2 Chronicles 32:28 NKJV](#)

[Nehemiah 10:39](#) For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the **grain**, of the new **wine** and the **oil**, to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary [are], [where] the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers [are]; and we will not neglect the house of our God. [Nehemiah 10:39 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 31:12](#) Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, Streaming to the goodness of the LORD--For **wheat** and new **wine** and **oil**, For the young of the flock and the herd; Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall sorrow no more at all. [Jeremiah 31:12 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 2:22](#) The earth shall answer With **grain**, With new **wine**, And with **oil**; They shall answer Jezreel. [Hosea 2:22 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:24](#) The threshing floors shall be full of **wheat**, And the vats shall overflow with new **wine** and **oil**. [Joel 2:24 NKJV](#)

[Haggai 1:11](#) "For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the **grain** and the new **wine** and the **oil**, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of [your] hands." [Haggai 1:11 NKJV](#)

It appears that of the 236 times that wine is mentioned in the Bible, 43 of them were "new wine." I believe that "new wine" refers to unfermented grape juice, though I do not mean to imply that all other mentions of wine referred to fermented juice or alcoholic beverage. It is hard to imagine that in the instances where wine was part of an offering or religious ceremony, that it would be fermented.

## Conclusion

Continuing with the timeline interpretation again seems fairly straight forward. The symbol of a black horse and a corrupt church seem to fit well. An interesting difference to note is that the rider of this horse is not carrying a weapon of war as in the previous two seals, which I interpreted as symbolic of the spread of Christianity.

I'm thinking now that maybe the wheat and the barley being sold for so much money represented the idea that becoming a Christian in that era became very profitable. During this period, I believe that it became practically necessary to declare yourself a Christian in order to hold any high government position. But at the same time, many were not truly being converted and hence hurting the Holy Spirit (oil) and not truly accepting the shed blood of Jesus which is symbolized by wine or grape juice.

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What do you believe?

- It seemed that when the first two seals were broken, one of the four creatures spoke, but for this seal John said the voice seemed to come from the center of the four creatures. Do you think it was God Himself speaking?
- Why do you think this black horse was not said to be conquering?
- What do you think about the symbols of the scale, wheat, barley, oil and wine?

## The fourth seal

### [Revelation 6:7-8](#)

[Revelation 6:7](#) When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."<sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. [Revelation 6:7-8 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

#### *Pale*

The fourth seal brings us a fourth horse which is described as being pale or sickly. Interestingly though, if you look at the Greek word, [χλωρός, chlōros](#)<sup>130</sup>, from which this color is translated, it is used more times as green. Twice as green grass and once as green thing, I believe to mean plants. I think you could see the relationship to the word chlorophyll which has to do with the process by which green plants absorb energy from light. But this doesn't have to completely throw out the sickly translation of this verse because, there is an expression, "you look a little green," which means you don't look well.

#### *Death and Hades*

Now let's examine some of the other symbols. The rider was called Death, and Hades followed, and both of them had authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, pestilence or wild beasts. This was the only one of the four riders who was named. It is interesting that Hades is symbolized as a being.

In most of the mentions of Hades in the New Testament, it is portrayed as a place.

[Matthew 11:23](#) "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to **Hades**; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. [Matthew 11:23 NKJV](#)

Because Jesus spent so much of His ministry in Capernaum and they did not accept Him as the Messiah, they would go to Hades. Here the town is spoken of as an individual who would also be punished as a being. Hades is pictured here as the alternative to going to heaven. The next one is from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus which also depicted heaven and Hades as the two alternatives for where people will end up.

[Luke 16:23](#) "And being in torments in **Hades**, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. [Luke 16:23 NKJV](#)

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<sup>130</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5515&t=NKJV>

People were familiar with cities with walls and gates and the inhabitants coming out and fighting against each other. So, Jesus spoke of Hades as a place with gates that would be the enemy of the church, but ultimately would not prevail.

[Matthew 16:18](#) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of **Hades** shall not prevail against it. [Matthew 16:18 NKJV](#)

In Acts, Luke mentions a couple times that Jesus' body was not abandoned to Hades, I believe meaning that He was resurrected back to life.

[Acts 2:27](#) For You will not leave my soul in **Hades**, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. [Acts 2:27 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:31](#) "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in **Hades**, nor did His flesh see corruption. [Acts 2:31 NKJV](#)

Some like to think of Hades as Hell, but clearly Jesus wouldn't have gone to Hell after death, if that was even a place where the wicked went when they died. These verses seem to indicate that when He died He went to Hades but didn't stay because He came back to life. I think this simply portrays Hades as the grave or where you end up when you die.

There are two other places in Revelation that mention Hades and interestingly they all mention death as well.

[Revelation 1:18](#) "I [am] He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of **Hades** and of **Death**. [Revelation 1:18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:13](#) The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and **Death** and **Hades** delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [Revelation 20:13-14 NKJV](#)

In the first chapter of Revelation, Jesus is said to have the keys of death and Hades, meaning He could not be locked in there and that He could get out. Also meaning that He came back to life after being dead. Near the end of Revelation, they are mentioned again, with both death and Hades seeming to be spoken of as beings, who had to give up their possessions (the dead), and were then destroyed in the lake of fire. In the language of the Old Testament, the equivalent word was sheole. We know this because the verses in Acts written by Luke were quotations from Old Testament passages.

[Psalm 16:10](#) For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. [Psalm 16:10 NKJV](#)

In the chapter I wrote on [Hell](#), I decided that the uses of the word sheole were mostly consistent with the grave. Jesus went to the grave but it couldn't hold Him. I had a thought that maybe death could represent the first death and Hades the second. Then casting them into the lake of fire could represent the end of the first and second death. But the verse in [Revelation 20:13](#) that mentions death and Hades giving up their dead sort of blew that idea out of the water, because there is no general resurrection from the second death. And speaking of water, how are the dead from the sea different from the dead in general. Obviously, those lost at sea were not buried in the ground, and furthermore, those they left behind don't even know where in the world they are. If Hades represents the grave, meaning literally the ground, then those who died at sea could be classified differently from those who were buried

in a known place in the ground. I think the point may be that Jesus in Revelation 1, or the creature speaking in the fourth seal are wanting to include every person that every lived who is not saved. This includes those who were buried in the ground, burned to ashes, eaten by wild animals, lost at sea and any other type of death you could think of. I think the point is that God doesn't need a body to resurrect a person. He can create a body and reanimate it with its original soul, making it the same person. So, in the context of this fourth seal, which is named Death and is accompanied by Hades or the grave, it could represent deaths where a body is left as well as death such as being burned up or eaten by animals where no body is left.

#### *Fourth of the earth*

Next let's look at the fourth of the earth that Death and Hades had power over. A fourth could be interpreted many ways, such as population, land area, ethnicity, nationality, social status, and I could go on and on. Since I have aligned this period with the dark ages where the church killed dissenters, calling them heretics, let's examine the numbers of such people that were killed. There is no way to really know for sure, and estimates vary widely. Many admittedly protestant sources have quoted the estimate of tens of millions.<sup>131 132</sup> Others including pro church sources have quoted much fewer, but not even the Catholic Church itself denies that such persecution and killing took place. There is plenty of disagreement in the following quotes about the numbers, but in the sources from which these quotes are obtained, there is a clear picture of the restriction of human choice and conscience by the church.

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. [Dowling, History of Romanism](#)<sup>133</sup>

In one word, the church of Rome has spent immense treasures, and shed, in murder, the blood of *sixty-eight millions, and five hundred thousand* of the human race, to establish, before the astonished and disgusted world, her fixed determination to annihilate every claim set up by the human family to liberty, and the rights of unbounded freedom of conscience! [Brownlee, Popery, and Enemy to Civil and Religious Liberty](#)<sup>134</sup>

Innocent III was the first Pontiff who employed armed forces for the suppression of heresy, and to him the Papacy is indebted for one of its most powerful engines of propagandism,—the Inquisition; designed to put an end not only to all public teaching, but to private thought. The unprotesting acquiescence of Europe in the imposition of the abominable code of the Inquisition affords humiliating and signal proof of the unlimited and arbitrary power exercised by the Popes. Their claim to sovereign dominion of life and death over all Christians was no idle vaunt. Every departure from the teaching of the Church was now made punishable by death in its most appalling form viz. by fire. [Legge, The Growth of the Temporal Power of the Papacy](#)<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> <http://webwitness.org.au/estimates.html>

<sup>132</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p489 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA489>

<sup>133</sup> Dowling, John. *The History of Romanism*. New York, Edward Walker, 1845, p541. <https://books.google.com/books?id=aQIQAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA541>

<sup>134</sup> Brownlee, William C. *Popery, and Enemy to Civil and Religious Liberty*. New York, Charles Moore, 1839, p114. <https://archive.org/stream/poperyanenemyto00browgoog#page/n114>

<sup>135</sup> Legge, Alfred Owen. *The Growth of the Temporal Power of the Papacy*. London, Macmillan & Co., 1870, p54. <https://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA54>



Pope Innocent III. surpassed the sanguinary fame of Theodora. It was in cruelty alone that her soldiers could equal the heroes of the Crusades and the cruelty of her priests was far excelled by the founders of the Inquisition—an office more adapted to confirm than to refute the belief of an evil principle. The visible assemblies of the Paulicians or Albigensis were extirpated by fire and sword and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight concealment or Catholic conformity. [Gibbon. \*The Student's Gibbon: A History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire\*](#)<sup>136</sup>

But at a later period in dealing with heretics the Roman church unfortunately gave the sanction of her highest authority to the use of the torture and thus betrayed her noblest instincts and holiest mission. The fourth Lateran Council (1215) inspired the horrible crusades against the Albigenses and Waldenses and the establishment of the infamous ecclesiastico-political courts of Inquisition. These courts found the torture the most effective means of punishing and exterminating heresy, and invented new forms of refined cruelty worse than those of the persecutors of heathen Rome. Pope Innocent IV., in his instruction for the guidance of the Inquisition in Tuscany and Lombardy, ordered the civil magistrates to extort from all heretics by torture a confession of their own guilt and a betrayal of all their accomplices (1252).<sup>4</sup> This was an ominous precedent, which did more harm to the reputation of the papacy than the extermination of any number of heretics could possibly do it good. [Schaff. \*History of the Christian Church - Volume 4\*](#)<sup>137</sup>

The Spanish Inquisition was established in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella by papal sanction (1478), reached its fearful height under the terrible General Inquisitor Torquemada (since 1483), and in its zeal to exterminate Moors, Jews, and heretics, committed such fearful excesses that even popes protested against the abuse of power, although with little effect. The Inquisition carried the system of torture to its utmost limits.

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#### Notes.

... For details see the works on the Inquisition. Llorente (Hist. crit. de l'Inquisition d'Espagne IV. 252, quoted by Gieseler III. 409 note 11) states that from 1478 to the end of the administration of Torquemada in 1498, when he resigned, "8800 persons were burned alive, 6500 in effigy, and 90,004 punished with different kinds of penance. Under the second general-inquisitor the Dominican, Diego Deza, from 1499 to 1506, 1664 persons were burned alive, 832 in effigy, 32,456 punished. Under the third general-inquisitor, the Cardinal and Archbishop of Toledo, Francis Ximenes de Cisneros, from 1507 to 1517, 2536 were burned alive, 1368 in effigy, 47,263 reconciled." Llorente was a Spanish priest and general secretary of the Inquisition at Madrid (from 1789-1791), and had access to all the archives, but his figures, as he himself admits, are based upon probable calculations, and have in some instances been disproved. He states, e.g. that in the first year of Torquemada's administration 2000 persons were burned, and refers to the Jesuit (Mariana History of Spain), but Mariana means that during the whole administration of Torquemada "*duo millia crematos igne.*" See Hefele, *Cardinal Ximenes*, p. 346. The sum total of persons condemned to death by the Spanish Inquisition during the 330 years of its existence is stated to be 30,000. Hefele (Kirchenlexikon, v. 656) thinks this sum exaggerated, yet not surprising when compared to the number of witches that were burnt in Germany alone. [Schaff. \*History of the Christian Church - Volume 4\*](#)<sup>138</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Gibbon, Edward, Smith, William, et al. *The Student's Gibbon: A History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire - Abridged - From AD 565 to the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks*. London, John Murray, 1901, p168.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=tgcaAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA168>

<sup>137</sup> Schaff, Phillip. *History of the Christian Church - Volume 4*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908, p351.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ilzYAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA352>

<sup>138</sup> Schaff. p352-353. <https://books.google.com/books?id=ilzYAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA352>

We come now to one of the darkest pages in the history of the Papacy, and to the foulest blot on the character and administration of Innocent III.—the crusade against the Albigenses. In the study of this episode, every right-thinking reader rises above theological and ecclesiastical differences into the region of common human rights and natural humane instincts. The movement was the legitimate outcome of the Hildebrandian idea and was instinct with its spirit.

The essential facts of the case, succinctly stated, are these: A large, peaceful, and prosperous, province governed by a generous and tolerant prince, embraced in its population large numbers of sectaries. Although later Christian thought condemns some of their tenets as erroneous, they were industrious, loyal, and orderly. Their pure morality was in strong contrast with that of the licentious, avaricious, and lazy clergy of the established church, and the fervor of their devotion with the idle and heartless ceremonies of papal worship. Upon this community Innocent fixed his eye, and determined to bring it, by force if necessary, into conformity with Romish dogma and practice. Upon this peaceful and moral population his mandate let loose all the power of the secular arm, and encouraged, by promises of papal indulgence, bands of freebooters—men without conscience and without pity, and stained with every crime—to act as his agents in enforcing submission. The Vicegerent of God, the man who delighted to represent himself as commissioned by the God-man, precipitated upon these unoffending and defenceless people all the horrors of murder, rapine and unbridled lust, for the glory of God and the honor of the church of Christ. [Vincent. \*The Age of Hildebrand\*. p337](#)<sup>139</sup>

Numerically, I don't think the church had power over a fourth of humanity, when you consider the highly populated countries of China and India. I believe the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church was mostly what was handed down or at least once held by the Roman Empire. I decided to do a word search on the number four in the Bible. It occurred many times in the plans for the Sanctuary and Temple. Altars were four sided with of course four corners and had four horns on the corners. There were many four's in the plans for the sanctuary and subsequently the temple [[Exodus 25-28](#), [Ezekiel 40](#)]. In [Proverbs 30](#), Solomon gives several lists of four things, I believe with the idea that the four examples provide complete coverage for each topic. In [Amos 2](#) God speaks similar lists of fours. [Isaiah 11:12](#) mentions the four corners of the earth. [Jeremiah 49:36](#) mentions four winds and four ends of the earth. [Ezekiel 1](#) and [10](#) describes the throne room in heaven where there are four creatures each of which seemed to have four sides and on each side a face, a wing and a hand (or possibly and arm and hand). There are distinct similarities in the four creatures John described in his view into the throne room of heaven. [Ezekiel 7:2](#) mentions the four corners of the land. [Ezekiel 37:9](#) mentions four winds. [Daniel 7:2](#) also mentions four winds of heaven. [Zechariah](#) mentions several fours, including winds of heaven, I believe all with the idea of complete coverage. Jesus mentions four winds implying the whole earth even including the heavens [[Matthew 24:31](#), [Mark 13:27](#)]. Peeking ahead in Revelation, there are several instances where four angels are mentioned, and in [20:8](#) the four corners of the earth. Obviously in the Bible there is a lot of precedent for dividing the earth into fourths.

Let's take a moment and see what the Bible says about the four directions of the compass. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were driven east out of the Garden of Eden [[Genesis 3:24](#)]. Cain settled east of Eden [[Genesis 4:16](#)], Ishmael was prophesied to live east of his brothers [[Genesis 16:12](#)]. God promised Abraham that his descendants would spread out north, south, east and west [[Genesis 28:14](#)]. In pharaoh's dream the corn was scorched by the east wind [[Genesis 41](#)]. The east wind brought the plague of locusts on Egypt [[Exodus 10:13](#)] and also to dried up a path through the Red Sea [[Exodus 14:12](#)]. East wind is mentioned many times in the Old Testament, most of them doing damage, mainly by heat. Of course, with Israel being on the east shore of the Mediterranean Sea, wind coming

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<sup>139</sup> Vincent, Martin R. *The Age of Hildebrand*. New York, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909, p337.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA337>

from the east would be from the land and possibly dry or desert wind. Prophecies in Daniel mention a horn growing south and east, and rumors coming from the east and north [[Daniel 8:9](#), [Daniel 11:44](#)]. Jonah sat east of Nineveh, waiting and watching for its destruction [[Jonah 4:5](#)]. Magi from the east came to worship baby Jesus [[Mathew 2](#)]. Jesus predicted that many from the east and the west would eat at the table in heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [[Matthew 8:11](#), [Luke 13:29](#)]. The locusts that were brought into Egypt on the east wind were removed by a west wind [[Exodus 10:19](#)]. The rear of the tabernacle was west, which means that the door faced east [[Exodus 26:22](#)]. In Daniel's dream of world empires, the goat representing Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire came from the west [[Daniel 8:5](#)]. I believe Zechariah is writing about the final coming of God to earth, when He describes the Mount of Olives being split from east to west and the two halves moving apart to the north and south [[Zechariah 14:4](#)]. Job speaks of the north as being cold [[Job 37:9](#)]. From the context of Jerusalem, north or the northern kingdom often referred to the ten tribes that split off after Solomon's reign. I think in a particular instance, the Psalmist uses north in the direction of up, and refers to the city of the great King in the far north [[Psalm 48](#)]. Jeremiah who lived after the end of the northern kingdom of Israel, spoke of evil and destruction coming from the north. I believe he was speaking of the Kingdom of Babylon, but in some instances possibly even some of the subsequent empires that would dominate the Jews. [Daniel 11](#) contains a prophecy of the king of the north and the king of the south, who at least at one point are thought to represent Rome and Egypt. The directions north, south, east and west, when given as a direction relative from somewhere were almost always from the perspective of the land of Israel, or more specifically Jerusalem. The four directions of the compass were also a manner of referring to the entire world.

There is a manner of speaking today where west refers to culture and civilization rather than a direction. I believe this originated with the Greeks and Romans who formed a culture that was passed on through the Roman Catholic Church. Countries today that are culturally referred to as the west are from Western Europe, North America, Australia, some parts of Asia and sometimes Latin America. Historically Asian and Islamic countries are referred to as the east.<sup>140</sup> Where you have east and west you would think there is north and south and from the ancient Roman perspective, barbarians were in the north and to the south was Africa although at times part of northern Africa was colonized by the empire. So, from the perspective of western culture, the Roman Catholic Church controlled the west, which could be said to be one fourth.

### *Kill with sword, hunger, and beasts*

Killing with the sword is only done by human beings against each other. Hunger from famine can be thought of as caused by nature, but one could say that there were examples of both as a result of civilization. For example, if a civilization teaches specialization and the population becomes dependent on a few to produce food for all, cutting off that food supply will cause famine among the general public. Civilization and the mass densities in cities has also led to great outbreaks of disease and death which is essentially what pestilence is. A culture and society where people are more spread out and are primarily responsible for growing and hunting their own food, are less susceptible to the two examples given above. Killing by beasts can be done in nature but as evidenced by the history of the Roman Empire, killing people with beasts was a sadistic form of punishment and entertainment.

### Conclusion

If we align this seal with the timeline of the seven churches, it fits nicely with the message to the fourth church which was Thyatira. That was the era that was characterized by the church running the state as opposed to the prior seal where the state basically ran the church.

<sup>140</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East%E2%80%93West\\_dichotomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East%E2%80%93West_dichotomy)

Incidentally, these first horses have been known as the four horses of the apocalypse, which is a phrase that may be known even by some non-religious people.

The color ashen, pale or green are all adjectives that could be used to describe one who is very sick or in very poor health. The church of this era could definitely be described as sick from the perspective of true Christianity as taught by Jesus. This era was about the church wielding the power to punish and kill people to enforce its teachings and maintain its power. This period of the church is known for the persecution, torture and killing of many who were labeled heretics for having dissenting views from the church. In secular history, some have labeled this period the dark ages. If you are looking for historical references for some of these abuses mentioned, refer to the chapter on the [Message to the Church in Thyatira](#).

What do you believe?

- What color do you think this horse was and do you think it was meant to look sickly?
- Who do you think Death and Hades represent?
- Who do you think is represented by the fourth of the earth that Death and Hades had authority over?

## The fifth seal

### [Revelation 6:9-11](#)

[Revelation 6:9](#) When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. <sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" <sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both [the number of] their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they [were], was completed.

[Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Souls of those who had been slain*

Let's begin by remembering that these seals have been visions of symbols that represented something. So, when we read that there are souls of martyrs under the altar that are asking for vengeance, remember that is it most likely symbolic. The first thing that comes to mind is that these people sacrificed their lives because of their faith and belief in the Word of God. So, these are assumed to be people that will be brought back to life in the first resurrection, meaning those who will be taken to heaven. So, if these people were so faithful to God that they gave up their life for Him, do you think that God would keep them, conscious, confined under the altar?

### *Under the altar*

Another question is what altar is this and is it in heaven or on earth? There are many altars mentioned in the Bible including ones that humans were sacrificed on. In the Sanctuary, there was an altar of sacrifice, and an altar of incense. There were also many altars to false gods, on which sometimes humans including children were sacrificed. Altars were used to offer something to a deity and often involved fire. The altar of sacrifice involved blood which represented the blood of Jesus that would be shed for our salvation from sin. The rising smoke from the burning incense on the small altar inside the sanctuary represents prayers. In contrast to altars to the true God, which

represented the sacrifice made by the Deity, altars to false gods were for what humans were sacrificing to the gods. There is an altar in heaven:

[Revelation 8:3](#) Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

[Revelation 8:3 NKJV](#)

Even though the sanctuary is patterned after the temple in heaven, there doesn't seem to be any mention of an altar of sacrifice in heaven. This would make sense if there is no killing or death in heaven. It is not really clear to me whether the fifth seal altar scene is in heaven or on earth.

### *Martyrs cried out with a loud voice asking for judgment for their blood that was shed*

Let's talk about the symbolism of blood calling out for vengeance.

[Genesis 4:9](#) Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where [is] Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. [Am] I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup> And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. [Genesis 4:9-10 NKJV](#)

What does the Bible say about martyrs?

[Revelation 2:10](#) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw [some] of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. [Revelation 2:10 NKJV](#)

I do not believe these martyrs were conscious. Instead, I think that perhaps being under the altar symbolizes that their sins were covered by the sacrifice of Jesus.

There is a general principle of life, that if you do good things for others, good things will come back to you. And if you do bad things, bad will be done to you. But this is not an exact science, and many times the scale of what a person does and what comes back to them is very unbalanced. Often in this world it seems that people get away with doing terrible things, even murder, with no consequences. And so many times corrupt governments or institutions get away with doing terrible things to people under their control with no apparent consequences. It seems that this is what this fifth seal is about. There were obviously many Christians killed in the prior eras by both the Roman Empire and Catholic Church, but these souls under the altar could represent all people who have been unjustly killed and their murderers not held accountable.

### Conclusion

The only timeframe I could find for this seal is that the time for judgment is not yet, and that there will be more people who will lose their life for their faith in Jesus. If you line this fifth seal up with the seven churches, it corresponds with Sardis, which I lined up with the reformation era. I think that what could be said is that after the start of the Reformation, there was still a period of time that the church had power to kill.

What do you believe?

- What do you think is represented by the souls being under the altar?
- Do you think the souls were literally conscious?
- Why do you think it says the number who would be killed was not completed yet?

## The sixth seal

### [Revelation 6:12KJV](#)

[Revelation 6:12](#) | I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. <sup>13</sup> And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" [Revelation 6:12-17 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

#### *Earthquake*

First let's see what the Bible says about earthquakes so we can learn about its use of the word. It occurred 17 times in 14 verses in the NKJV, most frequently in Revelation (7 times in 5 verses). The first incident in the Bible used the word three times [[1 Kings 19:11-12](#)]. When Elijah was running away from Jezebel, he was exhausted and discouraged and wanted to die. He was awakened and fed by an angel twice, before going forty days without eating, arriving at Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah was having a conversation with God, as two people talk to each other, the way Moses spoke with God. It seems that God wished to manifest Himself to Elijah, even though he didn't ask for it like Moses did. God caused a terrible windstorm, followed by an earthquake and a then a firestorm but was not in any of them. Finally, there was a gentle blowing, where it seems His presence was manifest, and Elijah came out to the entrance of the cave, and God resumed speaking to him [[1 Kings 19](#)]. (This brought to mind a conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus where He associated the wind with being born of the Spirit [[John 3:4-8](#)].) Isaiah mentions in a warning to Jerusalem that an earthquake could be used to punish Israel [[Isaiah 29:6](#)]. Amos prophesies and Zechariah remembers years later a great earthquake in the time of king Uzziah [[Amos 1:1](#), [Zechariah 4:5](#)]. Ezekiel prophesies another great earthquake in Israel [[Ezekiel 38:19](#)]. In the New Testament, there was an earthquake when Jesus died and one when He was resurrected [[Matthew 27:54](#), [Matthew 28:2](#)]. There was a great earthquake mentioned in Acts when Paul and Silas were in prison [[Acts 16:26](#)]. It seemed to me that these earthquakes were literal, but more half of them were not naturally occurring, mostly because they seemed to have been caused by God. In Revelation, not including the sixth seal, three of the four earthquakes were accompanied by thunder and lightning [[8:5](#), [11:19](#), [16:18](#)]. The fourth said that a tenth of the city fell, and 7000 people died [[11:13](#)]. I don't really want to discuss these in depth because they will be covered in coming chapters.

Let's look at some specific examples of literal earthquakes which occurred just as the church was coming out of the dark ages of oppression and corruption. In 1755, there was a massive earthquake estimated to be 8.5-9.0 on the Richter scale, which occurred off the coast of Lisbon Portugal. It was so widely spread that it was felt throughout Europe, North Africa, Greenland and the Caribbean, and is considered among the deadliest of all time.<sup>141 142 143 144 145</sup>

<sup>141</sup> [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lisbon\\_earthquake\\_1755](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lisbon_earthquake_1755)

<sup>142</sup> Murray, Hugh. *An Encyclopædia of Geography*. London, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, 1834, p213. <https://books.google.com/books?id=ANCgJ6jI5pAC&pg=PA213>

<sup>143</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1755\\_Lisbon\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1755_Lisbon_earthquake)

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGhv6zcBPxQ>

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Lisbon-earthquake-of-1755>

If this is too early to fit the timeline, there were devastating earthquakes in Tabriz, Iran in 1780<sup>146</sup>, Calabria, Italy in 1783<sup>147</sup>, Sichuan, China in 1786<sup>148</sup>, and Quito, Ecuador in 1797.<sup>149</sup> From the list in Wikipedia, it doesn't seem like one really stands out way above the others, so if I go with the literal earthquake, I think that the idea of this prophecy could be that one or a cluster of them marks the beginning of this period.<sup>150</sup>

### *Sun dark, moon like blood, stars fell*

Let's look at the next signs which involve the sun, moon and stars. An eclipse is probably the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of the sun becoming black, but having experienced a solar eclipse, the sun doesn't really go black and the moment of total eclipse is so short that you are seemingly back to full daylight mere moments later. Interestingly one of the plagues preceding the exodus of Israel from Egypt involved supernatural darkness for multiple days [Exodus 10:21]. On May 19, 1780 there was a well-documented dark day that occurred in the northeast United States. All historical dark days on record including biblical, and eclipses, have been regional. Does this seal refer to a global dark day, or is it symbolic of something else? Some think that this event matches the black sun predicted in this seal, and also what Jesus predicted would happen right after the "tribulation of those days."

[Matthew 24:29](#) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [Matthew 24:29 NKJV](#)

There is even one more Bible text which predicts the sun going dark.

[Joel 2:31](#) The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Joel 2:31 NKJV](#)

Since I think this prediction by Jesus was most likely referring to the same signs as spoken of here in the sixth seal of Revelation, I will repeat the same commentary and research that I did for that text in Matthew.

On May 19, 1780, in the New England states, there was a mysterious dark day that was not the result of an eclipse. It was a regional phenomenon, but the event was well recorded.

The New England Historical Society has a good description of that day.

The New England Dark Day was the darkest day of the American Revolution – a day as dark as night, a day when a candle was needed to see anything outside at noon.

On May 19, 1780, the sun came up as usual, but then the skies over New England darkened as far north as Portland, Maine, and as far south as New Jersey. There George Washington, fighting the Revolutionary War, reported the Dark Day in his diary (though he seems to have gotten the date wrong). Washington wrote:

"Heavy & uncommon kind of Clouds—dark & at the same time a bright and reddish kind of light intermixed with them—brightning & darkning alternately. This continued till afternoon when the sun began to appear. The Wind in the Morning was Easterly. After that it got to the Westward."

<sup>146</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1780\\_Tabriz\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1780_Tabriz_earthquake)

<sup>147</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1783\\_Calabrian\\_earthquakes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1783_Calabrian_earthquakes)

<sup>148</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1786\\_Kangding-Luding\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1786_Kangding-Luding_earthquake)

<sup>149</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1797\\_Riobamba\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1797_Riobamba_earthquake)

<sup>150</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_historical\\_earthquakes#11th-18th\\_centuries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_earthquakes#11th-18th_centuries)

The Dark Day inspired terror, panic and puzzlement. Men prayed and women wept. Thousands left off work and took to taverns and churches for solace. Children were sent home from school. Bewildered chickens went to their roost, frightened cattle returned to their stalls, the night birds whistled and frogs peeped as they did at midnight.<sup>151</sup>

The same website concluded with the suspected natural cause of the dark day.

Scientific research into old trees in the Algonquin Highlands, Ontario, concluded the Dark Day resulted from a massive wildfire in Canadian forests. Scientists found charcoal and resin – ‘fire scars’ -- in the growth rings of the trees.

Just because something has a natural cause does not mean it is not a fulfillment of a sign from God. I believe He has seen all the events of our history and can simply tell us things that He has seen happen. It was not a global event, but there is no debate that the event actually occurred. Most eye-witness accounts are very similar. There were variations regarding the moon, possibly depending on the observation point. Some said the moon appeared red<sup>152</sup> and some could see no moon at all.<sup>153</sup> I’m sure there are many more historical eye-witness accounts of that day, but Wikipedia has compiled a few online sources.<sup>154</sup>

Seventh Day Adventists teach that the tribulation of those days was the 1260-year period of Daniel and Revelation when the people of God were persecuted by the beast of the dragon. This prophetic period was said to end in 1798 when the Pope was taken captive by the French General Berthier. Ellen White says:

The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Between these two dates, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled. [White. \*Great Controversy\*. p306](#)<sup>155</sup>

The next sign mentioned was the stars falling. One event that fits the time frame and description by Jesus was the great Leonid meteor shower of 1833. Ellen white described it this way:

This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded; “the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion. No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or such dread and alarm by another.” “Its sublimity and awful beauty still linger in many minds.... Never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion.... The display, as described in Professor Silliman's journal, was seen all over North America.... From two o'clock until broad daylight, the sky being

<sup>151</sup> <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/new-england-dark-day-1780/>

<sup>152</sup> <https://storiesfromipswich.org/2014/07/25/the-dark-day-1780/>

<sup>153</sup> [https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech\\_0519](https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech_0519)

<sup>154</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_England's\\_Dark\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England's_Dark_Day)

<sup>155</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p306.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA306>

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=306>



perfectly serene and cloudless, an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens." [White. Great Controversy. p333](#)<sup>156</sup>

Another eyewitness description:

On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the Earth... The sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs. At Boston, the frequency of meteors was estimated to be about half that of flakes of snow in an average snowstorm. Their numbers... were quite beyond counting; but as it waned, a reckoning was attempted, from which it was computed, on the basis of that much-diminished rate, that 240,000 must have been visible during the nine hours they continued to fall. - Agnes Clerke's, Victorian Astronomy Writer<sup>157</sup>

The meteor shower of 1833 is well understood now, but at the time it was not. In fact, it is said to be the birth of meteor astronomy. This particular one is the result of earth passing through the orbit of the Temple-Tuttle comet which it does every year. However, approximately every 33 years, the comet itself is in the vicinity of earth as they cross paths. In those years, the number of meteors observed jumps because there is more debris present. The early November meteor showers are called Leonids because they appear to originate from the constellation Leo.<sup>158 159</sup>

My question is whether the meteor shower from 1799 could actually have been the sign Jesus was referring to since it was truly immediately after the 1260 years of tribulation which ended in 1798? These signs of the sun, moon and stars was a confirmation to many that their understanding of the 1260 years prophecy was correct. It was not given by Jesus as an immediate sign of His return.

### *Sky split*

The next sign in this seal, which is not mentioned in the parallel signs by Jesus in Matthew, read "The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up." The KJV said, "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." Let's start like I often do by looking for other similar statements in the Bible.

[Isaiah 34:4](#) All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as [fruit] falling from a fig tree. [Isaiah 34:4 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 1:10](#) And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. <sup>11</sup> They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; <sup>12</sup> Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail." [Hebrews 1:10-12 NKJV](#)

The writer of a science and the Bible blog wrote about these verses, including an original language analysis that was very interesting. He suggests that the language could imply the hosts of heaven wilting, rotting, or wasting away, not performing their usual function, which is giving light.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>156</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p333.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA333>

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=333>

<sup>157</sup> <https://leonid.arc.nasa.gov/history.html>

<sup>158</sup> <http://meteorshowersonline.com/leonids.html>

<sup>159</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonids>

<sup>160</sup> <https://scibible.wordpress.com/2013/06/15/heavens-rolled-up-like-a-scroll/>

It begins to occur to me that this whole sign seems like the partial undoing of the third and fourth days of creation. Read again the Genesis account of those two days and note the elements that are common.

[Genesis 1:9](#) Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry [land] appear"; and it was so. <sup>10</sup> And God called the dry [land] Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that [it was] good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb [that] yields seed, [and] the fruit tree [that] yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed [is] in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. <sup>12</sup> And the earth brought forth grass, the herb [that] yields seed according to its kind, and the tree [that] yields fruit, whose seed [is] in itself according to its kind. And God saw that [it was] good. <sup>13</sup> So the evening and the morning were the third day. <sup>14</sup> Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; <sup>15</sup> "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. <sup>16</sup> Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. [He made] the stars also. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that [it was] good. <sup>19</sup> So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. [Genesis 1:9-19 NKJV](#)

### Interpreting the symbols

Let's repeat the relevant verses from the sixth seal again.

[Revelation 6:12](#) | I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. <sup>13</sup> And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. [Revelation 6:12-14 NKJV](#)

The sun, moon, stars, sky, mountains and islands were all players on both accounts. Let's visualize this in a table.

Genesis	Revelation 6 <sup>th</sup> seal
Sun created	Sun became black
Moon created	Moon became red
Stars created	Stars fell
Sun, moon, stars placed in the heavens to give light	Heavens or sky rolled up like a scroll
Land was moved around	Mountains and islands moved out of their place

Another thing to note, is that it doesn't say the sun will become black and then shine again. Not saying it won't, but I'm just making the observation. I have always believed that there will be no human life on earth between the second and third coming (see [There is a resurrection of the wicked](#)). Perhaps the second coming will cause an extinction level event on this planet, after all the Bible in other places shows that the presence of God can cause earthquakes. The sky being rolled up like a scroll, could well describe the atmosphere as a cloud of dust spreads across the sky as a result of a massive volcano or meteor strike, either of which would cause a massive earthquake. I know it has always been thought of symbolically but recall that a rock struck the image and reduced it to dust in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (see [Nebuchadnezzar's dream about world kingdoms](#)).

From [verses 15-17](#) we have what appears to be survivors from whatever catastrophes have occurred, hiding behind rocks and in caves wishing they were dead. It seems that God and the Lamb are present, presumably in the sky, and all who are not looking forward to the second coming are frightened to the point of wishing they were dead.

If not from the earlier catastrophic events described, [verse 16](#) makes it pretty clear that this is the end of the world and Jesus has returned as He promised. So, the thing that is a little confusing to me is that it seems the sixth seal is supposed to cover a time period, from the end of the reformation to the second coming of Christ. So, do these signs mark the beginning of this period or the end? Is it possible that there are relatively smaller or regional versions of these sign at the beginning of the period and then massive or global ones at the end?

## Conclusion

Following a timeline, if this is the sixth of seven seals, and it follows the reformation era church, it could start somewhere in the mid to late 1700's or early 1800's. Up to this point, I have mostly looked at the seals as symbols representing things that occurred during an era of the church. Considering what John saw when this seal was broken, it seems reasonable to ask whether these things are literal or symbolic. Of course, there have been many earthquakes throughout the history of the church. There have no doubt been many eclipses, red moons and meteor showers as well. Reading on, it begins to appear that this seal even though it is only the sixth of seven is taking us all the way up to the second coming. Because the duration of the prior seal was so vague, and this one goes virtually to the end, the start and end of these last few era's do not seem to line up with the time periods of the seven churches.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe these signs mark the beginning of this era?
- Do you think these signs have already happened, or are still in the future?
- Do you think these signs should be interpreted symbolically rather than literally?

## Sealing of the 144,000

### [Revelation 7:1-8](#)

[Revelation 7:1](#) After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. <sup>2</sup> Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." <sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred [and] forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [were] sealed: <sup>5</sup> of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand [were] sealed;

<sup>6</sup> of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand [were] sealed;

<sup>7</sup> of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand [were] sealed;

<sup>8</sup> of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand [were] sealed;

of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand [were] sealed. [Revelation 7:1-8 NKJV](#)

You might have noticed that this chapter didn't begin with the opening of the next seal. Whether it is meant to be an insertion between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> seals, or a continuation of the 6<sup>th</sup>, is not totally clear, nor do I think it matters. I also don't believe that what is described here has to follow after the events described in the last chapter. I think John's attention was focused in one place and after watching that scene, he turned his attention to this one.

## Examining the symbols

### *Four angels*

The first thing to notice is that there were four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. In [the fourth seal](#), I discussed how the earth was often described in fourths, probably going back to the four directions on the compass. In this case I believe the four corners refers to the entire earth. Angels were described as holding back the four winds from doing damage to the earth, sea and the trees.

### *Four winds*

I found 8 other verses in the NKJV that used the phrase four winds.

[Jeremiah 49:36](#) Against Elam I will bring the four winds

From the four quarters of heaven,

And scatter them toward all those winds;

There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go. [Jeremiah 49:36 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 37:9](#) Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: " Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' " [Ezekiel 37:9 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:2](#) Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. [Daniel 7:2 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 8:8](#) Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. [Daniel 8:8 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 11:4](#) "And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these. [Daniel 11:4 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 2:6](#) "Up, up! Flee from the land of the north," says the LORD; "for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven," says the LORD. [Zechariah 2:6 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:31](#) "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. [Matthew 24:31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:27](#) "And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven. [Mark 13:27 NKJV](#)

When I first read these verses, I focused in on the words "from" or "toward" [[Daniel 8:8](#), [Ezekiel 37:9](#), [Matthew 24:31](#), [Mark 13:27](#)]. Then I noticed that six of the seven were followed by "of heaven" or "of the heavens" or "of the sky." The four winds as used by Jesus in Matthew and Mark clearly mean the entire world. Our verse of interest in [Revelation 7:1](#), says "four winds of the earth." To be fair, the words of Jesus in [Matthew](#) and [Mark](#), are not saying

the winds are from the heavens or the sky, but that the elect will be gathered from the sky or the earth and sky. This could be correlated with the following verses in Thessalonians:

[1 Thessalonians 4:15](#) For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 NKJV](#)

If you consider the statements of Jesus to mean that the dead in Christ will already be hovering in the air, then He will gather His elect from all over the earth, and sky. The other references to “four winds of heaven,” seem to be about the source of the winds.

In Revelation, the four angels are holding back the four winds of earth, not heaven. If you read on, it seems these angels had the power to harm the earth, sea, and trees. I think it actually means that they had the power to hold back the winds that would harm the earth, sea, and trees. So, it seems that four winds can be used to refer to geography (the whole world), or it can be used to refer to great upheaval among nations. I believe these verse in Revelation refer to the later, and angels are somehow holding it back. The four winds of earth could mean the unrest among nations will involve the whole world, something that could be called World War III.

### *Ascending from the east*

Next John sees an angel ascending from the east. Smith says this means like the rising sun, rather than from the east where the sun rises. Like the rising sun could imply the low sun angle at first does not shine with great heat but as it rises higher and higher in the sky, the power and brightness and heat rise as well.<sup>161</sup> This angel instructs the four angels to hold back the great upheaval in the world, until the servants of God have been sealed.

### *Power to hurt the earth and sea*

It is emphasized by repeating three times in three verses that these winds of strife have the power to hurt the earth and sea, and two times the trees. Could this possibly refer to the idea that this conflict would result in making the earth and sea uninhabitable, such as would happen with a global nuclear war? Previous world wars killed many people and did destroy some land, but for the most part, nations were able to rebuild and re-inhabit immediately after the war was over, which would not be the case after a worldwide nuclear war.

### *Seal of God*

Let’s now consider the word seal and how it is used in the Bible. I found the word “seal” 29 times in the NKJV. Not surprisingly ten of these instances were in Revelation, but all of them either literally, or symbolically refer to the same thing. A seal in ancient times was sort of like a signature today. I say sort of because signatures are produced manually and are generally not all identical. It is actually much more closely related to a stamp or seal used to notarize. A seal was most often the mirror image of something engraved on a ring, by which a person could verify their identity. The seal could be imprinted in something soft such as wax, or clay or using some kind of ink or dye onto parchment or other surfaces. I’m pretty sure this is not the first use of a seal, but it is mentioned as far back as Judah. The breastplate of the High Priest had twelve gem stones, each engraved like a seal. Kings were said to seal things with their signet ring, and any command carrying the king’s seal was as good as law. Job used the word three times, two of which were the same meaning but speaking of something symbolically being God’s seal. The third was

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<sup>161</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p522 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA522>

the other meaning of seal, as in something sealed airtight. Ezekiel, writing what some, myself included, think symbolically refers to Lucifer:

[Ezekiel 28:12](#) "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You [were] the **seal** of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. [Ezekiel 28:12 NKJV](#)

This seems like the first instance of something symbolically being a seal on a being, or is it? The footnote seems to indicate that this person, whether the king of Tyre or Lucifer was the seal. Lucifer could have been said to be the seal of God's creation of the angels. Jesus said that God's seal was upon Himself [[John 6:27](#)]. Paul said that those He brought to Christ were the seal of His Apostleship [[1 Corinthians 9:2](#)].

So, in this instance, what could be meant by the seal of God? It has been mentioned that a seal was used to authenticate something, especially if it is recognizable. Such was the case with a king's seal. I guess a seal could also be used to authenticate someone if it were in their possession. Since God is king, we should consider how seals were used by kings.

[Esther 8:8](#) "You yourselves write [a decree] concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and **seal** [it] with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and **sealed** with the king's signet ring no one can revoke." [Esther 8:8 NKJV](#)

Back then, a decree became law once it was signed by the king with his signet ring. Today in the USA, congress makes laws, but the president must sign them to enact the law. Probably all Christians, Jews and even some other religions call the Ten Commandments the Law of God. Does this law not need a seal or signature to enact it? Smith argues elegantly that this law does have a seal. The first three commandments mention God and how we should relate to Him, but it doesn't tell us who He is. There are many things and ideas that people call gods. Let's look at the fifth commandment: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you." It has one of God's names in it but doesn't really define who He is. The last five are for the most part civil laws and do not mention God or His name at all. That leaves us with the fourth.

[Exodus 20:8](#) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day [is] the Sabbath of the LORD your God. [In it] you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who [is] within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For [in] six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that [is] in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. [Exodus 20:8-11 NKJV](#)

This commandment, identifies the God of the first three commandments as the creator of all things, including the sun, moon, stars, wood, stone and anything else that many people worship. The fact that He created us and all things that surround us is the reason why God can command our worship and the keeping of His law. That in effect makes it His signature or seal. Hence, contrary to what most Christians claim or believe, that this law has been done away with, it is very much in effect and can never be done away with, anymore than a king's seal can be removed from a law, and the law remain in effect. Then perhaps it could be said that those who keep this commandment have the seal of God upon them.<sup>162</sup>

### *The 144,000*

Going back to the fifth angel and what he said, it appears there is a timeframe for this sealing of God's people. Does that mean that fourth commandment keepers have not always been sealed? Will they only be sealed at the end?

<sup>162</sup> Smith. p522 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA522>

Let's dig deeper into who these people are in the following verses. The 144,000 is a number that many Christians have heard, but one that probably most don't have a clear understanding of. It also has significance to some non-Christian religions. From the Christian perspective, is the number and composition literal or symbolic?

The number is mentioned a couple times in Revelation 14.

[Revelation 14:1](#) Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one **hundred [and] forty-four thousand**, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup> They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the **hundred [and] forty-four thousand** who were redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from [among] men, [being] firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. [Revelation 14:1-5 NKJV](#)

I believe this is referring to the same group of people and hence sheds more light on who they are. Let's list some of their characteristics:

1. Father's name written on their forehead
2. Sang a song that only they could learn
3. They are from earth
4. They have not been defiled with women and kept themselves virgins
5. Follow the Lamb wherever He goes
6. Considered first fruits from among men
7. No deceit in their mouth and faultless before the throne of God

In our current verses, the 144,000 got the seal of God on their forehead. This later verse in chapter 14, said they had God's name written on their forehead. This kind of makes sense in light of what I just wrote, where I drew parallels between a seal and a person's signature. In other words, God signs His name on their forehead. But I don't believe this is literal visible writing, or a tattoo on the forehead. I believe it to be symbolic of a choice or stance or belief. 2) would seem to mean they will experience something unique and could be related to 6) as they could be considered first fruits of this group or category of people. 4) is interesting because it could be taken symbolically or literally. It is pretty clear in Revelation, that a church or religion is symbolized by a woman. The true church by a pure woman, and false churches by sexually impure women. This partly comes from the symbolism of the true church as being the bride of Christ. Does 5) refer to on earth, or after they have been saved and taken to heaven? First fruits, is a term used quite a few times in the Bible, and literally meant the very first part of any harvest to ripen. In the Old Testament, it most often applied to the wheat and barley harvests. Regarding 6) the question is what are these the first fruits of? They are not the first taken to heaven without dying, because Enoch and Elijah were. They are not the first of those who died and were resurrected to immortality, because Moses, and Jesus, and those who were resurrected at the time He died, are all in heaven. In fact, Paul called Jesus the first fruit of those raised from the dead (not sure where that leaves Moses).

[1 Corinthians 15:20](#) But now Christ is risen from the dead, [and] has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [1 Corinthians 15:20 NKJV](#)

The later reference in [Revelation 14:5](#), calls this group faultless. The Greek word from which faultless is translated is, [ἄμωμος, amōmos](#).<sup>163</sup> It was used 7 times in the KJV. It was used as without blame, without blemish, blameless, without spot, faultless, and finally without fault. The word described the saved, the glorious church and sacrificial lambs. Not surprisingly it was used to describe Jesus and His blood that was sacrificed. That sacrifice allows us to stand before God blameless, even though all have sinned. God wants and expects us and His church to be blameless. There doesn't seem to be anything different about this description of being without deceit and faultless beyond what God normally expects from His people and church.

### *12,000 from each of the twelve tribes*

Let's get back to the number 144,000. First of all, the population of the tribes of Israel were vastly different, not to mention that most of them have been dispersed. I think the numbers are too arbitrary to be literal. It is possible that the number is literal but the sourcing of it is not. It is my opinion that God will not limit this group of people who will be sealed to an arbitrary number, but to those who, probably are existing at the time, and match the description and characteristics. I think one possible scenario is that these people are the ones who are alive at the end and taken to heaven without dying. What makes them special, so that they are the only ones who can learn a song (symbolically?) Another possibility that I see in the timeline is that these people are sealed before the winds of earth are released which seems to be before Jesus returns. Once, sealed do these people remain blameless through the remaining time of the end? The following are a couple quotes from Ellen White that potentially describe this group of people.

“When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. [White. Christ Object Lessons, p69](#)<sup>164</sup>

What say the testimonies concerning these things? Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful. [White. Testimonies, V5, p53](#)<sup>165</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Of course, we know that Christ lived a perfect life in our sinful world. If the character of Christ is perfectly reproduced in His people, it should mean in this state they will live a perfect life even in a sinful world. The second quote states this in a different way by saying they would rather die than sin. I think it is possible that this group of people, once sealed will exist for a period of time without needing further repentance or forgiveness because they would rather die than sin. This could be one distinguishing factor since people from all time have had the option to repent and receive forgiveness right up to the end of their life.

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G299&t=NKJV>

<sup>164</sup> White, Ellen G. Christ Object Lessons. Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1900, p69.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=COL&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=69>

<sup>165</sup> White, Ellen G. Testimonies for the Church, Vol 5, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948, p53.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=5T&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=53>



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What do you believe?

- In the Bible when it says four winds of heaven and four winds of earth, do you think they mean the same thing?
- Do you think the earth, sea, and trees mentioned are literal or symbolic?
- Do you think the 144,000 is a symbolic or literal number?

## Multitude from all nations, tribes, people and tongue

### [Revelation 7:9-17](#)

[Revelation 7:9](#) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation [belongs] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" <sup>11</sup> All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, [Be] to our God forever and ever. Amen." <sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" <sup>14</sup> And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. <sup>16</sup> "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup> "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." [Revelation 7:9-17 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Great multitude*

In the previous chapter I discussed the 144,000 and who they possibly are. I think if the great tribulation is the result of the four winds, and these people are also translated to heaven, how are they distinguished from the 144,000 or are they? I see four possibilities:

1. They are the same group - it never says John saw them in the first part of the chapter, but only heard the composition and the number (if the number was symbolic, there could actually be many more than 144,000)
2. They are a larger group of which the literal 144,000 are a subset who all went through the great tribulation just prior to the second coming
3. Most who will be saved at the end will be laid to rest before the great tribulation leaving a literal 144,000 who are the only ones able to survive it with their faith intact
4. They are all the people from earth's history who have been saved and taken to heaven

I think 4 is least likely because John was just learning about the 144,000 and the sealing of God's people to be followed by worldwide catastrophic events. Now he sees these people and is told they are the ones who went through great tribulation. I realize there have been many people in parts of the world all through history that have gone through great tribulation for God's sake, but clearly not everyone has. I mostly lean away from 2 and 3 because I don't think the 144,000 is literal. 2 is really only necessary if you believe that in a world of billions of people, the 144,000 is a literal number and you think that more than that will be alive to meet Jesus when He returns. I think my belief most closely aligns with 1.

### *Four creatures and twenty-four elders*

This scene is clearly back in the throne room of heaven where the four creatures and the twenty-four elders surround the throne of God [[Revelation 4](#)].

### **Conclusion**

It seems John is standing close enough to have a conversation with one of the twenty-four elders. What seems strange to me is that no question is recorded but the elder is said to be answering John. What is also interesting is that his supposed answer doesn't tell John anything he can't see for himself, but in turn asks John who he thinks they are. John may have a guess of who they are but asks the elder to tell him. These people can stand before the throne of God because they are covered by the perfect life of Jesus through His blood that was shed for them. The elder goes on to say that these people will be in the presence of God all the time. Whether this is literal or whether it means they can come into His presence anytime, or whether God's presence is with them wherever they go, I can't really say. He adds that they will never again hunger or thirst or be scorched by the sun.

I can't really say for certain, but it seems to me that this great multitude would be a larger group than the 144,000 that were just mentioned. Perhaps all those who will be saved.

What do you believe?

- Who do you think these people are?
- I hesitate to ask this question, but do you think these people will literally be serving God all the time for the rest of eternity?
- Do you think it should be seen as a privilege or a job to be serving God?

## **The seventh seal**

### [Revelation 8:1](#)

[Revelation 8:1](#) When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. [Revelation 8:1](#)  
[NKJV](#)

It was way back in chapter 6 where the sixth seal began. Whether the sealing of the 144,000 is actually part of the sixth seal or not is really not that important in my opinion, but considering how the seventh seal begins, it seems that it is. It is interesting that the first five eras of the seven churches seemed to line up with the first five seals, just as in Daniel, there were different visions with different symbols that covered the same time periods. However, even though the sixth seal and church could begin at the same time, it is not clear how the seventh church and seal could cover the same time period.

### **Examining the symbols**

#### *Silence in heaven for half and hour*

Since this is pretty obviously prophetic, let's begin by converting half an hour from prophetic time to real time using the day for a year principle ([see Appendix B](#)), we get the following:

$$\frac{1}{2} (\text{prophetic hour}) * \frac{1 (\text{prophetic day})}{24 (\text{prophetic hours})} * \frac{1 (\text{year})}{1 (\text{prophetic days})} * \frac{360 (\text{days})}{1 (\text{year})} = 7.5 (\text{days})$$

You may wonder why I used 360 days in a year instead of 365. The 360 is prophetic days in a prophetic year. Either way it only alters the result by about one tenth of a day, and John said “about” half an hour. What can cause complete silence except for nothing being present that can make any sound?

### Conclusion

What I have always believed about this is that this is the time when God and all the angels will leave heaven to come to earth for what we call the second coming. So, if the seventh seal begins with the second coming, then the sixth seal must cover from the reformation to the second coming.

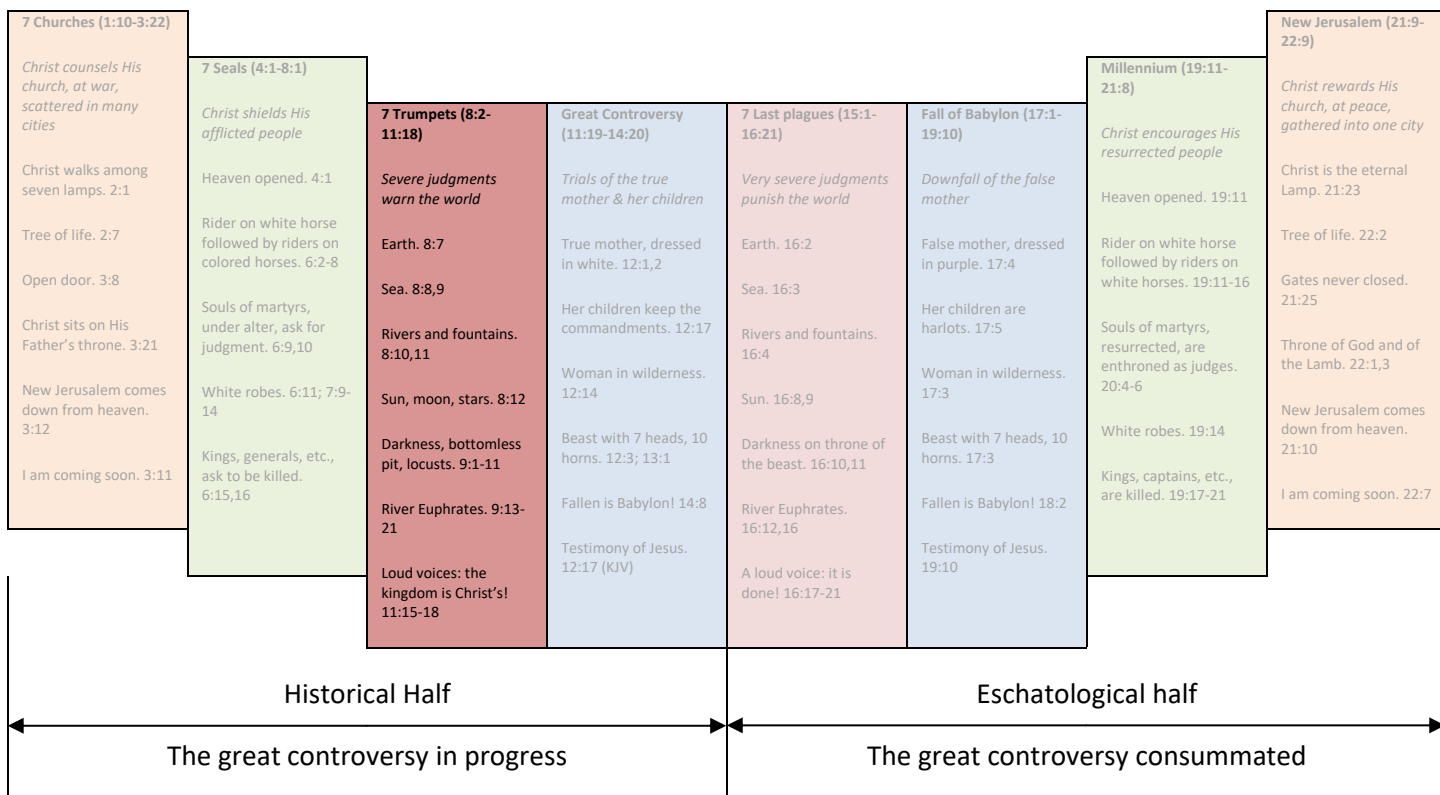
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What do you believe?

- Is this all there is to the seventh seal?
- Does this mean that it takes about three days to travel from heaven to earth?
- Do you see it as a problem if the seventh seal doesn't cover the same time period as the seventh church?

# Revelation 8:2-11:18 – Seven trumpets

As you can see from the outline below, we are starting into the third of eight sections as organized below.



## Preface – golden altar in front of the throne of God

### [Revelation 8:2-6](#)

[Revelation 8:2](#) And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. <sup>3</sup> Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. <sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw [it] to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. <sup>6</sup> So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. [Revelation 8:2-6 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Seven trumpets*

At this point is introduced another series of seven, in this case trumpets. If you include verse 1 in the introduction to the seven trumpets, it appears that they are all part of the seventh seal, kind of like an expansion of the details of

the last seal. If they were part of the last seal, does that mean that the events predicted by the seven trumpets all took place after or perhaps during the silence in heaven?

The introduction to the seven trumpets begins with a scene at the throne of God. John sees an angel standing in front of an altar holding a golden censor filled with incense. This is similar to the introduction to the seven seals which began with a detailed scene in the throne room of God in heaven. If you consider the parallels between the throne room in heaven, the temple of God and the sanctuary, then the introduction to the seven churches, with the seven lampstands should also remind us of the sanctuary or temple.

### *Golden censor and altar*

First there is the altar in front of the throne of God. The word altar occurred eight times in seven verses in Revelation. The one occurrence before this was in [the fifth seal](#) in [chapter 6](#), from where the souls of those who were slain for Christ's sake called out. In chapter 9 and 16, there is an altar that speaks. Chapter 11 mentions measuring the temple and the altar as if it were something of significant size. Lastly, in chapter 14 an angel comes out of an altar.

[Revelation 9:13](#) Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden **altar** which is before God, [Revelation 9:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:7](#) And I heard another from the **altar** saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous [are] Your judgments." [Revelation 16:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:1](#) Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the **altar**, and those who worship there. [Revelation 11:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:18](#) And another angel came out from the **altar**, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." [Revelation 14:18 NKJV](#)

In the Old Testament sanctuary, there was an altar of incense that was just on the other side of the veil or curtain from the Most Holy place where the mercy seat and the Ark of the Covenant were. I believe the Most Holy place to be a symbol of God's throne room in heaven. Whether it is actually a room that is enclosed seems to be implied if the temple is His throne room, because it can be measured. So, if the altar of incense in the earthly sanctuary is outside the Most Holy place, does that mean it is outside the throne room of God in heaven? Also, the Most Holy place and altar of incense in the earthly sanctuary had dimensions and the altar was much smaller. If the mentions of the altar in heaven are all referencing the same thing, it has a voice and is big enough for an angel to come out of it. I don't really have answers to all these questions, but I think there is just one altar in heaven, with four horns, a voice, is associated with fire and incense, and is big enough for angels to come out of it.

Next, we have the censor, which is used several times in the Old Testament, always in relation to incense. The interesting thing about this use is that the Greek word translated to censor in these verses under the seventh seal are the only place they occur in the Bible. The word [λιβανωτός, libanōtos](#)<sup>166</sup> has the primary definition, gum from the frankincense tree, which I interpret to mean the raw material from which frankincense is made. The secondary definition is essentially a censor for burning it (frankincense). I envision an enclosure made of some kind of metal which can be used to carry hot coals with holes on the upper part to allow the smoke of the incense to come out. I imagine it being held by a chain as the item itself would be too hot from the burning coals to handle directly. It is the

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3031&t=NKJV>

same type of device I believe Aaron's sons were playing with when they disobeyed God by using common coals, rather than the coals from the altar kindled by God Himself.

### *Incense*

I did a word search in the NKJV for incense and found that the word was used 144 times in 136 verses. It occurred in 45 verses in Exodus-Deuteronomy alone, mostly having to do with the sanctuary service. It seems that Satan had his counterfeit, as incense was mentioned many times in connection with idol worship. The incense used in the sanctuary service was a special recipe given by God himself to Moses.

[Exodus 30:34](#) And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with [these] sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. <sup>35</sup> "You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, [and] holy. <sup>36</sup> "And you shall beat [some] of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. <sup>37</sup> "But [as for] the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. <sup>38</sup> "Whoever makes [any] like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people." [Exodus 30:34-38 NKJV](#)

It is interesting to me that ingredients are given but then it says that people should not make it for personal use. It is thought by some that these were not all the ingredients and that the full recipe was a closely guarded secret. Jewish historian Josephus mentioned thirteen ingredients. According to the Talmud, during the days of the second Temple, the responsibility for making and guarding the composition of the incense was entrusted to the Avtinas family. It seems that one of the characteristics of this special incense was that the smoke rose up in a straight column.<sup>167 168</sup> I think it would make sense that it would be a secret, rather than just trusting everyone to obey a command.

But what did the incense represent? According to David, and also John earlier in the book of Revelation, it represented prayer.

[Psalm 141:2](#) Let my prayer be set before You [as] incense, The lifting up of my hands [as] the evening sacrifice. [Psalm 141:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:8](#) Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [Revelation 5:8 NKJV](#)

If you think about it, the altar of incense was placed right in front of the veil, meaning the smoke would rise up and enter the Most Holy Place. It makes a lot of sense as a symbol of prayer. It is worth mentioning that the incense was not to be burned with common fire. It is generally accepted that holy fire is that which was ignited by God Himself when He burned the sacrifice on the altar in the opening ceremony of the sanctuary. The fire on the altar was to be kept burning perpetually and carried from the altar of sacrifice to the altar of incense by a special fire tray or censer. I couldn't find where is said so, but it makes sense that this same fire was also used to light the lampstand which subsequently was to be kept burning 24 hours a day.

[Leviticus 9:22](#) Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. <sup>23</sup> And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, <sup>24</sup> and fire came

<sup>167</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House\\_of\\_Avtinas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Avtinas)

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.templeinstitute.org/incense.htm>

out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw [it], they shouted and fell on their faces. [Leviticus 9:22-24 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 6:12](#) 'And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. [Leviticus 6:12 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 10:1](#) Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup> So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace. [Leviticus 10:1-3 NKJV](#)

Having concluded that incense, or more specifically, the smoke rising from burning incense can represent prayers, why do [verses 3, 4](#) mention adding incense to the prayers of the saints. Maybe common incense can represent our prayers, but the special incense burning with Holy fire mixing with ours is symbolic of what only God can do for us, after all, the fire was kindled by God Himself.

### *Thunderings, lightning and an earthquake*

I examined [thunder](#) for the [first seal](#). [Lightning](#) as well as thunder were described in the throne room of heaven in [Revelation 4](#). I examined [earthquake](#) for the [sixth seal](#). Thunder was often associated with God's voice or Him speaking. I believe lightning as well as earthquakes were associated with His presence.

Finally, the angel throws the censer to the earth, which seemed to cause thunder, lightning and an earthquake. I picture a spherical object flying through the air toward the earth with sparks flying out of the holes, and though it doesn't say so, when it impacts the earth, it is immediately followed by the thunder, lightning and earthquake. Smith says the act of throwing the censer to earth symbolizes that there are no more prayers of intercession, as the time for repentance is at an end and probation is closed.<sup>169</sup> The question I have is: are the thunder, lightning and earthquake symbolic or literal? Another question I had was about the timing of this, relative to the silence in heaven. Did it happen before the silence, during, or after?

### **Conclusion**

Many believe the seven trumpets are part of the great tribulation, such as the world has never seen. Perhaps that is why the chapter division was placed where it is, because chapter and verse are not part of the original manuscript. On the other hand, I believe that the seven trumpets, being in the historic first half of Revelation cover the same time period as the seven churches, and seven seals, but from a different perspective. Maxwell pointed out the following:

There is a truly impressive grandeur about the scope of the seven trumpets. Like the seven letters and the seven seals, the seven trumpets are located in the historic half of the Revelation chiasm. Like those others, the trumpets deal with the sweep of Christian history. But whereas the seven letters deal almost exclusively with the Christian church and the seven seals deal mainly with Western Christianized civilization, the seven trumpets are concerned with all three of the great world religions that worship the God of the Bible.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Smith. p539. <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA539>

<sup>170</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p225.

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What do you believe?

- What do you think the smoke from the burning incense represents?
- Do you think the censer thrown to earth represents something physical?
- Do you think the thunder, lightning and earthquake are symbolic or literal?

## The first trumpet

### [Revelation 8:6-7](#)

[Revelation 8:6](#) So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. <sup>7</sup> The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. [Revelation 8:6-7 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Seven*

Let's take a brief look at seven. Recall also that Pharaoh had predictive dreams with sevens in them [[Genesis 41](#)]. The seven churches in Revelation 2-3 were said to each have an angel:

[Revelation 1:20](#) "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. [Revelation 1:20 NKJV](#)

But I don't think this refers to the same angels.

There are seven days in the week with the Holy Sabbath being the seventh day. There were many sevens in the Levitical laws, including the seven-year cycle, and a seven times seven year cycle that was followed in the fiftieth by the year of Jubilee. On entry into the Promised Land, the Israelites marched around Jericho seven days, and seven times on the seventh day, and then seven priests blew trumpets, and the walls came down. Elisha told Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan River to be cleansed of his leprosy. There were many seven's in the Gospels and the stories Jesus told. There are many sevens in the book of Revelation as well, including the seven stars Jesus held in His hand, the Lamb representing Jesus with seven horns and seven eyes. There were seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven plagues, and many others. The historical interpretation of the seven churches, and the seven seals represent the entire history of the church. Many have said that the number seven in the Bible represents perfection or completeness which I am inclined to agree with.

### *Trumpet*

Let's look at how trumpets are used in the Bible. The word "trumpet" was used 60 times and "trumpets" 49 times in the NKJV. There were two types of trumpets that I could see, but the use of trumpets in the Bible did not usually distinguish the type. There was a trumpet that was a hollow rams' horn, and there were trumpets that were made from metal.

[Numbers 10:2](#) "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. [Numbers 10:2 NKJV](#)



There were possibly other types which were not described in the Bible. Trumpets were usually used to announce the start of something, particularly the Jewish festivals. Trumpets were often used at coronations. They were very often used in the military in the Bible, specifically mentioned were calling people to assemble, and signaling retreat or ceasing pursuit. They were used from watch towers as an alarm of coming danger. And of course, you can't forget that trumpets were also used for music. In the New Testament, whether literal or symbolic I don't know, but the trumpet is mentioned as sounding at the time of Christ's return.

There was one other instance in the Bible where seven trumpets are specifically mentioned, and that was when Israel was just entering the Promised Land.

[Joshua 6:12](#) And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while [the priests] continued blowing the trumpets. <sup>14</sup> And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. <sup>15</sup> But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!" [Joshua 6:12-16 NKJV](#)

I find it very interesting and more than coincidence because Israel entering the Promised Land can be very symbolic of God's people being redeemed from the earth and taken to heaven. The difference however is that at Jericho, the seven trumpets sounded all together, but in Revelation, one at a time.

### *Hail, fire and blood*

Thiele suggests the hail, fire, and blood are symbols of judgment based on the following four passages.<sup>171</sup>

[Ezekiel 38:19](#) "For in My jealousy [and] in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, <sup>20</sup> 'so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who [are] on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.' <sup>21</sup> "I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. [Ezekiel 38:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 11:6](#) Upon the wicked He will rain coals; **Fire** and brimstone and a burning wind [Shall be] the portion of their cup. [Psalm 11:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 28:1](#) Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, Whose glorious beauty [is] a fading flower Which [is] at the head of the verdant valleys, To those who are overcome with wine! <sup>2</sup> Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, Like a tempest of **hail** and a destroying storm, Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, Who will bring [them] down to the earth with [His] hand. [Isaiah 28:1-2 NKJV](#)

<sup>171</sup> Thiele. p163. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=9](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=9) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=9>

[Isaiah 29:1](#) "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city [where] David dwelt! Add year to year; Let feasts come around. ... <sup>6</sup> You will be punished by the LORD of hosts With thunder and earthquake and great noise, [With] storm and tempest And the flame of devouring **fire**. [Isaiah 29:1, 6 NKJV](#)

The plagues of Egypt involved hail, fire and blood. In fact, notice how similar the language is regarding the hail, fire and even what it impacted.

[Exodus 9:22](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt--on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." <sup>23</sup> And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and **hail**, and **fire** darted to the ground. And the LORD rained **hail** on the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup> So there was **hail**, and **fire** mingled with the **hail**, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. <sup>25</sup> And the **hail** struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that [was] in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every **herb** of the field and broke every **tree** of the field. <sup>26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel [were], there was no hail. [Exodus 9:22-26 NKJV](#)

I think it is notable that the plague of hail in Egypt did not impact the people of God.

### *Trees*

Thiele points out the following about trees as a symbol.<sup>172</sup>

#### Trees--A symbol of the people of God

[Psalm 1:3](#) He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. [Psalm 1:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 52:8](#) But I [am] like a green olive **tree** in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. [Psalm 52:8 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 92:12](#) The righteous shall flourish like a palm **tree**, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. [Psalm 92:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 65:22](#) They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a **tree**, [so shall be] the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. [Isaiah 65:22 NKJV](#)

#### Burnt--A symbol of judgment on the people of God

[Isaiah 10:16](#) Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, Will send leanness among his fat ones; And under his glory He will kindle a burning Like the **burning** of a **fire**. <sup>17</sup> So the Light of Israel will be for a **fire**, And his Holy One for a **flame**; It will **burn** and devour His thorns and his briars in one day. <sup>18</sup> And it will consume the glory of his **forest** and of his fruitful field, Both soul and body; And they will be as when a sick man wastes away. <sup>19</sup> Then the rest of the **trees** of his **forest** Will be so few in number That a child may write them. <sup>20</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day [That] the remnant of Israel, And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, Will never again depend on him who defeated them, But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. [Isaiah 10:16-20 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 11:16](#) The LORD called your name, Green Olive **Tree**, Lovely [and] of Good Fruit. With the noise of a great tumult He has kindled **fire** on it, And its **branches** are broken. <sup>17</sup> "For the LORD of hosts, who planted you, has

<sup>172</sup> Thiele. p163. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=9](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=9) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=9>

pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal." [Jeremiah 11:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 21:14](#) But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings," says the LORD; "I will kindle a **fire** in its **forest**, And it shall devour all things around it." " " [Jeremiah 21:14 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 22:7](#) I will prepare destroyers against you, Everyone with his weapons; They shall cut down your choice **cedars** And cast [them] into the **fire**. [Jeremiah 22:7 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 15:6](#) "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Like the **wood of the vine** among the trees of the **forest**, which I have given to the **fire** for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem; <sup>7</sup> 'and I will set My face against them. They will go out from [one] **fire**, but [another] **fire** shall devour them. Then you shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I set My face against them. [Ezekiel 15:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 11:1](#) Open your doors, O Lebanon, That **fire** may devour your **cedars**. ... <sup>6</sup> "For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD. "But indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver [them] from their hand." [Zechariah 11:1, 6 NKJV](#)

[Joel 1:19](#) O LORD, to You I cry out; For **fire** has devoured the open pastures, And a **flame** has **burned** all the **trees** of the field. <sup>20</sup> The beasts of the field also cry out to You, For the water brooks are dried up, And **fire** has devoured the open **pastures**. [Joel 1:19-20 NKJV](#)

### The dry, unfruitful tree of Jerusalem smitten

[Matthew 21:19](#) And seeing a fig **tree** by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig **tree withered** away. [Matthew 21:19 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:13](#) And seeing from afar a fig **tree** having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup> In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard [it]. <sup>15</sup> So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. <sup>16</sup> And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. <sup>17</sup> Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " <sup>18</sup> And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. <sup>19</sup> When evening had come, He went out of the city. <sup>20</sup> Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig **tree dried up** from the roots. <sup>21</sup> And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig **tree which You cursed has withered** away." [Mark 11:13-21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:31](#) "For if they do these things in the **green wood**, what will be done in the **dry**?" [Luke 23:31 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:1](#) There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all [other] Galileans, because they suffered such things? <sup>3</sup> "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup> "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all [other] men who dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." <sup>6</sup> He also spoke this parable: "A certain [man] had a **fig tree** planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look,

for three years I have come seeking fruit on this **fig tree** and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'<sup>8</sup> "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize [it].'<sup>9</sup> 'And if it bears fruit, [well]. But if not, after that you can **cut it down**.' " [Luke 13:1-9 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 80:8](#) You have brought a **vine** out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and **planted it**.<sup>9</sup> You prepared [room] for it, And caused it to take deep root, And it filled the land.<sup>10</sup> The hills were covered with its shadow, And the mighty **cedars** with its boughs.<sup>11</sup> She sent out her boughs to the Sea, And her **branches** to the River. [Psalm 80:8-11 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 80:15](#) And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch [that] You made strong for Yourself.<sup>16</sup> [It is] **burned with fire**, [it is] cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. [Psalm 80:15-16 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 79:1](#) A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.<sup>2</sup> The dead bodies of Your servants They have given [as] food for the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.<sup>3</sup> Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem, And [there was] no one to bury [them].<sup>4</sup> We have become a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and derision to those who are around us.<sup>5</sup> How long, LORD? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy **burn like fire**? [Psalm 79:1-5 NKJV](#)

## Grass

Finally, Thiele points out the following symbolism regarding grass.<sup>173</sup>

Grass—flourishing vegetation a symbol of a flourishing people, the fruitage of righteousness

[Isaiah 44:3](#) For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;<sup>4</sup> They will spring up among the **grass** Like willows by the watercourses.' [Isaiah 44:3-4 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 23:4](#) And [he shall be] like the light of the morning [when] the sun rises, A morning without clouds, [Like] the tender **grass** [springing] out of the earth, By clear shining after rain.' [2 Samuel 23:4 NKJV](#)

Grass dried and burnt—the once flourishing made desolate

[Joel 1:19](#) O LORD, to You I cry out; For fire has **devoured** the open **pastures**, And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.<sup>20</sup> The beasts of the field also cry out to You, For the water brooks are dried up, And fire has devoured the open pastures. [Joel 1:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 37:1](#) [A Psalm] of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.<sup>2</sup> For they shall soon be **cut down** like the **grass**, And wither as the green herb. [Psalm 37:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 90:5](#) You carry them away [like] a flood; [They are] like a sleep. In the morning they are like **grass** [which] grows up:<sup>6</sup> In the morning it flourishes and grows up; In the evening it is cut down and withers.<sup>7</sup> For we have been **consumed** by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified. [Psalm 90:5-7 NKJV](#)

<sup>173</sup> Thiele. p164. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=10](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=10) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=10>

[Psalm 92:7](#) When the wicked spring up like **grass**, And when all the workers of iniquity flourish, [It is] that they may be **destroyed** forever. [Psalm 92:7 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 40:6](#) The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh [is] **grass**, And all its loveliness [is] like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup> The **grass withers**, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people [are] **grass**. [Isaiah 40:6-7 NKJV](#)

The “third part,” which will occur over and over in the first four trumpets I believe represents a partial or restrained judgment or event. This contrasts with the plagues in the second half of the book which are implied to impact the whole. This makes sense in the context of my chosen interpretation because except for the flood, God doesn’t execute global punishment or judgment until the end.

### Interpreting the symbols

Probably the original belief about the seven trumpets in Revelation held by the Seventh-Day Adventist church can be found in the book *Daniel and Revelation* by Uriah Smith. Following the historicist approach to interpreting the prophecies of Revelation, he looked for fulfillment of the first trumpet in the early centuries of the Christian church. As I mentioned previously, trumpets were often used in the military, hence he focused on military activity. Since the early church was passive militarily, and the Roman church and the Roman Catholic Church has dominated such a significant portion of history, he began with the pagan Roman Empire, specifically the attacks from the Goths under Alaric.<sup>174</sup>

Angel Manuel Rodriguez in Ministry magazine wrote how, though Adventists are unitedly historical in their beliefs in the interpretation of the seven trumpets, they are divided in some of the details. See the table below that I reproduced from his article.<sup>175</sup>

Trumpet	U. Smith	E. Thiele	R. Naden	C. M. Maxwell	W. Shea	J. Paulien/ H. LaRondelle/ R. Stefanovic	A. Treiyer
First	Attack of Visigoths against Rome under Alaric.	God’s judgment on Jerusalem.	God’s judgment on Jerusalem.	God’s judgment on Jerusalem.	Pagan Rome persecutes Christians.	God’s judgment on Jerusalem.	Attack of Visigoths against Rome under Alaric.
Second	Attack of the Vandals against Rome.	God’s judgment on pagan Rome.	God’s judgment on pagan Rome.	God’s judgment on pagan Rome.	Fall of pagan Rome.	Fall of the Roman Empire.	Attack of the Vandals against Rome.
Third	Attack of the Huns against Rome.	God’s judgment against professed Christian church.	God’s judgment against professed Christian church.	God’s judgment against professed Christian church.	Apostasy of the Christian church.	Apostasy of the Christian church.	Attack of the Huns against Rome.
Fourth	Fall of Western Rome.	Darkness of the Middle Ages.	Darkness of the Middle Ages.	Darkness of the Middle Ages.	Darkness of the Middle Ages.	Rise of secular-atheism (Rev. 11:7).	Collapse of Western Rome and its system of worship.
Fifth	Rise of Islam. (5 months period; 1299 + 150 = 1449.)	Rise and progress of Islam. (5 months period; 1299 + 150 = 1449.)	Satan’s attack on the Reformation by the Counter-Reformation. (5 months = 150 years; 1535–1685.)	Rise and progress of Islam. (5 months = 150 years; first Muslim attack on Constantinople in 674 to the last in 823 [only 149 years].)	Crusades during the Middle Ages. (5 months = 150 years; 1099–1249; from the capture of Jerusalem to the beginning of the last crusade.)	Reign of secular-atheism. (5 months = God’s judgments are comprehensive but limited; cf. Gen. 7:24; 8:3.)	Rise of Islam against apostate Christianity. (5 months = 150 years; 632–782; first Islamic expansionist wave.)
Sixth	Ottoman Empire. (1 day, 1 month, 1 year = 391 years; 1449–1840.)	Ottoman Empire. (391 years; 1449–1840.)	Time of final crisis; from 18th century to close of probation.	Ottoman Empire. (391 years; 1453, fall of Byzantine Empire to 1844.)	Ottoman Empire. (391 years; 1453–1844, when the edict of toleration was issued.)	Rise of end-time Babylon. The final crisis described in 7:1–3 and Rev. 13–16. (1 hour, 1 day, 1	Ottoman Empire. (391 years; 1453–1844, when the edict

<sup>174</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p537 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA537>

<sup>175</sup> Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. “Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets.” Ministry, January 2012, Nampa, ID, p8. <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <http://btlb.org/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>

					month, refers to a divine appointed moment of time.)	of toleration was issued.)	
Seventh	Mystery of God is finished.	Mystery of God is finished.	Consummation.	Mystery of God is finished.	Mystery of God is finished.	Sets final events in motion. (Summary of events described in Rev. 12–22.)	Time of the end when the mystery of God is accomplished.

It seems that Adventist theologians have for the most part taken the liberty to propose and believe interpretations of the seven trumpets, different from what the church originally taught. It seems there is a fair amount of consensus on the first three trumpets. I read what Thiele wrote on the seven trumpets in *Outline Studies in Revelation II*.<sup>176</sup> I also read Maxwell, on the seven trumpets, who referenced Thiele, in his well-known book *God Cares vol2*.<sup>177</sup> I also came across a paper written by Jon Paulien to be presented to the General Conference of the SDA Church regarding his thoughts on the seven trumpets. It describes some of the thought process behind the historicist interpretation of Revelation and a bit more of the process by which he arrived at his ideas summarized in the sixth column of Rodriguez's table.<sup>178</sup>

It is difficult to bring up any diversity in the beliefs of Adventists' without bringing up Ellen White to see where she weighs in on the subject. Near the end of the Ministry Magazine article, Rodriguez did address one of her positions, that being a mention of the Josiah Litch interpretation of a 391-year period in the sixth trumpet, and how in the last years before 1844, it added credibility to the movement.

In the year 1840, another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. Two years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the second advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman empire, and specifying not only the year but the very day on which this would take place. According to this exposition, which was purely a matter of calculation on the prophetic periods of Scripture, the Turkish government would surrender its independence on the eleventh day of August, 1840. The prediction was widely published, and thousands watched the course of events with eager interest.

At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the Advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller, both in preaching and publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844 the work rapidly extended. [White. Great Controversy. p334](#)<sup>179</sup>

Many Adventists have considered this an endorsement of Litch's interpretation of the sixth trumpet. However, Rodriguez cautions that she never again mentions 1840 as a year when prophecy was fulfilled.<sup>180</sup> I would add that

<sup>176</sup> Thiele, Edwin R. *Outline Studies in Revelation II*. Avondale College, 1974. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf)  
<https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf>

<sup>177</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p228-268.

<sup>178</sup> Paulien, Jon. *Interpreting the Seven Trumpets*. Berrien Springs, MI, February, 1986. <http://btlib.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf>

<sup>179</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p334.  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA334>  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=334>

<sup>180</sup> Rodriguez. p9. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>  
<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=9>

perhaps her statement could be seen as describing an event early in her life, even before her first vision, that did indeed have the effect of giving impetus to the 1844 movement.

With the obvious connection between trumpets and the military, one could see why Doug Batchelor and others have suggested that the seven trumpets cover the military history of the church. [13:20 <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/media/e/2315/t/an-overview-of-revelation--apocalypse-synopsis--pt--2>] Uriah Smith suggests the trumpets represent the political and war like events of the church.<sup>181</sup> However, Edwin Thiele wrote, “the trumpets are warning judgments and scourges of a limited nature that have largely taken place in past times when men in various places and ages forsook God and gave themselves over to the control of darkness.”<sup>182</sup> Maxwell wrote, “Nonetheless, the warning judgments of the seven trumpets may be perceived as an expression of love. Their purpose was to persuade **“the rest of mankind”** to “repent”—but tragically, they **“did not repent.”** [Revelation 9:20](#).<sup>183</sup> Paulien wrote, “This indicates that while the trumpets portray judgments on the enemies of God’s people (cf. 9:4), their purpose is to lead to repentance, even though they do not succeed in doing so with the unsealed.”<sup>184</sup>

## Conclusion

Ultimately I find myself believing a fairly common Adventist interpretation which is that the first trumpet represents judgment on Jerusalem in 70 A.D.. By this time, recall that the Jews as a nation had completely rejected Jesus as their long looked for Messiah. They had even gone so far as to accept the effects of shedding innocent blood, as Pilate had declared Jesus to be.

[Matthew 27:25](#) And all the people answered and said, "His blood [be] on us and on our children." [Matthew 27:25 NKJV](#)

In effect, it seems that they pronounced their own sentence. After Jesus was gone, they continued to harass and persecute His followers. Though the early church was initially composed of Jews, many of whom were converted by the testimony of the disciples, clearly the Jewish nation had rejected Jesus and His followers. I know the destruction of Jerusalem most likely occurred before the time John received this revelation, but from a historical perspective, I don’t think that matters at all. You can think of it as punishment from God for rejecting Jesus if you like, but I think it was the natural result of their behavior against the Romans once God’s protection was withdrawn.

I don’t necessarily believe that God always punishes or scourges as a parent might punish a child. But as a parent, I understand the benefit of punishment, and if God never punished when it is needed, He would not be acting in the best interest of His people. As a parent, one realizes that they do not always have to execute punishment, because often natural consequences are sufficient, and even better for learning. Executed punishment is merely a substitute, in cases where natural consequences did not follow. A student of history would realize that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, was a natural consequence of the rebelliousness of the Jews. In my opinion, the only part God had in this judgment was to lift His protection. So, looking ahead at the remaining six trumpets, I have a hard

<sup>181</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p538 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA538>

<sup>182</sup> Thiele, Edwin R. *Outline Studies in Revelation II*. Avondale College, 1974, p162. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=8](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=8)  
<https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=8>

<sup>183</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p224.

<sup>184</sup> Paulien. p9. <http://btlib.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=9>

time thinking of them all as judgments from God, but rather see them as events of a certain nature that occurred down through the history of the church.

What do you believe?

- Do you think a historicist interpretation of the seven trumpets can have them all in the future?
- If the symbols are literal, how do you envision blood mixed with hail and fire?
- With so many possible interpretations of these visions in Revelation, do you think God will reveal the correct one to His people?

## The second trumpet

### [Revelation 8:8-9](#)

[Revelation 8:8](#) Then the second angel sounded: And [something] like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. <sup>9</sup> And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. [Revelation 8:8-9 NKJV](#)

Regarding what John saw and was attempting to describe, a detail that jumped out at me is: “like” a mountain being thrown into the sea. If it really was a mountain that he saw, wouldn’t he have just said so? This kind of language would be expected if John is seeing something from the future that he doesn’t recognize, so he describes it in terms of something he understands. Do does he mean something as big as a mountain? It baffles me to come up with any ideas of something big like a mountain that isn’t a mountain unless human beings in the future are able to make something as big as a mountain. Maybe this comes from my love of science fiction movies but this sound like a massive spaceship hovering over the sea that is attacked and ablaze, crashing into the water, and subsequently polluting and killing a third of the sea.

### Examining the symbols

#### *Mountain*

If interpreting this trumpet symbolically, then it may not matter what he actually saw in vision as long the mountain can still be used as the symbol. Thiele gave the following references for the symbolism of a burning mountain.<sup>185</sup>

Mountain—a symbol of a people, nation, or power

[Jeremiah 51:24](#) "And I will repay Babylon And all the inhabitants of Chaldea For all the evil they have done In Zion in your sight," says the LORD. <sup>25</sup> "Behold, I [am] against you, O destroying **mountain**, Who destroys all the earth," says the LORD. "And I will stretch out My hand against you, Roll you down from the rocks, And make you a burnt **mountain**. [Jeremiah 51:24-25 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 2:2](#) Now it shall come to pass in the latter days [That] the **mountain** of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the **mountains**, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. <sup>3</sup> Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the **mountain** of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He

<sup>185</sup> Thiele. p165. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=11](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=11) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=11>



will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [Isaiah 2:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 13:4](#) The noise of a multitude in the **mountains**, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle. [Isaiah 13:4 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 2:35](#) "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great **mountain** and filled the whole earth. [Daniel 2:35 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 2:44](#) "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. <sup>45</sup> "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." [Daniel 2:44-45 NKJV](#)

### Fire—a force of destruction and judgment

[Psalm 50:3](#) Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; A **fire** shall devour before Him, And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. [Psalm 50:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 97:3](#) A **fire** goes before Him, And burns up His enemies round about. [Psalm 97:3 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 4:4](#) Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like **fire**, And burn so that no one can quench [it], Because of the evil of your doings." [Jeremiah 4:4 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 10:16](#) Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, Will send leanness among his fat ones; And under his glory He will kindle a burning Like the burning of a **fire**. <sup>17</sup> So the Light of Israel will be for a **fire**, And his Holy One for a flame; It will burn and devour His thorns and his briars in one day. <sup>18</sup> And it will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, Both soul and body; And they will be as when a sick man wastes away. [Isaiah 10:16-18 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 22:9](#) Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring **fire** from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. <sup>10</sup> He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet. <sup>11</sup> He rode upon a cherub, and flew; And He was seen upon the wings of the wind. <sup>12</sup> He made darkness canopies around Him, Dark waters [and] thick clouds of the skies. <sup>13</sup> From the brightness before Him Coals of **fire** were kindled. <sup>14</sup> "The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice. <sup>15</sup> He sent out arrows and scattered them; Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them. <sup>16</sup> Then the channels of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered, At the rebuke of the LORD, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils. [2 Samuel 22:9-16 NKJV](#)

### Sea

Since the seas seems to be such a prominent part of this trumpet, let's take a look at the Biblical use of the word. There were several bodies of water that were called seas in the New Testament. A word search for "sea" yielded 390 hits in 340 verses in the NKJV. 89 verses in the NKJV New Testament contained the word sea. Many times the word was use generically to refer to a large body of water. In the entire Bible there were several seas that were specifically named. Probably most common in the Gospels would be the Sea of Galilee. There was also the Dead Sea also known as the Salt Sea. Paul mentions which Adriatic Sea. The occurrences of the word Sea with a capital letter, meaning it was part of a name of a specific body of water are listed below.

- Salt Sea (dead) [[Genesis 14:3](#); [Numbers 34:3,34:12](#); [Deuteronomy 3:17](#); [Joshua 3:16,12:3,15:2,15:5,18:19](#)]
- Red Sea [[Exodus 10:19,13:18,15:4,15:22,23:31](#); [Numbers 14:25,21:4,33:10-11](#); [Deuteronomy 1:40,2:1,11:4](#); [Joshua 2:10,4:23,24:6](#); [Judges 11:16](#); [1 Kings 19:26](#); [Nehemiah 9:9](#); [Psalm 106:7,9,22,136:13,15](#); [Jeremiah 49:21](#); [Acts 7:36](#); [Hebrews 11:29](#)]
- Great Sea (Mediterranean) [[Numbers 34:6-7](#); [Joshua 1:4,1:9,15:12,15:47,23:4](#); [Ezekiel 47:10,15,19,20](#)]
- Sea of Galilee (Chinnereth) [[Numbers 34:11](#); [Joshua 12:3,13:27](#), [Matthew 4:18,15:29](#); [Mark 1:6,7:31](#); [John 6:1](#)]
- Sea of the Arabah [[2 Kings 14:25](#)]
- Sea of Egypt (Red Sea?) [[Isaiah 11:15](#)]
- Sea of Tiberius (Galilee) [[John 21:1](#)]
- Adriatic Sea [[Acts 27:27](#)]

It is not surprising that the Red Sea was mentioned so many times in the Bible, after all its crossing was synonymous with the Exodus and the beginning of the Israelite nation. The three sea's that bordered or were within the borders of Israel in Bible times were the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The only one large enough to carry ships for commerce or warfare was the Mediterranean or Great Sea. Although I'm sure it was referred to in the New Testament, it is interesting that it was not directly mentioned by name. We know that Paul sailed on it in his missionary journeys. Patmos where John was exiled when he wrote the book of Revelation was surrounded by the Adriatic Sea which is the same body of water as the Mediterranean. It is likely that this body of water is what John envisioned when he saw something thrown into it, when a third of the creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed. However, if what John saw was meant to be symbolic, it might not matter which sea it actually was that he saw.

The word sea was of course used multiple times in Daniel and Revelation prophetically, in addition to what was mentioned in the seven trumpets.

- Four winds stirred up the great sea [[Daniel 7:2](#)]
- Four great beasts came up from the sea [[Daniel 7:3](#)]
- Four angels held back the four winds so they would not hurt the earth, sea or trees until the servants of God were sealed [[Revelation 7:1-3](#)]
- An angel stood with his right foot on the sea and his left on the land [[Revelation 10:2](#)]
- A beast with ten horns and seven heads came up out of the sea [[Revelation 13:1](#)]
- The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea and everything in it died [[Revelation 16:3](#)]

The generally accepted thinking regarding the beasts that came up out of the sea is that the sea represented people and hence, it symbolized a nation or empire rising up in the populated regions of the earth mentioned in the Bible. Today I would classify Bible lands as North Africa, Southern Europe and the Middle East.

## Blood

Thiele also gave the following references for the symbolism of blood and sea creatures.<sup>186</sup>

Blood—a symbol of war, strife and bloodshed

[1 Kings 2:5](#) "Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, [and] what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the **blood** of war in peacetime, and put the **blood** of war on his belt that [was] around his waist, and on his sandals that [were] on his feet. [1 Kings 2:5 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 32:6](#) 'I will also water the land with the flow of your **blood**, [Even] to the mountains; And the riverbeds will be full of you. [Ezekiel 32:6 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 38:21](#) "I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. <sup>22</sup> "And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and **bloodshed**; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who [are] with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. [Ezekiel 38:21-22 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:30](#) "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: **Blood** and fire and pillars of smoke. [Joel 2:30 NKJV](#)

[Micah 3:10](#) Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity: [Micah 3:10 NKJV](#)

Creatures in the sea and ships—people making up the great sea of humanity, and their material possessions and conveniences

[Ezekiel 47:9](#) "And it shall be [that] every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. <sup>10</sup> "It shall be [that] fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be [places] for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the **fish of the Great Sea**, exceedingly many. [Ezekiel 47:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 1:14](#) [Why] do You make **men like fish of the sea**, Like creeping things [that have] no ruler over them? [Habakkuk 1:14 NKJV](#)

## Interpreting the symbols

The original historicist interpretation of the second trumpet by the Seventh-Day Adventist church is the invasion of North Africa by Genseric.<sup>187</sup> But, from the table presented by Rodriguez, it seems that many Adventist theologians have elected to apply the second trumpet to God's punishment of the Roman Empire in general and its fall.<sup>188</sup> If you take the sea to be the Roman civilization before it fell apart, it is not difficult to see how the invasion of various barbarian tribes could be symbolized by this scene that John saw. Let's continue by looking at some of the other elements John mentioned.

<sup>186</sup> Thiele. p165. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=11](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=11) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=11>

<sup>187</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p542 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA542>

<sup>188</sup> Rodriguez. p8. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation> <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>

We see the “thirds” again as was mentioned multiple times in the first trumpet, and will come up again in the third and fourth trumpets as well. It seems strange for that fraction to be repeated that many times without it having some symbolic significance.

Let’s take a little diversion into the fraction of “one third” in the Bible. The word “third” was found 193 times in the NKJV, however most of them had to do with the counting rather than the fraction. It was used a few times for measurements as a third of a unit of something in a recipe [[Numbers 15:6-7](#), [Numbers 28:14](#), [Ezekiel 46:14](#)]. David divided his army into thirds and placed them under three commanders in the uprising by Absalom [[2 Samuel 18:2](#)]. When trying to install the rightful king Joash, Jehoida divided his secret allies into thirds and placed them strategically around the temple courtyard [[2 Kings 11:4-8](#), [2 Chronicles 23](#)]. In Nehemiah’s time a temple tax of one third of a shekel was established [[Nehemiah 10:32](#)]. In Ezekiel’s prophecy of the desolation of Jerusalem, God told him to cut off the hair on his head and divide it in thirds, symbolizing the one third that would die by plague or famine, one third that would die by the sword, and one third that would be scattered [[Ezekiel 5](#)]. Zechariah speaks of two thirds that will be cut off and perish and one third that will go through fire and be refined as silver and gold, and will call on the name of God and will be His people [[Zechariah 13:7-9](#)]. Of course, there is extensive use of thirds in the seven trumpets which you will see as you read each one. Finally in [Revelation 12:4](#) in the retelling of the fall of Satan, it is mentioned that he swept away a third of the stars in heaven, which is commonly interpreted to mean that a third of the angels sided with him. The only one that seemed somewhat related was Ezekiel 5 and since it’s not that long, I will include it all.

[Ezekiel 5:1](#) "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass [it] over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the [hair]. <sup>2</sup> "You shall burn with fire **one-third** in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take **one-third** and strike around [it] with the sword, and **one-third** you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them. <sup>3</sup> "You shall also take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your [garment]. <sup>4</sup> "Then take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'This [is] Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. <sup>6</sup> 'She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that [are] all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.' <sup>7</sup> "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have multiplied [disobedience] more than the nations that [are] all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that [are] all around you'—<sup>8</sup> "therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Indeed I, even I, [am] against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. <sup>9</sup> 'And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. <sup>10</sup> 'Therefore fathers shall eat [their] sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds.

<sup>11</sup> 'Therefore, [as] I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish [you]; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. <sup>12</sup> '**One-third** of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and **one-third** shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another **third** to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

<sup>13</sup> 'Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken [it] in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them. <sup>14</sup> 'Moreover I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that [are] all around you, in the sight of all who pass by.

<sup>15</sup> 'So it shall be a reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that [are] all around you, when I execute judgments among you in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken. <sup>16</sup> 'When I send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your supply of bread. <sup>17</sup> 'So I will send against you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken.' " [Ezekiel 5:1-17 NKJV](#)

Things of note here are that since Israel was supposed to be God's people in the Old Testament and He is executing judgment on them by thirds, then this is not talking about the whole world. So, does this correlate at all with the thirds used in the seven trumpets? Well, I think it does because in the first trumpet, I believe it is a judgment against God's people Israel. The second trumpet, I believe is a judgment against the apostate church in the form of the Roman Empire.

### Conclusion

I think I find myself aligning with the camp that associates this second trumpet with the fall of Rome in the west. In prophetic symbolism, Daniel saw the beast representing the Roman Empire coming up out of the sea. Regarding the fraction of the sea that was impacted, note that the Roman Empire in the east did not fall at the same time, but stood for hundreds of years longer. Recall that in the first trumpet, the punishment came against Jerusalem who had rejected Jesus and was persecuting His true followers. In the fourth century, under the Emperor Constantine, the Roman Empire had essentially become the church when he made Christianity the official religion of the empire. The union of church and state ended the persecution of the Christian church and swelled its ranks but accelerated its apostasy. In the fifth century under attacks by barbarian tribes, the Roman Empire in the west finally fell. One could say the apostate church was now being punished in its form as the Roman Empire. I will hasten to add as I suggested for Jerusalem, that the fall of Rome was the natural result moral decay and other factors, and not a supernatural punishment against the empire. That does not take away from the fact that God could have chosen to predict its downfall in the second trumpet.

What do you believe?

- What are your thoughts on something "like" a mountain?
- Do you think this trumpet should be interpreted symbolically or literally?
- If the empire in the west fell but not the east, how would the fraction one third apply?

### The third trumpet

#### [Revelation 8:10-11](#)

[Revelation 8:10](#) Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. <sup>11</sup> The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. [Revelation 8:10-11 NKJV](#)

The instrument of destruction in this trumpet is said to be a great star. What is the significance of being a great star as opposed to just being a star? In the literal sense, it doesn't really take much of a meteor to do much damage. In fact we know we're not talking about a literal star because they are much bigger than earth and their damage would not be limited to one third if they impacted the earth. If a meteor, does it make any sense to describe it as a great meteor? It seems to lean toward some kind of symbolism.

## Examining the symbols

### Star

Let's look at the word star in the Bible. Surprisingly it was only found sixteen times in 15 verses in the NKJV. The first in [Numbers 24:17](#) is a prophecy that said a star would come out of Jacob, which has always been taken as a prophecy of the Messiah.

[Numbers 24:17](#) "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A **Star** shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult. [Numbers 24:17 NKJV](#)

The final use in the Old Testament is in [Amos 5:26](#), where it seems to refer to the favorite or most important of Israel's false gods.

[Amos 5:26](#) You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The **star** of your gods, Which you made for yourselves. [Amos 5:26 NKJV](#)

In the New Testament, the first four mentions, and the only in the Gospels, is in [Matthew 2](#). It is the story of the journey of the magi, following the star that was prophesied in [Numbers 24:17](#).

[Matthew 2:2](#) saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His **star** in the East and have come to worship Him." <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard [this], he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> 'But you, Bethlehem, [in] the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' " <sup>7</sup> Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the **star** appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found [Him], bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." <sup>9</sup> When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the **star** which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the **star**, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. [Matthew 2:2-10 NKJV](#)

In [Acts 7:43](#), Stephen is retelling the history of Israel and reminds them of the idolatry in their past,

[Acts 7:43](#) You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the **star** of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.' [Acts 7:43 NKJV](#)

There are a couple references to the morning star.

[2 Peter 1:19](#) And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the **morning star** rises in your hearts; [2 Peter 1:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:28](#) "and I will give him the **morning star**. [Revelation 2:28 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:16](#) "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." [Revelation 22:16 NKJV](#)

Looking ahead to the fifth trumpet, a star that had fallen to earth, was given the key to the bottomless pit. Some think this is the same star that fell to earth in this third trumpet that we are talking about.

[Revelation 9:1](#) Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a **star** fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. [Revelation 9:1 NKJV](#)

The plural, stars, was found 50 times in the NKJV, but mostly as literal stars. In [Judges 5:20](#), the stars were said to have fought on behalf of the Israelites against the Canaanites.

[Judges 5:20](#) They fought from the heavens; The **stars** from their courses fought against Sisera. [Judges 5:20 NKJV](#)

Since in the previous chapter it says that "The LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak;" [[Judges 4:15](#)], some take this to mean that the LORD used supernatural means to defeat Sisera and his army. Matthew Henry suggested perhaps fire from heaven, or I would say perhaps literal angels. The stars in [5:20](#) could refer to either. In summary, I would say that the word star can be a symbol of Jesus, Satan, angels, or a false god.

### *Rivers and springs*

In the previous trumpet, the sea was primarily affected, whereas in this one it is the rivers and springs. I would take these two as describing sources of drinking water. The first making their way down the mountains and the second from underground. Once again, we have the thirds as we did in the first two trumpets, the difference here being that this is the first time that men are specifically said to die. If you leave the door open for this third trumpet to be future and possibly literal, it is not difficult to see how a meteor strike at the source of rivers could pollute or poison them.

### *Fountains of water*

I already discussed the symbolism of a star in prophecy as being either a deity or angel. Let's look at some of the other symbols with references provided by Thiele.<sup>189</sup>

#### Pure fountains, rivers, and wells—sources of life and blessing

[Psalm 36:8](#) They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the **river** of Your pleasures. <sup>9</sup> For with You [is] the **fountain** of life; In Your light we see light. [Psalm 36:8-9 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 2:13](#) "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the **fountain** of living waters, [And] hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water. [Jeremiah 2:13 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 17:8](#) For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the **river**, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. [Jeremiah 17:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>189</sup> Thiele. p166. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=12](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=12) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=12>

[Jeremiah 17:13](#) O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. "Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the LORD, The **fountain** of living waters." [Jeremiah 17:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 12:3](#) Therefore with joy you will draw water From the **wells** of salvation. [Isaiah 12:3 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 41:18](#) I will open rivers in desolate heights, And **fountains** in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land **springs** of water. [Isaiah 41:18 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 8:7](#) "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of **brooks** of water, of **fountains** and **springs**, that flow out of valleys and hills; [Deuteronomy 8:7 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 13:14](#) The law of the wise [is] a **fountain** of life, To turn [one] away from the snares of death. [Proverbs 13:14 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 14:27](#) The fear of the LORD [is] a **fountain** of life, To turn [one] away from the snares of death. [Proverbs 14:27 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:18](#) And it will come to pass in that day [That] the mountains shall drip with new wine, The hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; A **fountain** shall flow from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Acacias. <sup>19</sup> "Egypt shall be a desolation, And Edom a desolate wilderness, Because of violence [against] the people of Judah, For they have shed innocent blood in their land. <sup>20</sup> But Judah shall abide forever, And Jerusalem from generation to generation. [Joel 3:18-20 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 13:1](#) "In that day a **fountain** shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. [Zechariah 13:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:6](#) And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the **fountain** of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. [Revelation 21:6 NKJV](#)

[John 4:10](#) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you **living water**." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that **living water**? [John 4:10-11 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 47:1](#) Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was **water, flowing** from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the **water was flowing** from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup> He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. <sup>3</sup> And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water [came up to my] ankles. <sup>4</sup> Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water [came up to my] knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water [came up to my] waist. <sup>5</sup> Again he measured one thousand, [and it was] a **river** that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. <sup>6</sup> He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen [this]?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> When I returned, there, along the bank of the **river**, [were] very many trees on one side and the other. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. [When it] reaches the sea, [its] waters are healed. <sup>9</sup> "And it shall be [that] every living thing that moves,



wherever the **rivers** go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the **river** goes. <sup>10</sup> "It shall be [that] fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be [places] for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. <sup>11</sup> "But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. <sup>12</sup> "Along the bank of the **river**, on this side and that, will grow all [kinds of] trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their **water flows** from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine." [Ezekiel 47:1-12 NKJV](#)

### Corrupt and defiled fountains—sources of illness and death

[Proverbs 25:26](#) A righteous [man] who falters before the wicked [is like] a **murky spring** and a **polluted well**. [Proverbs 25:26 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 6:7](#) As a fountain wells up with **water**, So she wells up with her wickedness. Violence and plundering are heard in her. Before Me continually [are] grief and wounds. [Jeremiah 6:7 NKJV](#)

[James 3:11](#) Does a **spring** send forth fresh [water] and bitter from the same opening? [James 3:11 NKJV](#)

### Springs once pure can become dry or corrupt

[Hosea 13:15](#) Though he is fruitful among [his] brethren, An east wind shall come; The wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness. Then his **spring** shall become dry, And his fountain shall be dried up. He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize. [Hosea 13:15 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 50:12](#) Your mother shall be deeply ashamed; She who bore you shall be ashamed. Behold, the least of the nations [shall be] a wilderness, A dry land and a desert. ... <sup>38</sup> A drought [is] against her **waters**, and they will be dried up. For it [is] the land of carved images, And they are insane with [their] idols. [Jeremiah 50:12, 38 NKJV](#)

### Wormwood

I was curious about the use of the word “wormwood” in the Bible. In the New Testament, [ἀψίνθιον, apsinthion](#)<sup>190</sup>, the Greek word from which it is translated doesn’t seem to have much of a definition aside from its use in the third trumpet. It is used twice in the same verse, the first being as a proper noun or name of the star and the second relating to the effect it left which is bitterness. In the Old Testament, it was found 8 times in the NKJV, and was the same Hebrew word, [לְעֵנָה, la’ănâ](#)<sup>191</sup>. Not surprisingly seven of the eight were used in the context of poisonous or bitterness. The eighth from Amos:

[Amos 5:7](#) You who turn justice to **wormwood**, And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!" [Amos 5:7 NKJV](#)

seems to be used in a metaphorical way which easily goes along with the poison or bitter use in the rest of the Old Testament. Strong’s definition is: from an unused root supposed to mean to curse; wormwood (regarded as poisonous, and therefore accursed):—hemlock, wormwood.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>190</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsgs=G894&t=NASB>

<sup>191</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongsgs=H3939&t=NASB>

<sup>192</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongsgs=H3939&t=NASB>

## Interpreting the symbols

The traditional historicist interpretation of this trumpet by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is that the star represents Attila the Hun in his attacks on the Roman Empire.<sup>193</sup> The following quotes were used by Smith, Barnes and others supporting the idea that Attila could be symbolized by a star like a burning torch.

In the manner of his appearance, he strongly resembled a brilliant meteor flashing in the sky. He came from the east, gathering his Huns, and poured them down, as we shall see, with the rapidity of a flashing meteor, suddenly on the empire. He regarded himself also as devoted to Mars, the god of war, and was accustomed to array himself in a peculiarly brilliant manner, so that his appearance in the language of his flatterers, was such as to dazzle the eyes of beholders. [Barnes. Notes on Revelation. p234.](#)<sup>194</sup>

... the favourite of Mars soon acquired a sacred character, which rendered his conquests more easy and more permanent; and the barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion or flattery, that they could not presume to gaze, with a steady eye, on the divine majesty of the king of the Huns. [Gibbon. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. p528.](#)<sup>195</sup>

Like a meteor, he swept in and destroyed:

The Illyrian frontier was covered by a line of castles and fortresses; and though the greatest part of them consisted only of a single tower, with a small garrison, they were commonly sufficient to repel, or to intercept, the inroads of an enemy, who was ignorant of the art, and impatient of the delay, of a regular siege. But these slight obstacles were instantly swept away by the inundation of the Huns. They destroyed, with fire and sword, the populous cities of Sirmium and Singidunum, of Ratiaria and Marcianapolis, of Naissus and Sardica; where every circumstance, in the discipline of the people, and the construction of the buildings, had been gradually adapted to the sole purposes of defence. The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Hadriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field. [Gibbon. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. p528.](#)<sup>196</sup>

Then he quickly burned out, dying young after a night of drinking and partying, as did Alexander the Great.<sup>197</sup>

From the table presented by Rodriguez, it seems that some Adventist theologians have since elected to apply the third trumpet to God's punishment of the professed Christian Church, or the apostasy of the church.<sup>198</sup> Paulien didn't elaborate on how the symbols related to his interpretation except to say:

We have concluded earlier that John, in writing out the vision of the seven trumpets, utilized language and imagery that point the reader to major historical acts of judgment carried out by God in the course of the Christian era. These judgments follow one another in chronological sequence. They fall, in response to the

<sup>193</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p547 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA547>

<sup>194</sup> Barnes, Albert. Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation. New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1859, p234. <https://books.google.com/books?id=TIJgr7wHLolC&pg=PA234>

<sup>195</sup> Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London, T. Cadell, Strand, 1831, p528. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA528>

<sup>196</sup> Gibbon. p529. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA529>

<sup>197</sup> Gibbon. p548. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA548>

<sup>198</sup> Rodriguez. p8. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>  
<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>

prayers of the saints, on those who have opposed God and His people. The 2000 year length of Christian history further indicates that these judgment events must be major trends in history not just minor details. [Paulien, p83](#)<sup>199</sup>

The third trumpet exudes an overwhelming flavor of apostasy, which perverts the truth of God. This is rightly associated with the church's compromise with paganism and the corresponding rise of the papacy as a scourge on those who had moved away from the Word of God to the doctrines of men. [Paulien, p85](#)<sup>200</sup>

I agree with Paulien that the trumpets should be major trends, hence, I am not in favor of the original Adventist interpretation which allocates the first three trumpets to the fall of Rome. The problem with the judgment alternative is that it is not really a punishment against the former people of God as the first two can be portrayed. The next major trend as viewed from a historical perspective is the continued apostasy of the church on its own, as opposed to under the umbrella of the Roman Empire. I guess you can look at it as something they allowed Satan to do to them. If stars can represent angels, a great star is easily symbolic of Satan that was cast from heaven to this earth, and it has always been his objective to pervert and distort (make bitter) the Word of God to accomplish his own purpose. In this case, the Christian religion, undoubtedly under the influence of Satan, became a tool to manipulate and oppress people. Those in power taught that the consequences of non-compliance with their teachings would be everlasting torture in the fires of Hell. But not only that, many who didn't comply were horribly tortured and killed. The Word of God, the Bible, was kept out of the hands of the common people. Abuses such as the selling of God's forgiveness for sins became the norm. Crusaders in the name of Christ committed unspeakable crimes against the supposed enemies of the Church. Clearly Satan had succeeded in turning the pure, life giving Gospel of Jesus Christ into a bitter curse. [See references provided in the [Message to the Church in Thyatira](#), and [the fourth seal](#)]

### Conclusion

Five of the seven people in Rodriguez's table interpret this trumpet as God's punishment against the supposed Christian Church, or the apostasy of the Christian Church.<sup>201</sup> I have a hard time describing what happened as a punishment from God, so instead I will go with the latter, believing this trumpet depicts the apostasy of the church.

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What do you believe?

- Do you have a problem with me interpreting the third trumpet as something done by the professed people of God, as opposed to what was done to them, as in the first two trumpets?
- Do you think Satan can do this much damage directly, or do you think he needs to find willing human instruments to work through?
- Do you think the instruments of Satan were doing what they thought was right, or do you think they were taking advantage of their position to increase their wealth or power?

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<sup>199</sup> Paulien. p83. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=83](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=83)

<sup>200</sup> Paulien. p85. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=85](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=85)

<sup>201</sup> Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. "Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets." Ministry, January 2012, Nampa, ID, p8. <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <http://btlb.org/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>

## The fourth trumpet

### [Revelation 8:12](#)

[Revelation 8:12](#) Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

[Revelation 8:12 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

#### *Sun struck, moon and stars darkened*

Is it just a coincidence that in the creation account, the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day? There are also other places in the Bible that mention signs in the sun, moon, and stars. I will start by listing the ones that seem to mention them as symbols of something else.

[Genesis 37:9](#) Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." <sup>10</sup> So he told [it] to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What [is] this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

[Genesis 37:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:1](#) Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. [Revelation 12:1 NKJV](#)

These first two are clearly symbolic. The first in Genesis was a dream that Joseph experienced with the symbols being obvious and confirmed for us in the very next verse. In this case the sun represented his father, the moon his mother and the stars his brothers. In the next one in Revelation, most agree that a pure woman represents God's people, the sun represents the glory of the gospel of salvation, and the twelve stars represent the twelve apostles. There are various interpretations for the moon, but I like one shared by Amazing Facts. The moon which in reality reflects the light of the sun, represents the Old Testament sacrificial system of the Jews, which was a symbol and foreshadowing of the actual sacrifice of Jesus.<sup>202</sup>

[Psalm 148:3](#) Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! [Psalm 148:3 NKJV](#)

This one is not literal because the sun and moon are inanimate. In fact, the whole chapter is a song or poem about all creation praising God.

[Ezekiel 32:7](#) When [I] put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give her light. [Ezekiel 32:7 NKJV](#)

This one from Ezekiel seems to be either a song or a poem that is predicting or gloating over the fall of Egypt to Babylon. It could be symbolic but in any case does not appear to be associated with the end of the world.

[Ecclesiastes 12:1](#) Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them": <sup>2</sup> While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened, And the clouds do not return after the rain; [Ecclesiastes 12:1-2 NKJV](#)

<sup>202</sup> <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/study-guide/e/5000/t/the-bride-of-christ>

This one from Ecclesiastes is a bit interesting because Solomon lived in what could be called the Golden Age of the kingdom of Israel. So, what evil days is he referring to? Is this a prophecy, or is he merely talking about a person's final days before death?

[Isaiah 13:9](#) Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. <sup>10</sup> For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. <sup>11</sup> "I will punish the world for [its] evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. [Isaiah 13:9-11 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 24:1](#) Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants. [Isaiah 24:1 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 24:1](#) Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants. ... <sup>3</sup> The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word. ... <sup>19</sup> The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. ... <sup>23</sup> Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously. [Isaiah 24:1, 3, 19, 23 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:10](#) The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness. [Joel 2:10 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:31](#) The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Joel 2:31 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:15](#) The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. [Joel 3:15 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 3:11](#) The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear. [Habakkuk 3:11 NKJV](#)

These verses from the Old Testament Prophets seem to be predicting judgment and destruction on nations such as Egypt, Babylon, and Israel. We know that the sun was literally darkened as God punished the Egyptians preceding the Exodus, and presuming the darkness lasted more than a day, the moon and stars as well, but I believe these verses we just read were all looking forward. They each suffered destruction at one time or another, but I don't know of any record of the sun or moon going dark at those times. I think these verses can be applied to the downfall of nations or kingdoms from the past, but I think they can be reapplied to the time of the end. From the past, I think that the sun shining on someone was considered a sign of favor from the gods. The opposite would be a sign of disfavor. In past applications, I think the signs of the sun, moon, and stars could be symbolic in that sense. In future applications, especially the time of the end, it is possible that Egypt, Babylon, and Israel are symbols. It is also interesting to note that in one case, the moon is said to turn red, instead of going dark. Does that imply a different occasion or sign, or does it refer to the same instance?

[Matthew 24:29](#) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [Matthew 24:29 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:24](#) "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; [Mark 13:24 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:25](#) "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; [Luke 21:25 NKJV](#)

In these cases, Jesus was pretty clearly talking about either the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, or the end of the world. Assuming He was speaking literally, since there is no record of the sun going dark at that time, it must apply to the time of the end. It should be noted that the time of the end could be a long time relative to the lifespan of a person, and there are prophecies and timelines in which I believe the sign could have already happened.

[Acts 2:20](#) The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Acts 2:20 NKJV](#)

This is from Peter's sermon at Pentecost, and he is clearly quoting the prophet Joel, which we read above. In Joel 2, the part in particular that he is referring to are [verses 17, 18](#), where it talks about the Spirit of God being poured out. I believe under the circumstances that the focus is clearly on the Spirit being poured out from verse 18, but why is he also quoting the part about the sun and moon? In Joel, darkening of the sun seems to be a sign, and hence more likely literal, rather than a symbol of the light of truth being obscured.

[Joel 2:30](#) "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.<sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Joel 2:30-31 NKJV](#)

In that same chapter there is a mention of an early rain and a latter rain.

[Joel 2:23](#) Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you--The former rain, And the latter rain in the first [month]. [Joel 2:23 NKJV](#)

### Interpreting the symbols

The book of Acts teaches tells us that the Holy Spirit was poured out like rain at Pentecost and the growth of the church exploded as a result. I believe that was the early rain. I also believe the Holy Spirit will be poured out again in the end days and the spread of the Gospel will greatly accelerate, and that I believe will be the latter rain. I have already claimed that there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars in the end days but why we would claim part of Joel was fulfilled back then and the whole in the future, I don't know. But the question I have is: have the signs in the sun, moon, and stars already occurred? If so, is the latter rain in the past, or still in effect now until the end?

[Revelation 6:12](#) | I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. [Revelation 6:12 NKJV](#)

There is compelling evidence that the signs in the sun, moon, and stars was already fulfilled right after the tribulation of those days, as Jesus predicted. If the tribulation was the dark ages of Papal dominance and persecution, which I believe and have asserted more than once, then these signs should have occurred shortly after the tribulation ended. [see [The sixth seal](#)] The question is whether all the signs of in the sun, moon, and stars that I have listed are to occur once, and are in the past or whether there are multiple events predicted? There is also the difference of the moon being red vs. dark? This is merely my opinion, but for a sign that was mentioned as many times as we have seen, if it is literal, then it should be experienced by many more people than the occurrence I mentioned in the sixth seal.

Thiele suggests that the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars in this trumpet are symbolic of the time period portrayed.<sup>203</sup>

The darker the period, the more ignorant the people, the greater the unity of Papism! The world's midnight was the noon-day of the Popery!

...

Ignorance and darkness are the principal ligaments of the Papism. They are its natural elements. [The Western Baptist Review](#)<sup>204</sup>

The noon of the Papacy synchronizes with world's midnight. Innocent III. was emphatically the Prince of Darkness. There was but one thing in the universe which he dreaded, and that was light. The most execrable shapes of night could not appal him; these were congenial terrors: he knew they had no power to harm him or his. But the faintest glimmer of day on the horizon struck terror into his soul, and he contended ceaselessly against the light, with all the artillery of anathemas and arms. During the whole century of his pontificate the globe was seen reposing in deep shadow, girdled round with the chain of the papal power, and corruscated fearfully with the flashes of the pontifical thunder. Like a crowned demon, Innocent sat upon the Seven Hills, muffled up in the mantle of Lucifer, and governed earth as Satan governs hell. [The Papacy; Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects](#)<sup>205</sup>

On a gentler note, Maxwell wrote:

The medieval church maintained schools and hospitals. It made copies of the Bible. It enlisted numerous priests and nuns of exemplary character. But it unquestionably misinterpreted Scripture and misrepresented Christ. Under its administration, the "Light" of heaven was "dimmed." The fourth trumpet was fulfilled. Maxwell, *God Cares*, p242<sup>206</sup>

The Thiele and Maxwell ideas represent four of the seven columns in Rodriguez's table. The original view, Smith went with the fall of the Roman Empire in the west.<sup>207</sup> But Paulien and some others have proposed a very different option. He suggested that the interpretation of Thiele and Maxwell was a continuation of the third trumpet. Whereas he suggests that the fourth is more like the next and hence choose an interpretation that led into the fifth trumpet.<sup>208</sup> In his own words:

Could it be that the third and fourth trumpet depict the rise of two new enemies of God's people, replacements for the religious and civil powers that oppressed Christ and His people in the first century? Perhaps the fourth

<sup>203</sup> Thiele. p169. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=15](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=15) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=15>

<sup>204</sup> Waller, John L. (Editor). *The Western Baptist Review. Volume I.* Frankfort Kentucky, A. G. Hodges & Co-Printers, 1846, p273. <https://books.google.com/books?id=rEM5AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA273>

<sup>205</sup> Wiley, James A.. *The Papacy; Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects.* Edinburgh, Johnstone and Hunter, 1851, p86. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GKhAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA86>

<sup>206</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family.* Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p242.

<sup>207</sup> Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. "Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets." Ministry, January 2012, Nampa, ID, p8. <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <http://btlib.org/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>

<sup>208</sup> Paulien. p85-90. <http://btlib.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=85>

trumpet portends the rise of a power that, like Rome and the Pharaoh of the Exodus, opposed God's truth and His people in a more direct way. I would like to suggest that the fourth trumpet depicts the rise of secularization, a process with roots in Hellenism and the Middle Ages but which sprouted openly in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and blossomed into full force with the French Revolution. While this darkness was not total at first it has deepened until it threatens every faith on all continents today.

The key to this suggestion is the interpretation of the fifth trumpet with its abundance of imagery. The abyss is unlocked by the fallen star of the third trumpet. It is also connected with [Rev 11:7](#). It is intriguing that Ellen White blames the secular-atheism of the French Revolution on the suppression of God's word by the papacy in France.<sup>209</sup> She also associates the French Revolution with the beast from the abyss of [Rev 11](#). Though she does not comment on the fifth trumpet these associations suggest that it is not foreign to her way of thinking to interpret the fifth trumpet in terms of the secularization of the world from the French Revolution on. [Paulien, \*Interpreting the seven trumpets\*](#)<sup>210 211</sup>

## Conclusion

Although I do find Paulien's ideas about secular atheism intriguing for today, I find myself more in line with Thiele, Maxwell, and others in associating the fourth trumpet with the Papacy in the dark ages.

What do you believe?

- What do you think about whether the signs of the sun, moon, and stars are literal or symbolic?
- Do you think this trumpet could represent a judgment from God?
- What interpretation do you find yourself most identifying with?

## Introduction of the last three trumpets as the three woes

### [Revelation 8:13](#)

[Revelation 8:13](#) And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" [Revelation 8:13 NKJV](#)

There is a subdivision between the first four trumpets and the last three, which were also called woes. Looking back, some things to note are that the first four trumpets are described in only two verses each, but the next two have a great more detail, occupying the entire 21 verses of the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter. The first four all mention thirds, but there are no thirds mentioned in the fifth trumpet, and the sixth says that a third of mankind would be killed.

Let's examine this eagle briefly before moving on to the last three trumpets. Is the eagle merely a messenger in the vision, or does it represent something? Where else have we encountered an eagle in Revelation? A word search for

<sup>209</sup> [Footnote from Paulien's quote] White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p265-269. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA265>  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=265>

<sup>210</sup> [Footnote from Paulien's quote] White, Ellen G. *Education*.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=ED&lang=en&pagenumber=228>

<sup>211</sup> Paulien. p86-87. [http://btib.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=86](http://btib.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=86)



“eagle” turned up 21 hits in the NKJV. Not surprisingly, about half of them were about the great wings or flying or swooping attack of an eagle.

[Deuteronomy 28:49](#) "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, [as swift] as the **eagle** flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, [Deuteronomy 28:49 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 32:11](#) As an **eagle** stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, [Deuteronomy 32:11 NKJV](#)

[Job 9:26](#) They pass by like swift ships, Like an **eagle** swooping on its prey. [Job 9:26 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 23:5](#) Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For [riches] certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle [toward] heaven. [Proverbs 23:5 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 48:40](#) For thus says the LORD: "Behold, one shall fly like an eagle, And spread his wings over Moab. [Jeremiah 48:40 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 49:22](#) Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, And spread His wings over Bozrah; The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs. [Jeremiah 49:22 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 17:3](#) "and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, Full of feathers of various colors, Came to Lebanon And took from the cedar the highest branch. ... <sup>7</sup> "But there was another great eagle with large wings and many feathers; And behold, this vine bent its roots toward him, And stretched its branches toward him, From the garden terrace where it had been planted, That he might water it. [Ezekiel 17:3, 7 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:4](#) "The first [was] like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. [Daniel 7:4 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 1:8](#) Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle [that] hastens to eat. [Habakkuk 1:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:7](#) The first living creature [was] like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle. [Revelation 4:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 8:13](#) And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" [Revelation 8:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:13](#) Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male [Child]. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. [Revelation 12:13-14 NKJV](#)

Half again, mostly overlapping with the verses just presented read “like and eagle,” or “as an eagle,” meaning the eagle was symbolic of something. The eagle symbolizes flight and something up in the sky or heavens. It is symbolic of youth and energy. And probably, most commonly, the eagle is likened to an invading army swooping down and

attacking a defenseless nation. The verses likening an eagle to something that were not included in the first list follow.

[Psalm 103:5](#) Who satisfies your mouth with good [things], [So that] your youth is renewed **like the eagle's**. [Psalm 103:5 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 8:1](#) "[Set] the trumpet to your mouth! [He shall come] **like an eagle** against the house of the LORD, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law. [Hosea 8:1 NKJV](#)

[Obadiah 1:4](#) Though you ascend [as] high **as the eagle**, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," says the LORD. [Obadiah 1:4 NKJV](#)

[Micah 1:16](#) Make yourself bald and cut off your hair, Because of your precious children; Enlarge your baldness **like an eagle**, For they shall go from you into captivity. [Micah 1:16 NKJV](#)

The eagle has a place among the four beings that most closely surround the throne of God as described in Ezekiel and Revelation. There is a difference in the way they are described by Ezekiel and John, but there are enough similarities that I believe they are observing the same thing, just from different perspectives or viewpoints or settings.

[Ezekiel 1:10](#) As for the likeness of their faces, [each] had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an **eagle**. [Ezekiel 1:10 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 10:14](#) Each one had four faces: the first face [was] the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an **eagle**. [Ezekiel 10:14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:7](#) The first living creature [was] like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying **eagle**. [Revelation 4:7 NKJV](#)

Leviticus and Deuteronomy classify the eagle with the vulture and buzzard as unclean meat.

After reviewing all the mentions of eagles in the Bible, this one in [Revelation 8:13](#) kind of stands alone. In no other case did I find an eagle as a messenger. Is there a reason this messenger was an eagle and not another angel? Let's briefly look at midheaven where this eagle was said to be flying. It is translated from the Greek word [μεσουράνημα](#), [mesouranēma](#)<sup>212</sup> having the meaning "the highest point in the heavens, which the sun occupies at noon, where what is done can be seen and heard by all." It was used three times, all in Revelation, beginning with this verse and followed by:

[Revelation 14:6](#) Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-- [Revelation 14:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:17](#) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, [Revelation 19:17 NKJV](#)

Considering these two verses, I wondered about the reason the current passage described an eagle flying in midheaven with a message rather than an angel as in Revelation 14:6.

<sup>212</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3321&t=NASB>

Finally, the message the eagle declared which was apparently to all the earth was, woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the final three trumpets. This must mean that the last three will be more severe than the first four. I already mentioned how the first four only affected thirds of specific things on the earth. What does the word woe mean and how is it used in the Bible? It is translated from the Greek word [οὐαί, ouai](#)<sup>213</sup>, and was used 47 times in 36 verses in the KJV. It was a primary declaration of grief; or an interjection of grief or denunciation. It was used in 27 verses by Jesus, mostly as a denunciation against the religious leaders of the day. He also denounced with woes, the cities Chorazin and Bethsaida for rejecting Him in spite of all the miracles he performed there. It was used as a declaration of grief for those who would, through no fault of their own suffer hardship such as pregnant women in the time of trouble. It seemed to me a declaration of grief for those that were too rich or comfortable see their need of a Savior. So, are the three woes spoken by the eagle a declaration of denunciation or grief? I think it was both a denunciation against those who like the leaders of Jesus' day, led the people astray or worse actively opposed the truth, but also of grief for the innocent people who would be affected.

I believe the last three trumpets are distinguished from the first four and are called woes because they are more severe or more intense.

What do you believe?

- What do you think the eagle is a symbol of in this case?
- If the eagle flew in midheaven as a symbol that all people could hear its declaration, do you think that itself is symbolic of something historical that happened between the fourth and fifth trumpets?
- If someone or a class of people are denounced with woes from heaven, do you think their punishment will be worse than those who have not been denounced with woes if they do no repent?

## The fifth trumpet (first woe)

### [Revelation 9:1-12](#)

[Revelation 9:1](#) Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. <sup>2</sup> And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. <sup>3</sup> Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. <sup>4</sup> They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And they were not given [authority] to kill them, but to torment them [for] five months. Their torment [was] like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. <sup>6</sup> In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

<sup>7</sup> The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces [were] like the faces of men. <sup>8</sup> They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' [teeth]. <sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings [was] like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. <sup>10</sup> They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power [was] to hurt men five months. <sup>11</sup> And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew [is] Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

<sup>213</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3759&t=NASB>

<sup>12</sup> One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things. [Revelation 9:1-12 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

John described a great many things in this fifth trumpet and first woe that need to be analyzed before attempting to understand the meaning or interpretation. Most likely the things he saw were symbols, but it is possible that some of what he saw were things he had never seen before. In those cases, he would have tried his best to describe them in terms of things he knew.

### Star

First there is mention of the star that had already fallen to earth. It seems pretty straight forward and obvious that this is referring to the star that fell on the streams and waters in the third trumpet. I did a biblical search on the word when I wrote-up that chapter [[The third trumpet](#)]. In the third trumpet it poisoned the rivers and springs which I believe symbolized the corruption of the pure truth of the Gospel. It was difficult to come to any other conclusion than that the star represented Satan. He had succeeded in getting the church to blend many pagan ideas and rituals with the corruption that often comes with power, to poison the fresh life-giving water of life offered by Jesus, and make it bitter.

### Key

Next there is the "key" to the bottomless pit. A word search in the NKJV yielded 6 hits including this fifth trumpet.

[Judges 3:25](#) So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the **key** and opened [them]. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor. [Judges 3:25 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 22:22](#) The **key** of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open. [Isaiah 22:22 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:52](#) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the **key** of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." [Luke 11:52 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 3:7](#) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the **key** of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': [Revelation 3:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:1](#) Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the **key** to the bottomless pit. [Revelation 9:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:1](#) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the **key** to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. [Revelation 20:1 NKJV](#)

The first one, in Judges is strictly literal. The next one in Isaiah was about an unfaithful or possibly even traitorous steward Shebna, who would lose his position, and it would be given to Eliakim. The steward in the palace had to have the full confidence and trust of the king, because he had access to the keys to every door in the palace. In this position of trust, it would be very easy for him to harm or steal from the king or worse. I believe this was written so that these words could be applied to Jesus as is done in [Revelation 3:7](#).

In Luke, Jesus is denouncing the religious leaders of the day. In the position they held, they had great power over the interpretation of the Scriptures for the common people. Jesus accused them of not only misinterpreting them so the truth was obscured, but hindering the people under their power from receiving the truth.

### *The bottomless pit*

In the last two key references above [[Revelation 9:1](#), [Revelation 20:1](#)], the abyss and the bottomless pit sort of seem like they might be the same thing. Abyss is translated from the Greek word [ἄβυσσος, abyssos](#)<sup>214</sup>, which has the meanings:

- I. bottomless
- II. unbounded
- III. the abyss
  - a. the pit
  - b. the immeasurable depth
  - c. of Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons

It was used 9 times in the KJV, once in [Luke 8:31](#), when the demons whom Jesus was about to cast out, implored Him not to send them to the abyss. It was used by Paul in [Romans 10:7](#), where I can't really say what he meant by it, but it does seem to imply that Christ's death may have taken Him to the abyss. I wonder if this has something to do with the difference between the first death that Jesus called sleep, and the second death? Then it is used seven times in Revelation, translated as bottomless pit every time in the NKJV.

In this verse in Revelation, abyssos is translated to "of the bottomless," but "pit" is translated from [φρέαρ, phrear](#)<sup>215</sup>, which has some of the same meaning but alone was translated to "well," as in water well in John. The second definition is:

the pit of the abyss (because the nether world is thought to increase in size the further it extends from the surface of the earth and so resemble a cistern, the orifice of which is narrow)<sup>216</sup>

This kind of tells me that the abyss and the bottomless pit are both deep in the earth, whether literal or symbolic, I don't know. Demons can be sent down to it and can also come up out of it. Smoke, whether literal or symbolic, as from a furnace can come up out of it, and things like locusts along with it [[Revelation 9:1-12](#)]. There is an angel who is king of the abyss who is called Abaddon, or Apollyon [[Revelation 9:11](#)]. Is this another name for Satan? I don't think there is any Biblical record of him being cast down to the bottomless pit except during the millennium. Who else could be called the king of the abyss? A beast (symbolic?) also comes up out of the abyss [[Revelation 11:7](#)]. In [Revelation 20:1-3](#), an angel cast Satan, also called the dragon, the serpent, and the devil, into the abyss and bound him there for a thousand years, after which he will be released for a short time. Seventh-Day Adventists' have typically interpreted this abyss where Satan is bound to simply be the desolate earth, where no life remains during the millennium when Christ and the saints are in heaven. But all the uses of the word prior to the millennium lead me to believe it might be a place that exists now. Perhaps a prison where angels who break the rules are sent for a time.

### *Smoke*

Next, we have the smoke coming out of the pit. Smoke and furnace are mentioned together three times in the Bible. First in describing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Next, above Mount Sinai, when God was there. And finally, in the verses we are studying right now. The sun was darkened for an unspecified amount of time by the

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G12&t=NASB>

<sup>215</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G5421&t=NASB>

<sup>216</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G5421&t=NASB>

smoke from the bottomless pit. Interestingly, the dark day in New England on May 19, 1780, which many have claimed to be a fulfillment of the prophecy of the sun going dark, has been speculated to have been caused by smoke from forest fires [see [The sixth seal](#)]. Smoke is the aftermath of God's punishment on Sodom and Gomorrah, but in the second case, it is used to obscure His glory on Mount Sinai. A characteristic of smoke is that it generally rises because it is associated with hot air. In this case, I'm sure the smoke is not concealing God's glory, on the contrary, it is concealing something under the command of demons.

### *Creatures that appeared out of the smoke*

We have now reached these strange things that came out of the pit in the smoke. First, they were described as locusts, probably because they were like a swarm, but clearly that's not literally what he saw. When he got a closer look at the creatures, what he described seemed a bit like the centaur of mythology, except he didn't say anything about arms like a man. A horse's body, with a man's face, with long hair and teeth like a lion, and a stinging tail like a scorpion. Strange creature indeed, but as I said, John tried to describe what he saw in terms of things that he knew. Even though they were not locusts upon closer examination, they were commanded (by God I presume) to not hurt any grass or green thing or trees, which would normally be the target of locusts. They were also not allowed to kill any person, but they could torment those who didn't have the seal of God in their foreheads. Let's take a closer look now at some of these symbols and how they are used in the Bible.

### *Locusts*

Locust or locusts are mentioned 46 times in the NKJV. The first five occurrences, in Exodus, plus two in [Psalm 78:46](#), [Psalm 105:34](#), are all about the plague of locusts on Egypt just before the Exodus. In his prayer of dedication for the newly built Temple, Solomon mentioned locusts in the same sentence as famine, pestilence, blight, mildew, plagues, and even an enemy siege [[1 Kings 8:37](#), [2 Chronicles 6:28](#)]. Locusts were mentioned as a possible plague of punishment from God upon Israel [[2 Chronicles 7:13](#)]. The word locust was mentioned ten times but really they were all about the same thing. Six times in [Joel 1:4](#), about a literal plague of locusts that the Jews suffered. Then four more times in [Joel 2:25](#), where he describes how God will make up for the damage done by the locust plague. It is thought that [Amos 7:1](#) was a reference to this same locust plague. Scholars are divided and uncertain of when the prophet Joel lived. It is thought that he was referring to a literal plague of locusts but whether it was present or future is not certain either. It was apparently so devastating, because there were four waves and each one devoured a bit more of what little remained. I found it interesting that he used some similar symbolic language to Revelation in calling them a mighty nation and giving them attributes such as teeth like lions. The question is whether this prediction was literally fulfilled before Jesus came, or whether it was meant to be a prophecy of His first or second coming. [Joel 1](#) is about devastation on the Jews from nature, by plagues of locusts and drought, which was naturally followed by famine. The first half of [chapter 2](#) appears to continue the description of the plague of locusts and other pests, describing them even more with human characteristics. The thought did occur to me that this prophecy which at first glance appears to be about locusts, could be symbolic of other things just before the first or second coming of Jesus. In fact [Joel 2:28-29](#) is quoted by Peter in [Acts 2:16-17](#) as being fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, following the deliverance promised. I think the second half of Joel, like [Matthew 24](#), was possibly prophesying two deliverances, both by Jesus at His first and second comings. Is it possible that the locusts represented the Romans and the Jews could have been delivered if they had accepted Jesus as the Messiah? Continuing on with the mention of locusts in the Bible, they are used to describe great hoards or numbers of attacking enemies [[Judges 6:5](#), [Judges 7:12](#), [Isaiah 33:4](#), [Jeremiah 46:23](#), [Jeremiah 51:14,27](#)]. Finally, I found it interesting because these locusts in Revelation are said to have a king, while Solomon pointed out that real locusts don't [[Proverbs 30:27](#)]. So, as a symbol relating to this trumpet, I would say that the Bible uses locusts to describe hoards, or overwhelming numbers of opponents.

### *Scorpions*

The next characteristic of these hoards is that they had power as scorpions. Literal scorpions are insects with a tail that can inflict a painful sting. However, the sting of most scorpion are not deadly to human beings. I found it interesting that one of the sources said, stinging is not necessarily their first choice, and that they will simply use brute force to subdue their prey if possible. I guess this makes some sense if it takes time and energy to manufacture the venom.<sup>217 218 219</sup> When I think of scorpions, I think of the sting. Let's look in the Bible to see where scorpions were mentions and whether we can attach any symbolism to them. In [Luke 11:12](#), Jesus used it as an example of something harmful that a parent would not give to their child. Once in the Old Testament [[Deuteronomy 8:15](#)] and once in the New [[Luke 10:19](#)], God or Jesus said They provided protection from scorpions and serpents. In the time of Israel before the divided kingdom, Rehoboam, son of Solomon, stupidly threatened to keep his subjects in line with scorpions instead of whips [[1 Kings 12:11,14](#), [2 Chronicles 10:11,14](#) (these two references are from the KJV. Don't know why but the NKJV used the word scourges but footnoted it with scorpion.)]. In the Old Testament, prophets were often persecuted and sometimes killed after they brought messages from God to evil rulers. When God called Ezekiel to ministry as a prophet, it seems he was promised protection from scorpions [[Ezekiel 2:6](#)]. Overall, I found the mention of scorpions in the Bible to be consistent with the idea that they are not thought of as deadly, but they can inflict pain or suffering. I didn't find them used symbolically in the Bible except in this fifth trumpet that we are currently discussing.

### *Grass, green things, trees*

We read that these creatures were told not to harm the grass, green things, and trees. In contrast, I found it interesting that in the first trumpet, a third of the trees were harmed and all the grass. Let's look at the symbolism of these in the Bible.

I found "grass" 63 times in 56 verses in the NKJV. There are actually seven Hebrew words that were translated to grass and one Greek word. 14 times it was used literally or symbolically as food for livestock. 10 times the grass was mentioned to be the beneficiary of dew, rain or rivers, which in most cases symbolized God's care and blessings on people [[Deuteronomy 32:2](#), [2 Samuel 23:4](#), [Job 38:26-27](#), [Psalm 72:6](#), [Psalm 90:5](#), [Psalm 147:8](#), [Proverbs 19:12](#), [Isaiah 35:7](#), [Isaiah 44:3-4](#), [Isaiah 66:12-14](#)]. 14 times grass was depicted as withering from lack of water, or from hot air, or having a fleeting existence [[2 Kings 19:26](#), [Psalm 37:2](#), [Psalm 102:4,11](#), [Psalm 103:15](#), [Psalm 129:6](#), [Isaiah 15:6](#), [Isaiah 37:27](#), [Isaiah 40:6-8](#), [Matthew 6:30](#), [Luke 12:28](#), [James 1:10-11](#), [1 Peter 1:24](#), [Revelation 8:7](#)]. 10 times and probably more, among the two previous cases, grass symbolized people [[Numbers 22:4](#), [Job 5:25](#), [Psalm 92:7](#), [Psalm 103:15](#), [Psalm 129:5-6](#), [Isaiah 37:27](#), [Isaiah 40:6-8](#), [Isaiah 51:12](#), [James 1:10-11](#), [1 Peter 1:24](#)]. When not used literally, it seems that grass symbolized people because of their short existence, but also because it could wither in hot or dry conditions, but also sprout back up again if the rains came.

Green was found 39 times in the NKJV. Including its various forms such as greenness or greenish, it was translated from 15 different Hebrew and Greek words. In science, green is associated with chlorophyll which is responsible for the green color in plants and is also part of the process that allows plants to absorb energy from light.<sup>220</sup> In the 39 cases of just the word green in the NKJV, the vast majority of times it was used in conjunction with some kind of plant. I think it is very common to associate green with life. Several times it appeared that green plants were said to be food for animals. Other times I found the word to describe the trees or groves where idols were sacrificed to, or temple prostitution took place.

<sup>217</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scorpion>

<sup>218</sup> <https://askabiologist.asu.edu/explore/not-so-scary-scorpions>

<sup>219</sup> [https://www.emedicinehealth.com/wilderness\\_scorpion\\_sting/article\\_em.htm](https://www.emedicinehealth.com/wilderness_scorpion_sting/article_em.htm)

<sup>220</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chlorophyll>

Next in the sequence of things these creatures were not allowed to harm at all were the trees. The words tree and trees were used hundreds of times in the Bible. But there were about 11 times where something was likened to a tree, and in 7 cases it was a person.

[Psalm 1:3](#) He shall be **like a tree** Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. [Psalm 1:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 37:35](#) I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself **like a native green tree**. [Psalm 37:35 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 52:8](#) But I [am] like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. [Psalm 52:8 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 92:12](#) The righteous shall flourish **like a palm tree**, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. [Psalm 92:12 NKJV](#)

[Song of Songs 2:3](#) [The Shulamite] **Like an apple tree** among the trees of the woods, So [is] my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, And his fruit [was] sweet to my taste. [Song of Songs 2:3 NKJV](#)

[Song of Songs 7:7](#) This stature of yours is **like a palm tree**, And your breasts [like] its clusters. [Song of Songs 7:7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 17:8](#) For he shall be **like a tree** planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. [Jeremiah 17:8 NKJV](#)

The object in these 7 cases are: a wise man, a wicked violent man, the psalmist, a righteous man, Solomon, his lover, and finally the man who trusts in the Lord. It seems the Bible writers were not too discriminating about what kind of person a tree could represent.

In this fifth trumpet, it would seem that the green things represent the sealed people of God, because these creatures from the abyss were told they could hurt men who didn't have the seal of God on their forehead. I want to briefly revisit this seal of God that I discussed in great detail in the chapter on the [sealing of the 144,000](#). Based on the following verse it was sort of assumed that there was a time near the end when certain people would receive the seal of God.

[Revelation 7:3](#) saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." [Revelation 7:3 NKJV](#)

This verse was from between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> seals, so even with a historical interpretation, that sealing could take place right before the second coming of Jesus. Even though we know that there have been people all through earth's history that have been faithful to God and will be saved, this seems to imply that there is a time where God's people are not sealed yet. In light of this apparent end time sealing, the idea that the fifth trumpet involves a category of people who already have the seal of God on their forehead, for me, is one of the biggest obstacles to applying a historical interpretation to the seven trumpets. So, the big question is whether this is literally the same seal of God or a different one? One way to look at it is, if we are interpreting these trumpets as being symbols, then it would make sense that the seal of God could be a symbol distinguishing God's true followers throughout the earth's history. In fact, back in the chapter on the sealing of the 144,000 I reasoned that those who were sealed kept all of the Ten Commandments, including the fourth which so many Christians either ignore, or alter for their convenience. Let's tuck this idea of Sabbath keeping and the seal of God away for now.



### *Not allowed to kill*

Next, in verse 5 we read that these creatures were not allowed to kill anyone, but to hurt those who do not have the seal of God for five months. Is this a prophetic time period? Referring to my [appendix on Prophetic time](#), we can convert five months to 150 prophetic days or 150 literal years. The next five verses have a lot more detail about the creatures and reiterate the scorpion sting and the ability to hurt men for five months, ending with the name of their king. In the symbolism, what does hurt mean? When it says they were not allowed to kill anyone, that must be symbolic as well, right? Jesus said something that might be relevant.

[Matthew 10:28](#) "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [Matthew 10:28 NKJV](#)

Could the hurt involve the first death, which Jesus called sleep, but kill actually mean second death in hell? We might as well look at the rest of the detailed description of these creatures now.

[Revelation 9:7](#) The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces [were] like the faces of men. <sup>8</sup> They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' [teeth]. <sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings [was] like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. <sup>10</sup> They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power [was] to hurt men five months. <sup>11</sup> And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew [is] Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. [Revelation 9:7-11 NKJV](#)

A large part of the imagery comes from horses and chariots going into battle, but the elements are sort of blended together. Horses that had faces of men with long hair and crowns on their head, and battle armor on their chest, along with the sound of chariots. The elements that were out of place for horses and chariots rushing into battle were wings, teeth like lions, and scorpion tail stingers. And the sting from the tail was specifically said to be the element that hurt men.

I don't know if each of these symbols need to mean something that correlates with the actual fulfillment or not but let's look at some of them.

### *Horses*

Horse or horses were mentioned 155 times and horsemen 51 times in the NKJV. Throughout the Bible and virtually the entire history of the world, horses were essentially the fastest mode of transportation. Horse(s) and chariot(s) were mentioned together nearly 60 times. Since the most common use of horses was as military machines in the form of cavalry, and for pulling chariots, they were probably too expensive for lower class people to own. Solomon purchased horses from Egypt for 150 pieces of silver a piece [[2 Chronicles 1:17](#)]. During the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan, God repeatedly made it clear to the Israelites that He could easily defeat their enemies in spite of their military might represented by horses and chariots. God also commanded them not to accumulate horses and chariots because then they might trust in their own military power instead of in Him. Whether real or illusions, God has used horses and chariots that were so bright they looked like they were on fire [[2 Kings 2:11](#), [2 Kings 6:17](#)]. Horses were used as symbols in visions, dreams and prophecies:

[Jeremiah 4:13](#) "Behold, he shall come up like clouds, And his chariots like a whirlwind. His **horses** are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, for we are plundered!" [Jeremiah 4:13 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:27](#) Set up a banner in the land, Blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the nations against her, Call the kingdoms together against her: Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz. Appoint a general against her; Cause the **horses** to come up like the bristling locusts. [Jeremiah 51:27 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:4](#) Their appearance is like the appearance of **horses**; And like swift steeds, so they run. [Joel 2:4 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 1:8](#) Their **horses** also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle [that] hastens to eat. [Habakkuk 1:8 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 3:8](#) O LORD, were [You] displeased with the rivers, [Was] Your anger against the rivers, [Was] Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your **horses**, Your chariots of salvation? ... <sup>15</sup> You walked through the sea with Your **horses**, Through the heap of great waters. [Habakkuk 3:8, 15 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 1:7](#) On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: <sup>8</sup> I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a **red horse**, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him [were] **horses**: red, sorrel, and white. [Zechariah 1:7-8 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 6:1](#) Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots [were] coming from between two mountains, and the mountains [were] mountains of bronze. <sup>2</sup> With the first chariot [were] **red horses**, with the second chariot **black horses**, <sup>3</sup> with the third chariot **white horses**, and with the fourth chariot **dappled horses**--strong [steeds]. <sup>4</sup> Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What [are] these, my lord?" <sup>5</sup> And the angel answered and said to me, "These [are] four spirits of heaven, who go out from [their] station before the Lord of all the earth. <sup>6</sup> "The one with the **black horses** is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country." <sup>7</sup> Then the strong [steeds] went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. <sup>8</sup> And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country." [Zechariah 6:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:1](#) Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." <sup>2</sup> And I looked, and behold, a **white horse**. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. <sup>3</sup> When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." <sup>4</sup> Another **horse, fiery red**, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that [people] should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. <sup>5</sup> When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a **black horse**, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." <sup>7</sup> When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." <sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a **pale horse**. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. [Revelation 6:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:13](#) Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, <sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." <sup>15</sup> So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year,

were released to kill a third of mankind. <sup>16</sup> Now the number of the army of the **horsemen** [was] two hundred million; I heard the number of them. <sup>17</sup> And thus I saw the **horses** in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the **horses** [were] like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. <sup>18</sup> By these three [plagues] a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails [are] like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

[Revelation 9:13-19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:20](#) And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the **horses'** bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. [Revelation 14:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:13](#) "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, **horses** and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. [Revelation 18:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:11](#) Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a **white horse**. And He who sat on him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes [were] like a flame of fire, and on His head [were] many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> He [was] clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup> And He has on [His] robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. [Revelation 19:11-16 NKJV](#)

I have to say I didn't really see a unifying theme in the use of horses in Bible prophecy. Possibly it could be said that in general they symbolized the characteristics which the Bible attributes to them in real life, such as swiftness, strength, endurance, and advantage in battle. In vision, horses were often described as being different colors, which also symbolized something specific.

### *Crowns*

Next, we can look at the crowns like gold on their heads. Why did John say crown's like gold and not crowns of gold? Could he tell just by looking that they were not real gold? Obviously, crowns are worn by kings and queens. The word crown(s) was used 68 times in the NKJV. The Jewish High Priest wore a gold crown that was holy. I counted about 9 times that it was used to mean the top, mostly of a person's head. A few times it was used in a different sense where something good, or beautiful, or noble was said to be a crown. In that same context [Isaiah 28:5](#) called the Lord a beautiful crown to the remnant of His people. Of course, in the New Testament, the crown of thorns was mentioned a number of times. 7 times including 2 in Revelation, a literal crown was something the redeemed were said to receive when they got to heaven. Twice in [Revelation 4](#), the 24 elders (who I believe to be humans taken to heaven ahead of time [in this document see also [The burial of Jesus](#), and [Throne room in heaven](#)]) were said to have crowns. Also, in Revelation, in the first seal the rider on a white horse was given a crown [[Revelation 6:2](#)]. The last hit was in [Revelation 14:14](#) where it says that when Jesus comes back on the cloud, He will have a golden crown on His head. In general crowns of gold were something worn by royalty, the redeemed, and Jesus. Since on casual observance John could tell that these crowns were not real gold, there must have been some significance to that. Maybe this swarm were masquerading as the redeemed but in reality were not.

### *Face like men*

Next let's look at the faces like men.

[Ezekiel 1:10](#) As for the likeness of their faces, [each] had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. [Ezekiel 1:10 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 10:13](#) As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, "Wheel." <sup>14</sup> Each one had four faces: the first face [was] the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. [Ezekiel 10:13-14 NKJV](#)

[James 1:23](#) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; [James 1:23 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:7](#) The first living creature [was] like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle. [Revelation 4:7 NKJV](#)

These four verses were the ones that peaked some interest in me as I scanned over them. I talked about the four creatures or beings that surround the throne of God in [Chapter 4 - Throne room in heaven](#). They were described a little differently by Ezekiel and John, but these creatures or beings who stand closest to the throne of God each had a face like a man, or as John described them, one of them did. In [Ezekiel 10](#) it's not entirely clear whether the wheels had faces or whether the four faces, cherub, man, lion, eagle, belonged to the creatures. But if the four faces belonged to the creatures why is one of them, a cherub, instead of a bull as described in [Ezekiel 1](#)? Since we are talking about faces like a man, we don't really have to concern ourselves with that question now. Let's just focus on the fact that on these creatures that stand closest to the throne of God, a face like that of a man is present. Is it possible that these faces alternate between representations of all of God's creations, after all He created the cherub as well? Some have said that the four beings surrounding the throne can represent characteristics of God relatable to us through symbols. Thiele suggests the symbols represent the types of missions that angels are called upon to perform on earth.<sup>221</sup> The eyes all over in the front and on the back [[Revelation 4:6](#)], represent seeing everything that happens on earth. The lion can represent strength, ferocity and if representing God, majesty (king of beasts). The bull, power and steady service, and in the case of God the bull was a sacrificial animal. The face like a man's can represent intelligence, and if representing God, that He became a man. And the eagle, flight, swiftness (wings were used in other places to symbolize speed), elevation, sharp eyesight, attack from above. On a completely different vein, the verse in James likened someone who didn't act on his convictions to the reflection of a man's face (conversely a doer to the real face). I think the most closely related are the creatures or beings around the throne with faces like that of a man. Probably in this case, the face like a man's means that these creatures are really men with all the other attributes I have been and am discussing.

### *Long hair*

Next is the long hair or hair like a woman. Which is it because I don't necessarily think they have to mean the same thing? Let's look at some verses:

[Numbers 6:1](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, <sup>3</sup> 'he shall separate himself from wine and [similar] drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from [similar] drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. <sup>4</sup> 'All the days of

<sup>221</sup> Thiele, Edwin R. *Outline Studies in Revelation I*. Avondale College, 1974, p81. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation I. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250751\)\].pdf#page=88](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation I. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250751)].pdf#page=88)  
<https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250751.pdf#page=88>

his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.<sup>5</sup> 'All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. [Then] he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. [Numbers 6:1-5 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 11:14](#) Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? <sup>15</sup> But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for [her] hair is given to her for a covering. [1 Corinthians 11:14-15 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 14:25](#) Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. <sup>26</sup> And when he cut the hair of his head--at the end of every year he cut [it] because it was heavy on him--when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard. [2 Samuel 14:25-26 NKJV](#)

I wonder why it is that so many of the depictions we have of men from Bible times show them with long hair in light of what Paul wrote? It seems pretty clear that culturally in New Testament times, men did not have long hair according to Paul. Of course, long is relative and generally the pictures of women show them with much longer hair. First, the Nazirite vow was something that was given by God to Moses as something people could take. It doesn't really say what the purpose was except that they would be holy during the days of the vow. It is well known for Sampson, probably the most well-known Nazirite who was dedicated as such from birth. From what we can read of his story in the Bible, he probably violated many of the restrictions of the vow [[Judges 13-16](#)]. The prophet Samuel it seems was dedicated from birth as a Nazirite, though it doesn't use that word. It said that a razor shall never come on his head [[1 Samuel 1:11](#)]. In the New Testament, although the word is not mentioned, it seems that John the Baptist was a Nazirite from birth. It doesn't say anything about a razor never touching his head but it does mention that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb, and never drank wine [[Luke 1:15](#), [Luke 7:33](#)]. As for Absalom, nowhere does it say he took a Nazirite vow, but it does say he cut his hair once a year and apparently it was a lot of hair. This is why it is speculated that when he fled in battle and the Bible says his head was caught up in the oak, most people assume it meant his hair [[2 Samuel 18:9](#)]. So, has any of this exploration helped to understand the meaning or symbolism of the long hair in John's vision? Since these creatures were summoned by the fallen star (Satan), there should be no connection with the long hair of the Nazirite vow which was a dedication to God. Since these creatures were apparently being summoned up to go into battle, I don't think the long hair has a connection to anything feminine. I will defer further discussion on the long hair to the overall interpretation.

### *Teeth like lions*

Next are the teeth like lions. We have probably all seen enough pictures of lions to have a good visual in our mind. Most likely John noticed large the large fangs necessary for capturing and tearing apart their food.

[Joel 1:6](#) For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number; His teeth [are] the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion. [Joel 1:6 NKJV](#)

I did a word search for teeth and there were quite a few hits but most were not relevant. This one in Joel seemed the most relevant especially in light of the fact that we quoted [Joel 1](#) already because of its mention of locusts. In Daniel's dreams and visions of world kingdoms, three times teeth were mentioned, though not of a lion. All were mentioned in the context of devouring meat, which we know for certain symbolized conquering nations and people. Teeth of beasts were mentioned by Moses as something God would send upon Israel if they forsook Him for false gods [[Deuteronomy 32:24](#)]. Eliphaz, in his speech to Job that bad things don't happen to good people said that God could break the teeth of young lions to protect the innocent [[Job 4:10](#)]. Obviously, he wasn't around when so many Christians were fed to the lions in the arena in Rome. It seems that maybe the Psalmist was reading Eliphaz, in Job,

when he wrote the prayer asking for God to punish the wicked, by breaking the fangs of young lions in [Psalm 58](#). David praised God for rescue from enemies in [Psalm 124](#), where he mentioned “not giving us to be torn by their teeth.”

Three points came to me in this word search on teeth of lions or beasts. Multiple times it was mentioned that God would protect the innocent or His own from the teeth of lions or beasts. It also seemed that God would punish His unfaithful with the teeth of beasts, possibly both literal and symbolic. And symbolically for sure, beasts which represent nations, conquered other nations, symbolized in part by devouring with teeth. If nothing else, at least the teeth must represent the ability of these creatures to conquer.

### *Breastplates of iron*

Next, we have breastplates like breastplates of iron. Breastplate was mentioned 28 times in the NKJV, but only 3 times in the NASB, all of them symbolic of the armor of God. On examination of the verses, it seemed that the 25 extra breastplates in the NKJV were translated to breastpiece in the NASB, as in a part of the high priest’s attire. Since this is not about priestly attire, the ones of more interest to me were the 3 hits from the NASB, which were breastplate of righteousness in [Isaiah 59:17](#) and [Ephesians 6:14](#), and of faith in [1 Thessalonians 5:8](#). The plural was also mentioned 2 times, both of which are from this trumpet. The last is from [Revelation 9:17](#), which is the vision of the sixth trumpet, which has a lot of similarities to the fifth. Obviously, these are not breastplates of true righteousness, but perhaps they are of false righteousness. Maybe this is a clue that this trumpet symbolizes something of a religious nature.

### *Wings*

Next, they had wings which made a loud noise, like chariots rushing into battle. Wing(s) are used 90 times in the NKJV. Literally, wings are found on angels, birds and insects, but I think we are much more interested in the symbolic uses of wings in the Bible. Probably most relevant are from Daniel which is Revelation’s companion book of prophecy. I believe the wings on the lion, representing Babylon [[Daniel 7:4](#)], and the leopard, representing Greece [[Daniel 7:6](#)], both symbolize the speed at which they advanced and conquered. The wing(s) of the golden cherubim that surrounded the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant were mentioned a number of times. The wings of actual angels that surround the Throne of God were also mentioned numerous times in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Revelation. At least three times God was said to be like an eagle. Rescuing Israel from Egypt was likened to them being born on eagles’ wings [[Exodus 19:4](#)]. Moses likened God’s protection for Israel, to an eagle spreading its wings and hovering over its young [[Deuteronomy 32:11](#)]. Through Jeremiah, God said He would swoop down on wings like an eagle to deliver punishment on Edom [[Jeremiah 49:22](#)]. I found at least 9 times where the metaphor of a mother bird protecting it’s young under her wings was applied to God [[Ruth 2:12](#), [Psalm 17:8](#), [Psalm 36:7](#), [Psalm 57:1](#), [Psalm 61:4](#), [Psalm 63:7](#), [Psalm 91:4](#), [Matthew 23:37](#), [Luke 13:34](#)]. The phrase “wings of the wind” was used three times [[2 Samuel 22:11](#), [Psalm 18:10](#), [Psalm 104:3](#)]. I puzzled over the meaning of this phrase for a bit. The word translated to wing in this phrase was [כַּנָּף, kanaph](#).<sup>222</sup> Though wing is the primary use, it was also translated to skirt, border, corners, and ends. The primary definition is: wing, extremity, edge, winged, border, corner, shirt.<sup>223</sup> The first two of the three uses of the phrase are actually the same, and they essentially read, “sped on wings of the wind.” If you apply the edge, extremity, or border definition, you might get a picture of the wind pushing a sailboat, or possibly even surfing on the wind. I don’t think it means that God needs the wind to make him move, but that wind is a powerful force of nature and it is at God’s command. The third use of the phrase, riding on a cloud and walking on the wind, is a little different but also paints a picture of God’s movements. The word was also used in the context of

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H3671&t=NKJV>

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H3671&t=NKJV>

something going away. So, what does it represent in the vision of this fifth trumpet? Clearly it doesn't represent the movement of God, or the metaphor of a mother bird protecting its young. I think I go back to what I said at the beginning of this word search, that it has the most to do with the wings in the visions of Daniel, meaning how fast it spread, or how quickly nations fell to this power.

### *Sound*

Next, there was the sound of the wings that was like horses and chariots rushing into battle.

[2 Kings 7:6](#) For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses--the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" [2 Kings 7:6 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 8:16](#) The snorting of His horses was heard from Dan. The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of His strong ones; For they have come and devoured the land and all that is in it, The city and those who dwell in it." [Jeremiah 8:16 NKJV](#)

These two verses were the closest that I found to what John may have heard. The first one may be the exact same sound, and the second may be a stretch. In the first case, Samaria, the capital city of the Northern Kingdom had been under siege for some time by the Arameans. It had caused such a shortage of food, that a mother even killed her own child for food. God chose to save them by making the Arameans hear a sound of chariots, horses and a great army. We are not told whether any visual accompanied the sound, but they fled leaving the Israelites all the supplies in their camp. In the second verse, the tribe of Dan was long gone by this time. It had historically been known as the northernmost tribe of Israel, hence the saying from Dan to Beersheba. Apparently, the Chaldeans would come from the North, devouring the land on their way to Jerusalem. I'm not presenting historical references for this because it is not my primary point. I understand Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt to the south before taking Jerusalem, but maybe he came from the north against Egypt and then doubled back to conquer Jerusalem. It is thought that the route from Jerusalem to Babylon went north to the Euphrates river and then southeast to Babylon.

I didn't find any other place in the Bible where it talked about wings making that sound. These creatures were already said to be like winged horses with battle armor, so I'm not sure what else the sound of horses and chariots going into battle could mean in addition to what has already been described.

### *King over them*

I already talked about the scorpion tails and the five months, so the last thing to talk about is the king over these creatures. Recall that I mentioned Solomon saying that locusts don't have a king over them [[Proverbs 30:27](#)]. There are some insect colonies that have a queen, such as bees. At this stage in the vision, these creatures are not just a swarm acting on instinct but they are organized under a leader. We are even given his name in Hebrew and Greek. In the opening verse it said a star that fell from heaven to earth was given the key to the abyss. That was strongly implied to be Lucifer in heaven, Satan after he was cast out. Remember how I mentioned that stars can represent angels. Is this king, the angel of the abyss meant to be the same as the star that was given the key? Why would he be called a star in one case and an angel in the other? Is the last verse an explanation, identifying the first, as some of Daniel's visions were followed by an interpretation? Let's start by looking at the names. [Ἀβαδδὼν, abaddōn](#)<sup>224</sup> is

<sup>224</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3&t=NKJV>

only used this once in the Bible, but the Greek version of the Hebrew word אַבְדּוֹן, 'abaddown'<sup>225</sup>, is used six times. Let's look at the Hebrew uses in the Old Testament.

[Job 26:6](#) Sheol [is] naked before Him, And **Destruction** has no covering. [Job 26:6 NKJV](#)

[Job 28:22](#) **Destruction** and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.' [Job 28:22 NKJV](#)

[Job 31:12](#) For that [would be] a fire [that] consumes to **destruction**, And would root out all my increase. [Job 31:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 88:11](#) Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? [Or] Your faithfulness in the place of **destruction**? [Psalm 88:11 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:11](#) Hell and **Destruction** [are] before the LORD; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men. [Proverbs 15:11 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 27:20](#) Hell and **Destruction** are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied. [Proverbs 27:20 NKJV](#)

It seems, in the Old Testament, that Abaddon, which means: place of destruction, destruction, ruin, is used to describe a place rather than a being. It seems to be closely tied to Sheol, death and the grave. The word Sheole, which was included in my [word study on Death in Appendix A](#), is used more than sixty times in the Old Testament, and in the KJV is interpreted as either hell or the grave. So, does this mean the king of the creatures of the abyss is called Death? Turning to the Greek name, Apollyon, I noticed that word was used only once in the entire Bible, so it's difficult to get any context by other uses. It has the meaning "Destroyer," and according to Strong's is an active participle to the word, ἀπόλλυμι, [apollymi](#)<sup>226</sup>, which was used numerous times in the New Testament. It was frequently translated to the words, perish, destroy, and lose. I think it is fair to say that whoever this king is, he is also called Death and Destruction. The question is, is this king Satan himself, or is he a human leader, undoubtedly inspired by Satan. It is still not very clear to me whether the angel that unlocked the abyss, is the same as the king of the creatures that came out of it. I don't think Satan generally appears in person as he did when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. I think he usually works through leaders who have chosen evil, rather than good. Just think of all the leaders of countries today who care nothing about their people, but only about their own comfort and staying in power.

### Interpreting the symbols

I think I have spent enough time going over the individual details of this vision, and now it is time to start pulling it together and attempting to attach some interpretation to it. Possibly the most common interpretation of this trumpet, is that it represents a phase in the spread of the Muslim culture and religion. This line of interpretation goes back as far as Martin Luther and Isaac Newton.<sup>227</sup> The symbols of the horse, the wings representing speed, the long hair, battle armor, and the abyss likened to the desert wasteland of the region are all easily attributable to the expansion of Islam, and where it originated. The spread of this religion followed battles, with the usual killing, and conquests, the same way that past kingdoms conquered and expanded. Hence, the interpretation of hurting but not killing, needs some explanation. I believe this vision is symbolic, so it seems the interpretation should avoid intermingling literal and symbolic. Who is the target of this swarm? It is those who do not have the seal of God. Does

<sup>225</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H11&t=NKJV>

<sup>226</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G622&t=NKJV>

<sup>227</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p244.



this mean those who claim to be God's people, but are misrepresenting Him and disobeying His Law? Or does it mean pagans, who neither recognize, nor obey Him? Some have looked ahead to the next trumpet which seems related, to see who the target is, assuming that it must be the same. Many have said the third part of mankind that was killed in the next trumpet, represents the Eastern Roman Empire. The interpretation being that the capital city, Constantinople, stood and hence was only hurt by the first woe, but was conquered or killed in the second woe. It seems that the first three references all rely on Gibbon for their historical quotes. I'm not going to requote them all but you can easily read some of them from the links in these footnotes.<sup>228 229 230 231 232 233</sup>

Another big question is whether a 150-year period can be identified in the early spread of the culture and religion of Islam. Many have pointed out that five literal months is the life span of the desert locust, questioning whether that has an application, such as one generation.

- 636-936 – Sir Isaac Newton and Alexander Keith, because the five months is mentioned twice, fix two back to back periods of one hundred and fifty years. The first from its commencement to its height. The second during which the sting that was left behind continued to hurt.<sup>234 235</sup>
- 1299-1449 – Smith, Thiele and others have selected these dates to bracket the 5-month prophetic period. They allow for this fifth trumpet to begin with the rise of Islam in the seventh century, but pin the 150-year period much later, when they were united under a king.<sup>236 237</sup>
- 674-823 – Maxwell, chooses a different set of dates, from the first but futile Moslem attack on Constantinople, to the last futile attack, there elapsed a period one year short of 150.<sup>238</sup>

Another interpretation that Paulien, LaRondelle, Stefanovic seem to agree on, as shown in the Table<sup>239 240</sup>, is that this trumpet portrays the reign of secular atheism. They do not try to find a five month or 150-year period but

<sup>228</sup> Keith, Alexander. *Signs of the Times, Vol 1*. Edinburgh, William Whyte & Co., 1847, p288.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=m8qhkkgUIWoC&pg=PA288>

<sup>229</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel and the Revelation (The response of history to the voice of prophecy)*. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p469. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/n543/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/n543/mode/2up)] [Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1897, p561 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA561>]

<sup>230</sup> Thiele. p172. [http://btlb.org/Thiele,EdwinR.OutlineStudiesinRevelationII.AvondaleCollege,1974\[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=18](http://btlb.org/Thiele,EdwinR.OutlineStudiesinRevelationII.AvondaleCollege,1974[adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=18) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=18>

<sup>231</sup> Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London. T. Cadell, Strand, 1831, p858. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA858>

<sup>232</sup> Maxwell. p242-251.

<sup>233</sup> Newton, Isaac. *Observations Upon the Apocalypse of St. John – Part II*. 1733, p303.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=gW5BAAAACAAJ&pg=PA303>

<sup>234</sup> Keith. p307. <https://books.google.com/books?id=m8qhkkgUIWoC&pg=PA307>

<sup>235</sup> Newton. p305. <https://books.google.com/books?id=gW5BAAAACAAJ&pg=PA305>

<sup>236</sup> Smith. p478. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/478/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/478/mode/2up)] p574

<https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA574>

<sup>237</sup> Thiele. p174. [http://btlb.org/Thiele,EdwinR.OutlineStudiesinRevelationII.AvondaleCollege,1974\[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=20](http://btlb.org/Thiele,EdwinR.OutlineStudiesinRevelationII.AvondaleCollege,1974[adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=20) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=20>

<sup>238</sup> Maxwell. p251.

<sup>239</sup> Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. "Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets." Ministry, January 2012, Nampa, ID, p8.

<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <http://btlb.org/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>

<sup>240</sup> Stefanovic, Ranko. *End-Time Demonic Activities in the Book of Revelation*. Journal of Adventist Mission Studies, Vol. 11 [2015], No. 2, Art. 14, p169. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1308&context=jams>, <http://btlb.org/End-Time-Demonic-Activities-in-the-Book-of-Revelation.pdf>

interpret the time span to mean God's judgements are limited. The different approach that they have taken also pairs this trumpet with the prior which they interpret as the rise of secular atheism. The Islam interpretation pairs this trumpet with the next. In the Bible, pharaoh, at the time of the Exodus was a prominent figure representing atheism as evidenced by the following statement:

[Exodus 5:2](#) And Pharaoh said, "Who [is] the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." [Exodus 5:2 NKJV](#)

In the book *Great Controversy*, Ellen White wrote:

In the sixteenth century the Reformation, presenting an open Bible to the people, had sought admission to all the countries of Europe. Some nations welcomed it with gladness, as a messenger of Heaven. In other lands, popery succeeded, to a great extent, in preventing its entrance; and the light of Bible knowledge, with its elevating influences, was almost wholly excluded. In one country, though the light found entrance, it was not comprehended by the darkness. For centuries, truth and error struggled for the mastery. At last the evil triumphed, and the truth of Heaven was thrust out. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." [John 3:19.] The nation was left to reap the results of the course which she had chosen. The restraint of God's Spirit was removed from a people that had despised the gift of his grace. Evil was permitted to come to maturity. And all the world saw the fruit of willful rejection of the light.

The war against the Bible, carried forward for so many centuries in France, culminated in the scenes of the Revolution. That terrible outbreaking was but the legitimate result of Rome's suppression of the Scriptures. It presented the most striking illustration which the world has ever witnessed, of the working out of the papal policy,—an illustration of the results to which for more than a thousand years the teaching of the Roman Church had been tending. [White, Great Controversy, p265](#)<sup>241</sup>

If one truly examines what the Church of the dark ages had become, it is no wonder that people would want to disavow the existence of such a God. Hence the natural result of the misrepresentation of God and the suppression of His Word is the rejection of the concept of God. We see this manifested in different forms today. Jon Paulien wrote the following in 1986. How much more applicable is it in 2020?

All these images point to modern-day secularism. Beliefs such as Marxism, evolution and rationalism have full control of the media with the result that this generation has no God, no morality, no meaning and no hope. In the words of Camus the only logical action to take is suicide. Such a condition is far worse than a literal locust-plague. Communism oppresses many. Ecumenism waters down the faith. Secularism and materialism feed the hunger for God's word with ashes. The final result is spiritualism, when people turn to demons to fulfill their spiritual longings. [The Soviet Union is the world's leader in the study of parapsychology.] [Paulien, Interpreting the Seven Trumpets](#)<sup>242</sup>

Though secularism is a tool of the Devil, it was its backlash that broke the iron fist of the Papacy. In fact, it opened the doors for the spread of the truth of God through the availability of Bibles in the languages of the people.

<sup>241</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p265.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA265>

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=265>

<sup>242</sup> Paulien, Jon. *Interpreting the Seven Trumpets*. Berrien Springs, MI, February, 1986, p87. [http://btlib.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=87](http://btlib.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=87)

In 2013, Jon Hjørleifur Stefansson wrote a master's Thesis at Andrews University where he traced the history of the Adventist Church's interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets which I found very educational. In an appendix, he made a parallel showing how very much Smith quoted Keith, and Keith Gibbon in their respective books. He also explained the difficulties with some of the dates which have caused many individuals and the Adventist Church as an organization, to explore other dates, or entirely different interpretations.<sup>243</sup>

## Conclusion

What I am concluding is that many if not most Adventist interpretations are still Islam based. Probably the second most dominant view is that these symbols represent secularism and atheism, which has historically been associated with Marxism and Communism, and in non-Communist countries, is closely identified with liberalism and progressivism. It has been very difficult for me to pick, but since I am not learned or forward enough to propose my own position at this time, I think I find myself most closely identifying with the interpretation outlined by Maxwell. Since his book is still under copyright, I unfortunately cannot offer a free online reference, but highly recommend his book *God Cares*, which I quoted above.

One thing I am uncomfortable with is the intermingling of the literal and symbolic. For example, Smith and Keith quote Gibbon stating that Abubeker's command to his men to not destroy corn fields or fruit or palm trees was a fulfillment of the vision's command "... not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree." My issue is with trying to interpret the trees literally in this case. They also interpreted his command to not kill certain people as fulfillment of the vision's command to only hurt "... the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads." But at the same time Abubeker commanded them to kill certain other men, where the vision said not to kill anyone but only hurt them.<sup>244 245 246</sup>

It is hard to argue with the secular atheism interpretation because it is such a big thing now. I just think that, using Daniel's visions as a measuring stick, these symbols should apply to military conquests. I have no doubt that socialist and communist countries have conquered others but I think that, fueled by a bad image of God, it gradually grows up from within and when it has enough momentum, it takes over.

Finally, in trying to connect some of the symbols, the thinking is that the angel is either the literal angel who appeared to Mohammed, or himself, the founder of the religion. The abyss, the vast desert wasteland where it all started and came from. The greenery that they hurt but didn't kill is symbolic of the Eastern Roman Empire, but more specifically the capital city, Constantinople, which was also allied with the Eastern Orthodox Church. The characteristics of the creatures were symbolic of the appearance of the warriors, and the manner of warfare waged by the Muslim armies.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think there is so much more detail for the fifth trumpet, than the previous four?

<sup>243</sup> Steffanson, Jon Hjørleifur. *From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy: the History of the Adventist Interpretation of Revelation 9, from 1833 to 1957*. 2013.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1053&context=theses>, [http://btlb.org/From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy the History of the Ad.pdf](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf)

<sup>244</sup> Smith. p474. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/474/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/474/mode/2up)] p567  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA567>

<sup>245</sup> Keith. p300. <https://books.google.com/books?id=m8qhkkgUIWoC&pg=PA300>

<sup>246</sup> Gibbon. p897. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA897>

- Secular atheism is such a big antagonist to the Christian Church today. Do you think it should have a place in the big picture of the church's history?
- If these two trumpets or woes occupy such a large portion of Revelation, one whole chapter, it would seem they are important and God would want us to understand them, at least in the last days. Why do you think there is not more consensus on the interpretation, even within one church?

## The sixth trumpet (second woe)

### [Revelation 9:13-21](#)

[Revelation 9:13](#) Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, <sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." <sup>15</sup> So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. <sup>16</sup> Now the number of the army of the horsemen [was] two hundred million; I heard the number of them. <sup>17</sup> And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses [were] like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. <sup>18</sup> By these three [plagues] a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails [are] like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

<sup>20</sup> But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. <sup>21</sup> And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. [Revelation 9:13-21 NKJV](#)

It is not difficult to see some parallels between this trumpet or woe and the previous one. The words that were mentioned in both, though the context may be different were, horses, breastplates, lion, smoke, and tails. Of course, there are differences which were, men killed, there were four angels instead of one, breastplates were colored rather than iron, the horses' head looked like a lion rather than just the teeth, tails were like serpent head's rather than scorpions' tails.

### Examining the symbols

I will not need to repeat the analysis for the same symbols.

#### *Four horns of the golden altar*

The voice announcing the sixth trumpet was said to be coming from the four horns of the golden altar. One might ask why the altar is talking and whether it is alive but remember that these are most likely symbols. The next question that came to mind was, which altar is this? In the Old Testament Sanctuary, there were two altars. There was the larger altar of sacrifice that sat in the courtyard, and the smaller altar of incense that was located in the Holy place. Both altars were gold plated and both had four horns, but their purpose was very different. My first inclination would be to say that there should be no death or sacrifices going on in heaven, so there is no need for an altar of sacrifice. Perhaps in the parallel between the sanctuary on earth and the one in heaven, the courtyard represents earth where Jesus was sacrificed? If this vision was near the throne of God, it more likely that it is the one that the earthly altar of incense was patterned after.

The first occurrence of the word altar in the NKJV is with Noah after the flood [[Genesis 8:20](#)]. I had thought that it might be mentioned in the story of Can and Abel, but though the Bible calls what they brought offerings it didn't say anything about an altar. Abram built altars to the Lord for sacrifices [[Genesis 12:7](#), [Genesis 12:8](#), [Genesis 13:4](#), [Genesis 13:18](#),

[Genesis 22:9](#)). Isaac, following his father's example, built an altar for sacrifice to the Lord [[Genesis 26:25](#)]. Jacob built altars to sacrifice to the Lord [[Genesis 33:20](#), [Genesis 35:1](#), [Genesis 35:3](#), [Genesis 35:7](#)]. Before they received the blueprints for the Sanctuary, God told the Israelites their altars should be made of earth or uncut stones. Using a stone that any tool had worked on would profane the altar. Shortly after this God gave Moses the plans for the Sanctuary which included two plated altars, both with four horns. One was the altar of sacrifice [[Exodus 27](#)] and the other was for burning incense [[Exodus 30](#)]. Of all the items in the Holy Place, the altar of incense was to stand the closest to the Ark of the Covenant, with only the veil between them [[Exodus 40:5](#)].

Let's look more closely at the altar of incense, since that is more likely what John saw in vision. God gave Moses a special recipe for the incense that was to be burned on this altar, and it was to be kept secret, and never used by anyone for common use [[Exodus 30:37](#)]. The coals for burning the incense were to be taken from the altar of sacrifice [[Leviticus 16:12](#)]. These coals were from fire ignited by God, and man-made or strange fire was never to be used in the Sanctuary service [[Leviticus 9:24](#), [Leviticus 6:12-13](#), [Numbers 3:4](#)]. When I studied the Sanctuary service I discussed how the incense represented prayers or atonement [[Psalm 141:2](#), [1 Chronicles 6:49](#)]. Once a year, presumably on the Day of Atonement, blood from a sacrifice was put on the horns of the altar [[Exodus 30:10](#)]. For sin offerings, some of the blood was wiped on the horns of the altar, which most likely represents the combined role of prayer and penalty in our forgiveness [[Leviticus 4:7](#), [Leviticus 4:18](#)].

So, is there any significance in the altar announcing this sixth trumpet? Unfortunately, after analyzing the altar throughout the Bible, I haven't been able to come up with any good reason why it was announcing this trumpet.

#### *Four angels*

The four angels in this case it seems are destroyers or killers, who would kill a third of mankind. I will examine the number four, which was found 322 times in the NKJV, and then the word angel, 199.

Interestingly, although probably not relevant from the number perspective, there were four rivers flowing out of the Garden of Eden, one of which was named the Euphrates [[Genesis 2:10](#)]. From somewhat recent memory, there were four creatures, or beings immediately surrounding the throne of God [[Ezekiel 1](#), [Revelation 4](#)]. The number four occurred multiple times in Daniel's dreams and visions representing the four divisions of the Greek Empire [[Daniel 7:6](#), [Daniel 8:8](#), [Daniel 8:22](#), [Daniel 11:4](#)]. The expression "four winds" occurred 9 times and "four corners" 23 times in the NKJV. When not literal, they were usually synonymous with the four directions of the compass, and generally meant from or to everywhere, or in every direction. Also in Daniel, there were four beasts, which represented four consecutive world Empires [[Daniel 7](#), [Daniel 8](#)]. There were many fours in the Old Testament Sanctuary design. [Jeremiah 15:3](#) mentions four kinds of doom that would fall upon the rebellious southern kingdom. Zechariah [[1:18](#)] saw four horns in vision which the angel immediately interpreted to be the powers that scattered Israel and Judah. Zechariah [[6:1](#)] saw four chariots, which the angel conveniently interpreted as the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before God. These were almost certainly related to or the same as the four creatures or beings that Ezekiel and John saw around the throne of God. Symbolically, I think it is pretty fair to say that the number four represents full coverage, or everywhere. It is interesting to note that the number can be literal even in the context of a dream of symbols as we see in Daniel. At this point I will not try to conclude whether it is literal or symbolic.

In the NLT, Paul refers to the slaying of the first born as being done by the angel of death [[Hebrews 11:28](#)]. "My" angel will go before the Israelites (into the Promised Land), and will completely destroy certain of the occupants [[Exodus 23:23](#), [Exodus 33:2](#)]. The angel of the Lord stood in the way of Balaam, with sword drawn [[Numbers 22](#)]. The angel of the Lord killed 185,000 men of Assyria that were attacking Jerusalem [[2 Kings 19:35](#), [2 Chronicles 32:21](#), [Isaiah 37:36](#)]. The angel of the Lord was destroying people in Israel after David took a census [[2 Samuel 24:16](#), [2 Chronicles 21:16](#)]. Herod

was killed by the angel of the Lord [[Acts 12:23](#)]. In most if not all of these cases, the term “angel of the Lord” was used. Even though each of these instances seems very literal, perhaps we should examine whether the term “angel of the Lord” is symbolic of something.

This is in fact a whole other study, but let me just briefly say, I believe, that in some cases, the “angel of the Lord” referred to God, or more likely pre-incarnate Jesus. The logic for saying that “the angel of the Lord” can refer to God is that there were instances where He simply said so, or accepted worship, or claimed the ground around Him was holy. “The angel of the Lord” appeared to Hagar in the wilderness and said I will greatly multiply your descendants [[Genesis 16:10](#)]. “The angel of the Lord” spoke to Abraham and identifies Himself as the Lord [[Genesis 22:15-16](#)]. [Exodus 3:2](#) says “the angel of the Lord” appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and then promptly told him he was on holy ground. In [Judges 2:1](#) the “angel of the Lord” spoke of his covenant with Israel. Zechariah saw a vision where Joshua the High Priest and Satan were standing side by side before the “angel of the Lord.” In this case Satan was the accuser and the “angel of the Lord” appears to be the Lord Himself, the judge of all creation [[Zechariah 3](#)]. I don’t know if it is possible to know for certain which of the 68 times in the NKJV that “the angel of the Lord” refers to God and which refer to an angel.

Moving on to something closer, and pretty clearly symbolic, [Revelation 7:1-2](#) mentions four angels, who had power to harm the earth, sea and trees, but who were held back from doing so until God’s people were sealed. I think one would have to ask if these four angels (sixth trumpet) represent the same thing as the ones in Revelation 7, and I don’t think they do.

When I introduced the seven churches in [Revelation 1:20](#), I asserted that the angel was likely symbolic of a human spiritual leader [[Revelation – Chapter 1](#)]. If we continue along this line of interpretation, then this could be a clue that the destroying or conquering power in this trumpet is power based in or motivated by religious beliefs.

### *Bound*

The four angels were said to be bound at the great river Euphrates. What is the meaning or symbolism of being bound? I think there is a difference between angels that are bound to prevent them from doing something, and angels that have the power to do something and are told to wait [[Revelation 7:3](#)]. The word bound or bind has multiple meanings. Tying items together or fastening one thing on to another was often described using the words bind or bound. In the Bible, many times someone who made a vow, oath, or promise was said to be bound. In this case they bound themselves. Numerous other times it was used in the context of someone being bound against their will with cords, or shackles, often as a prisoner. I think this last definition is probably what is symbolized in this vision, making [Revelation 20:2](#), a good cross reference, where Satan is bound for a thousand years. I believe the symbolism here portrays being restrained against their will.

### *Euphrates River*

Geographically, the Euphrates sort of parallels the Tigris, both of which begin in Turkey, and pass through Syria and Iraq on their way to the Persian Gulf. Rivers are often boundaries between countries, but the Euphrates flowed right through the center of ancient Babylon, which was the vulnerability exploited by Cyrus.<sup>247</sup> It is also currently not a boundary in today’s geography.<sup>248</sup>

<sup>247</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall\\_of\\_Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Babylon)

<sup>248</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphrates>



This river is mentioned 21 times in the NKJV, only two of which are in the New Testament. There is no reason I know of, to doubt that the Euphrates River today is the same as the one mentioned after the flood in the Bible.<sup>249</sup> The Euphrates and the Tigris were two of four rivers mentioned, before sin, in the Garden of Eden [[Genesis 2:14](#)]. I would say however that the topology of the land must have changed significantly during the flood, so the river mentioned in Genesis 2 is not literally same as the one mentioned after. In fact, when you think of it, rivers today generally originate from precipitation and melting snow from higher elevations. Such would most likely not have been the case in Eden. In fact, the Bible says that there were four river which all divided from a single one that flowed out of Eden.

[Genesis 2:10](#) Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first [is] Pishon; it [is] the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where [there is] gold. <sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land [is] good. Bdellium and the onyx stone [are] there. <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river [is] Gihon; it [is] the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river [is] Hiddekel; it [is] the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river [is] the Euphrates. [Genesis 2:10-14 NKJV](#)

I believe the river out of Eden must have originated from an underground source, possibly the same that burst forth from the deep to cause the flood [[Genesis 7:11](#)].

After the flood, God made a covenant, where He promised to give the descendants of Abram all the land between the river in Egypt (presumably the Nile) and the great river, the Euphrates [[Genesis 15:18](#)]. Several times after this in the Old Testament, the Euphrates was mentioned in one way or another as a border of the land given to Israel [[Deuteronomy 1:7](#), [Deuteronomy 11:24](#), [Joshua 1:4](#), [1 Chronicles 5:9](#), [1 Chronicles 18:3](#)]. The Euphrates was associated with the kingdom of Assyria [[2 Kings 23:29](#)]. The king of Babylon took over the entire land that had been given to the Israelites, from Egypt to the Euphrates [[2 Kings 24:7](#)]. King Josiah died in the Battle of Carchemish, along the Euphrates [[2 Chronicles 35:20](#)]. The defeat of Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish, along the Euphrates was predicted by Jeremiah [[Jeremiah 46](#)]. The beginning of [Jeremiah 13](#), is an acted-out parable of the ruin of Judah, in which the Euphrates River was mentioned four times. The first mention in the New Testament is this one, and the last is from the sixth of seven bowls of wrath [[Revelation 16:12](#)].

So, is there some symbolism attached to this river? It was one of few named things before the flood. It was prominently mentioned as a border or at least a best-case border of Israel. Symbolically Jeremiah used it as something people would cross in coming back to the land of Israel. Twice it was used symbolically in Revelation. Considering the whole Bible, I would have to say that it was primarily referenced as a border of the land of Israel, the Promised Land.

### *The hour and day and month and year*

One of the very big debates about this vision is whether this expression refers to a specific point in time or a period of time.

It has been said that the KJV translation portrays more of a sense of a period of time, and newer translations a point in time. Whether they are better or not is up for debate, but newer translations have had access to some more recently discovered, and potentially more ancient manuscripts. Even though translated from the same manuscript,

<sup>249</sup> Map reference: <http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/euphrates-river-valley-map.html>

notice the slight difference in the wording between the KJV and NKJV. The later could be much more easily read as a point in time but remember the source for both are the same.

[Revelation 9:15](#) And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. [Revelation 9:15 KJV](#)

[Revelation 9:15](#) So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. [Revelation 9:15 NKJV](#)

If you believe a span of time is implied, you most likely believe that the prophetic day/year principle applies. If an hour is 1/24<sup>th</sup> of a day, then in the prophetic sense, that hour would represent 1/24<sup>th</sup> of a literal year. The question is whether you would take 1/24<sup>th</sup> of 360 or 365.25xxxxx? In addition to other reasons discussed in Appendix B, I believe that in symbolism, the numbers should be nice symmetric round numbers, and 1/24<sup>th</sup> of 360 is 15. (See also [The seventh seal](#), [Appendix B – Prophetic time](#)) Adding it up would yield 360 + 30 + 1 = 391 years and 15 days.

### *Kill a third of mankind*

Mankind was used 8 times in the NKJV. Nine times from the Hebrew word [אָדָם](#), 'adam'<sup>250</sup>, which itself was used over 500 times and most commonly translated to man/men but with the inclusive meaning of all humanity. Eight times in Daniel from the Aramaic word [אַנְשֵׁי](#), 'enash'<sup>251</sup>, which itself was used 25 times in the KJV, and mostly translated to man. Four times from the Hebrew word [בָּשָׂר](#), 'basar'<sup>252</sup>, which was used 269 times in the KJV, mostly translated to flesh, possibly applying to animals as well as humans. In the New Testament, from the Greek word [ἄνθρωπος](#), 'anthrōpos'<sup>253</sup>, which itself was used over 500 times, mostly translated to man, but meaning human being, male or female. It seems pretty clear to me that mankind in the Bible mostly refers to human beings and possibly in a few cases, all living creatures. I know it seems so obvious that it doesn't need to be said but, since mankind seems to refer to living beings, then kill would most logically mean to end the life of the living being. The Biblical use of the third was explored in the [Second Trumpet](#).

### *200 Million horsemen*

This is an astounding number for the size of an army. I think this might be the largest quantity mentioned in the Bible. The only other place in the NKJV I found the word million was in [2 Chronicles 14:9](#), when an Ethiopian army of one million came out against the kingdom of Judah in the time of King Asa. I thought I remembered a verse in the Bible that mentioned ten thousand times ten thousand which taken literally would be 100 million.

[Daniel 7:10](#) A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. [Daniel 7:10 NKJV](#)

These numbers seem very large for a single group at one time, but relative to the population of the earth or even a country it is not that much. Undoubtedly the largest army that will ever assemble on earth was mentioned in [Revelation 20:8](#), where it says their number was like the sand of the seashore. These were all the unsaved from the entire history of earth, assembled around the New Jerusalem, attempting to take the city by force. But it says in the next verse that fire came down from heaven and devoured them. So, is this 200 million literal? Since we are treating everything else as symbolic, it seems that the number should symbolize something as well. Perhaps [Genesis 24:60](#)

<sup>250</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H120&t=NKJV>

<sup>251</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H606&t=NKJV>

<sup>252</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1320&t=NKJV>

<sup>253</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G444&t=NKJV>



could also provide a way of interpreting this large number. In this verse Rebekah, the wife of Isaac and daughter-in-law of Abraham was blessed by her family who said, “May you our sister become thousands of ten thousands.” This is obviously referring to descendants over time.

### *Horses*

I examined the use of horses in the Bible in the [Fifth Trumpet](#).

### *Breastplates*

Breastplates were also covered in the [Fifth Trumpet](#), but these are different in that their color is said to be “fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow.” Not surprisingly, this is the only place I found the word hyacinth in the NKJV. What color is hyacinth? I couldn’t find a really universal definition of the color hyacinth. It seems that the closest thing would be the color of the flowers by the same name, which are varied but maybe mostly shades of blue purple and pink. I’m sure that fire is mentioned many times in the Bible, but this verse implies the fiery red. According to multiple dictionaries, brimstone is another word for sulfur, whose symbol is S on the periodic table. According to Wikipedia it is the fifth most common element on earth.<sup>254</sup> The color is yellow and in its pure form has no odor. The smell most people associate with sulfur such as skunks, hot springs, and rotten eggs are the result of sulfur compounds, for example hydrogen sulfide.<sup>255</sup> The word brimstone is used 14 times in the NKJV, and almost every time it is mentioned with fire. The most common occurrence of the word is in association with the lake of fire, or hell fire and the destruction of Satan and the wicked [[Psalm 11:6](#), [Isaiah 30:33](#), [Isaiah 34:9](#), [Ezekiel 38:22](#), [Revelation 9:17-18](#), [Revelation 14:10](#), [Revelation 19:20](#), [Revelation 20:10](#), [Revelation 21:8](#)]. It is also mentioned more than once in connection with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah [[Genesis 19:24](#), [Deuteronomy 29:23](#), [Luke 17:29](#)]. The last thing I will say about brimstone or sulfur, and maybe the most relevant, especially in the context of warfare, is that it is an essential component in gun power. Many have concluded, myself among them, that the colors mentioned here represent the use of firearms and cannons.

### *Heads of lions*

The word lion was used 101 times in the NKJV. At least a third were referring to the literally animal. Today, the lion has the nickname, king of beasts. Probably in Bible times, it had a similar reputation [[Judges 14:18](#), [2 Samuel 17:10](#), [Proverbs 20:2](#), [Proverbs 30:30](#)]. Four times, in prophecy Balaam referred to the young Israelite nation as a lion or lioness, devouring its prey [[Numbers 23:24](#), [Numbers 24:9](#)]. Jesus was described as the Lion from the tribe of Judah, who was worthy to open the seven seals [[Revelation 5:5](#)]. A person’s bravery or might was established by their ability to kill a lion [[Judges 14:5-6](#), [1 Samuel 17:34-36](#), [2 Samuel 23:20](#), [1 Chronicles 11:22](#)]. Lions were often a symbol of something. The phrase “like a lion,” occurs 15 times in the NKJV, most often in the context of someone or a nation being attacked by or at the mercy of another. In a couple cases, the phrase was used to describe something seen in vision that had certain characteristics of a lion. Finally, the phrase was used a few times to describe something positive, as in something as powerful and brave as a lion protecting or providing for someone. The similar phrase “as a lion,” which occurs 9 times in the NKJV, however was used more often to describe something positive, including the strength and prowess of some of the tribes of Israel.

In general, lions in the Bible symbolized or represented something majestic, powerful and fierce, but in more cases as a danger rather than a benefit or protector, which is very true to life.

<sup>254</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulfur>

<sup>255</sup> <https://www.livescience.com/28939-sulfur.html>

### *Mouths, expelling fire, smoke and brimstone*

The word mouth was used 394 times in the NKJV. A small portion of them simply as the opening of something such as a well, sack, or cave. 9 times specifically as “the mouth of the Lord.” The word mouth was used 52 times in Proverbs, mostly exclaiming the power and good things that can come from the mouth of the wise, and on the other hand the terrible things that can result as a result of what comes out of the mouth of the foolish or wicked.

[Job 41:19-21](#) mentions flames or fire going out of the mouth of God in creation. David mentions fire coming out of God’s mouth against his enemies [[2 Samuel 22:9](#), [Psalm 18:8](#)]. A couple times Isaiah mentions breath of God as fire or burning brimstone [[Isaiah 30:33](#), [Isaiah 33:11](#)]. God’s words in the mouth of Jeremiah were as fire [[Jeremiah 5:14](#)].

As for lion’s mouths, there were a few occurrences in the NKJV. A prayer of David for deliverance [[Psalm 22:13](#), [Psalm 22:21](#)], which interestingly surrounds a prophecy of Jesus on the cross [[Psalm 22:17-21](#)]. Salvation or rescue from the lion’s mouth was mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments [[1 Samuel 17:34-35](#), [Amos 3:12](#), [2 Timothy 4:17](#)].

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is great power in the mouth, or tongue or words, for either good or evil, salvation or destruction. Words from the mouth of God were both literally and figuratively powerful, for creation or destruction.

### *Tails*

The word tail(s) was used 20 times in the NKJV. 4 times it was used as “fat tail” as in what to do with it in the sacrificial service. Moses was supposed to catch the miraculously created serpent by the tail and it would turn back into a staff [[Exodus 4:4](#)]. God described the blessings that would come to Israel as the result of obedience, they would be the head and not the tail, as in lead among nations, not follow [[Deuteronomy 28:13](#)]. If they disobeyed, they would not lead among nations, they would be the tail and not the head, they would even have to borrow from immigrants living among them [[Deuteronomy 28:44](#)]. Samson caught foxes and tied a torch to their tails and set them free among the grain fields of the Philistines [[Judges 15:4](#)]. Job wrote of the tail of the behemoth being like a cedar tree [[Job 40:15-18](#)], which sounds a lot like a dinosaur. Consequences of disobedience were that God would cut off the head and tail, meaning, the elder and honorable, and the false prophet [[Isaiah 9:13-15](#)]. In predicting doom for Egypt, there would be no work for the head or tail, probably with the same symbolism as in [Isaiah 9:15](#). Tails like scorpions and serpents are mentioned in both the fifth and sixth trumpets [[Scorpions](#), Serpent’s will be discussed next]. Further on in Revelation, the Dragon’s tail swept a third of the stars of heaven to earth [[Revelation 12:3-4](#)].

### *Serpent*

Serpent(s) were mentioned 43+14 times in the NKJV. Before sin the serpent was said to be more crafty than any beast of the field [[Genesis 3:1](#)]. Literally, a serpent played a big role in sin coming into the world, I think resulting in the serpent symbolizing Satan many times in the rest of the Bible [[Genesis 3:2-13](#)]. The serpent was cursed after its participation in the entry of sin to the world [[Genesis 3:14](#)]. When Jacob predicted the futures of his sons on his death bed, he said Dan would be like a serpent, biting horse’s heels [[Genesis 49:17](#)]. Moses performed the miracle of turning a staff into a serpent and back to show that God was behind the Exodus [[Exodus 4:3](#), [Exodus 7:9-15](#)]. A bronze serpent on a pole was made as a symbol of Jesus, who would heal the Israelites from snake bites if they looked at it [[Numbers 21:6-9](#), [Deuteronomy 8:15](#), [1 Corinthians 10:9](#)]. An interesting side note to this bronze serpent was that hundreds of years later, King Hezekiah destroyed this serpent, that Moses had made at the command of God, because the people were superstitiously offering incense to it [[2 Kings 18:1-4](#)]. In defending the greatness of

God, Job mentions that He will pierce the fleeing serpent, possibly a reference to the eventual defeat of Satan [[Job 26:13](#)]. A couple times the Psalms likens the wicked to the venom of a serpent [[Psalm 58:4](#), [Psalm 140:3](#)]. In the same Psalm that Satan quoted to tempt Jesus regarding angels bearing you up if you strike your foot against the stone, it promises protection against lions and serpents for those who trust in the Lord [[Psalm 91:13](#)]. Solomon likens wine to the bite of a serpent and the sting of a viper [[Proverbs 23:32](#)]. Isaiah mentions flying serpents, and associates a creature he calls leviathan to a serpent [[Isaiah 14:29](#), [Isaiah 27:1](#), [Isaiah 30:6](#)].

In the New Testament, Jesus called the religious leaders of His day serpents and vipers [[Matthew 23:33](#)]. When Jesus sent out His disciples, He told them to be shrewd as serpents, but innocent as doves [[Matthew 10:6](#)]. Jesus, possibly quoting from Psalm 91, promised protection against serpents and scorpions when He sent out the seventy [[Luke 10:19](#)]. Four times in the remainder of Revelation, serpent was used as another name for Satan [[Revelation 12:9](#), [Revelation 12:14-15](#), [Revelation 20:2](#)].

In only a very few instances were serpents mentioned in a positive context. In most cases they were dangerous, deadly, poisonous, punishing, and symbols of Satan.

### *Demons*

The word demon occurs 32 times in the NKJV, and only in the four Gospels, and in every case it was relating to either literal or accused demon possession. The plural occurred 49 times in the NKJV, including 4 in the Old Testament. 36 times in the Gospels again relating to literal or accused demon possession. Interestingly demon possession is only found in the Gospels but accounts for the majority of cases where demon(s) are mentioned. The three times in the Old Testament were about sacrificing to demons [[Leviticus 7:17](#), [Deuteronomy 32:17](#), [2 Chronicles 11:15](#), [Psalm 106:37](#)]. Paul used the word demons 5 times, four of which were in the context of sacrificing to them [[1 Corinthians 10:20-21](#)], and one in the context of falling away from God and following spirits and doctrines of demons [[1 Timothy 4:1](#)]. James wrote that the demons believe in God and tremble [[James 2:19](#)].

One big question I had is whether demons and evil angels are the same? I believe they are the same. One reason I believe this is because His opponents accused Jesus of using Satan's power to cast out demons, Jesus' reply indicated that if He did that Satan would be working against his own kingdom.

### *Idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone*

The words Idol or idols were mentioned 138 times in the NKJV. The first was when Rachel stole the household idols from her father Laban [[Genesis 31:19-35](#)]. In the NKJV, the Ten Commandments didn't use the word image in place of idol. I found it interesting that after the Ten Commandments, idols were only mentioned a few more times in the remaining books written by Moses. Of course there were other ways of describing the same thing such as the molten calf [[Exodus 32](#)]. Aside from the golden calf incident, I don't think the Israelites had an idol worship problem under the strong leadership of Moses, so those mentions were warnings against the practice of worshipping them, and what would happen if they did. [Judges 17-18](#) tells the story of the beginning of idol worship in Dan. During the times of the kings of Judah, there was a repeated cycle of wicked kings establishing idol worship, among other bad things, followed by good kings who tried to eliminate idol worship [[1 Kings 15:12](#), [2 Kings 21:11](#), [2 Kings 21:21](#), [2 Kings 23:24](#), [2 Chronicles 15:8](#), [2 Chronicles 24:18](#)]. Jeroboam, the very first king of the northern tribes of Israel, established idol worship at least in part because he didn't want his subjects going to the temple in Jerusalem [[1 Kings 12:25-33](#)]. Unlike the southern kingdom, there were no good kings of Israel who removed idols, but it was just a series of bad or worse kings [[1 Kings 16:13](#), [1 Kings 21:26](#), [2 Kings 17:12](#)]. More than half of mentions of idols were in the writings of the prophets. Many of them were declaring the futility of lifeless idols compared to the living God. Others emphasized wickedness of choosing to worship idols instead of God who had done so much for them and

demonstrated His power on their behalf. Still others the sexually immoral practices associated with some idol worship, and possibly worst of all, child sacrifices to idols. In the New Testament, there was a lot of concern or debate in the early church about eating food sacrificed to idols.

Finally, let's zoom in on the specific mentions of idols of gold, silver, brass, wood or stone. Moses reminds Israel of the abominations of the idols of Egypt that were made of wood, stone, silver and gold [[Deuteronomy 29:17](#)]. Moses warned the Israelites not to bow down to idols of stone figures [[Leviticus 26:1](#)]. Psalms reminds that idols of silver and gold are the work of man's hands [[15:4](#), [135:15](#)]. Isaiah mentions a day that is coming when every man will cast away their idols of silver and gold [[2:20](#)]. He also reminds them of the futility of the idols of gold and silver from Egypt [[Isaiah 31:7](#)]. In a satire on idolatry, Jeremiah writes of the foolishness of worshipping idols of wood, silver, and gold, the work of man, instead of the Living God [[10:8-9](#)]. Hosea says that Israel reaped the whirlwind because among other thing, they worshipped idols of silver and gold [[8:4](#), [13:2](#)]. Isaiah tells a short story that illustrates the folly of idolatry. A man plants a tree, cares for it and the rain makes it grow. Then he cuts it down and uses some of it for firewood to cook with and to warm himself. He takes some of the wood and with iron tools that he made over a fire, he carves the wood into an image of a man. Finally, he bows down to the wooden image and worships it, asking it to deliver him, it is his god [[Isaiah 44:9-28](#)]. In almost every case idols were made from one of these materials (gold, silver, brass, wood, stone), though it is often assumed and not mentioned.

In the Bible, idols were symbols of false gods and demons. The worship of them was always associated with apostasy from the true God. The worship of idols, was often associated with other sins, such as sexual immorality and human or child sacrifices. The practices often enriched the priests at the expense of the worshippers.

### *Murders, sorceries, immoralities, theft*

These four specific acts were mentioned along with the worship of idols and demons as not being given up in spite of the judgement or torments of the horse army that killed a third of mankind. Murder was mentioned 21 times in the NKJV. The first two instances being from the Ten Commandments [[Exodus 20:13](#), [Deuteronomy 5:17](#)]. Jeremiah specifically mentions murder, immorality, theft, and idol worship as acts that God is calling the Israelites to forsake [[Jeremiah 7:9-10](#)]. Hosea, in a chapter about God's displeasure with Israel, also mentions three of those sins, lying, killing, stealing, in a single verse [[Hosea 4:2](#)]. In the New Testament, when the rich young ruler asked Jesus which commandments he should keep to inherit the kingdom, Jesus said, don't murder, commit adultery, steal, or bear false witness; honor your parents and love your neighbor [[Matthew 19:18-19](#), [Mark 10:19](#), [Luke 18:20](#)]. Paul summed up the law in this way, don't commit adultery, murder, steal or covet; and love your neighbor as yourself [[Romans 13:9](#)]. Especially from the New Testament, it seems these four sins are the do nots of the Ten Commandments or the Law of God.

### **Interpreting the symbols**

I had previously thought of the fifth and sixth trumpets, also called the first and second woes, as being very similar. But when I listed all the symbols, there were not as many repeats as I was expecting. Nevertheless, many Christian

scholars since the 1500's, have found a good fit for these first two woes in the rise and spread of Islam.<sup>256 257 258 259 260</sup> Stepping back a little from the differences in detail, one can notice that these two trumpets were both called woes, and that they both received a lot more words describing them than the prior four trumpets. I also see similarities in the hordes of horsemen that had power to hurt through their mouths and tails. In terms of intensity, the first had teeth like lion's whereas in the second the whole head was like a lion. In the first the tails were like scorpions which were not deadly, but in the second, they were like serpent heads and were deadly. Keith mentioned the breastplates of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone as representing the colors scarlet, blue and yellow that were predominant colors worn by the Ottoman armies.<sup>261</sup> I believe rightfully so, that many have made connections between the colors, fire, smoke and brimstone, with the use of firearms and canons. After all brimstone, or sulfur is one of the main ingredients in gun powder. Many apply the killing of the 1/3 to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a fraction of the original Roman Empire.<sup>262</sup> Smith linked the angels to the four principle sultanies at the time, Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Bagdad.<sup>263</sup> Keith to Persia, Kerman, Syria, and Roum.<sup>264</sup> Maxwell suggests that the four angels could represent four Islamic leaders, but they could also represent "demon princes" as in [Daniel 10:10-31](#). A differentiation is made between the attacking armies of the first and second woes, with the first symbolizing the Saracens, and the second the Seljuk Turks and the Ottoman Empire. Clearly if you are looking for a major trend, a significant civil, political, or military power affecting or interacting with the Christian Church in the Middle Ages, it is a logical choice.<sup>265</sup>

The next question I have is whether there is a time period or dates associated with this trumpet. Near the beginning, the phrase, "the hour and day and month and year," was used. When discussing the symbols, I questioned whether this referred to a point in time, or a time span [[Hour, day, month and year](#)]. Since it happens to be in the time period of interest and mentioned above, the fall of Constantinople, the capitol city of the Eastern Roman Empire, was in 1453.<sup>266 267 268</sup>

Keith proposes something that I do not agree with at all. He chooses to apply the usual prophetic day/year principle but he uses the literal or solar days per year of  $365 \frac{1}{4}$  plus the leap year correction. In doing this, he arrives at 188 days for the fractional part of the solar year.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a year would be a fraction over 91 days, then he subtracts three days off of that for the leap year corrections, arriving at 188 days. But then he, in my opinion inconsistently, applies

<sup>256</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p244.

<sup>257</sup> Keith. p1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA1>

<sup>258</sup> Thiele. p177. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=23](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=23) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=23>

<sup>259</sup> Maxwell. p251-257.

<sup>260</sup> Newton, Isaac. *Observations Upon the Apocalypse of St. John – Part II*. 1733, p305.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=gW5BAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA305>

<sup>261</sup> Keith, Alexander. *Signs of the Times, Vol 2*. Edinburgh, William Whyte & Co., 1847, p38.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA38>

<sup>262</sup> Keith. p25. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA25>

<sup>263</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel and the Revelation (The response of history to the voice of prophecy)*. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p480. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/480/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/480/mode/2up)] [Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1897, p575 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA575>]

<sup>264</sup> Keith. p10. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA10>

<sup>265</sup> Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London. T. Cadell, Strand, 1831, p1009.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1009>

<sup>266</sup> Gibbon. p1168. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1168>

<sup>267</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall\\_of\\_Constantinople](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Constantinople)

<sup>268</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Fall-of-Constantinople-1453>

only 30 days per month. Anyway, he arrives at a total time span of  $365 + 30 + 1 = 396$  years plus 15 days for the hour plus the 188 for a total of 396 literal years and 103 literal days.<sup>269</sup> He unconvincingly begins with the endpoints 1055 and 1451 for a span of 396 years, and then I'm not even sure what he finally ends up with.<sup>270</sup>

If you choose to see this as a span of time, I find it much more logical and convincing to use the 360 day year, arriving at  $360 + 30 + 1 = 391$  literal years and  $360 / 24 = 15$  days if you include the hour [earlier in this chapter: [Hour, day, month and year](#), [Appendix B – Days in a month and days in a year](#)]. The 15 days could either be added to the span, or some have interpreted it to be within an hour (plus or minus 15 days).

What the Seventh-Day Adventist church believed and taught for many years was put into words by Smith, mostly based on the work of Josiah Litch and William Miller. They applied the end dates 7/27/1449 – 8/11/1840 which was exactly 391 years and 15 days.<sup>271</sup> For hundreds of years by that time, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, there had been a lot of consensus among Protestants that these two trumpets represented Muslim warfare against the Byzantine Empire. Miller's big contribution to the SDA view was that he put the 150 years of the fifth trumpet, and the 391 years of this trumpet back-to-back. Protestants had generally associated the fifth trumpet with the Arabs or Saracens, and the sixth with the Ottomans. Litch, and subsequently SDA's, accepted Miller's proposal to assign both time periods consecutively to the Ottomans, where they hurt during the first period and killed during the second.<sup>272</sup> Litch used Gibbon's July 27, 1299,<sup>273</sup> the year Othman first invaded Nicomedia, as the starting point of the 150, giving them the 7/27/1449 as the opening date of the 391. The event they pointed to in 1449 that marked the end of one period and started the next was that the balance of power had reached the point where Constantine sought the approval of the Turkish sultan Amuranth, before taking the throne.<sup>274 275</sup> This deference of the Christian Emperor to the Turkish sultan, would find its reversal 391 years later, when the Turkish sultan accepted the protection of Western powers in 1840.<sup>276</sup> The interpretation penned by Smith, was virtually unquestioned as the position of the SDA church for the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>277</sup> Only a few lone voices had questioned the mostly united position of the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to see more sustained and substantial challenges to it.<sup>278</sup> In 1914, the Review and Herald appointed a committee to study the challenges to the existing church position, with their conclusion being a return to the Protestant position, applying the 150 years of the fifth trumpet to the Arabs, with revised dates for the 391 year period. Upon receiving the report, the General Conference did not change the official position of the church, but apparently did not attempt to squash the differing views. The early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to see a return to the Protestant view by a number of SDA College professors.<sup>279</sup> In

<sup>269</sup> Keith. p23. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA23>

<sup>270</sup> Keith. p30. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA30>

<sup>271</sup> Steffanson, Jon Hjorleifur. *From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy: the History of the Adventist Interpretation of Revelation 9, from 1833 to 1957*. 2013, p13-57.

[http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=26](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=26),

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=theses>

<sup>272</sup> Steffanson. p16. [http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=29](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=29)

<sup>273</sup> Gibbon. p1119. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1119>

<sup>274</sup> Smith. p478. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/478/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/478/mode/2up)] p574

<https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA574>

<sup>275</sup> Thiele. p174. <http://btlb.org/Thiele,EdwinR.OutlineStudiesinRevelationII.AvondaleCollege,1974>

[\[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=20](http://adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=20) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=20>

<sup>276</sup> Smith. p485. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/484/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/484/mode/2up)] p584

<https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA584>

<sup>277</sup> Steffanson. p56. [http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=69](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=69)

<sup>278</sup> Steffanson. p58. [http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=71](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=71)

<sup>279</sup> Steffanson. p86. [http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=99](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=99)

1953-1957, the church published the *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, which re-stated the original position of the Church on the fifth and sixth trumpets, but then stated that there was no consensus on the interpretation due to many unanswered questions.<sup>280 281</sup>

In the mid-1980's Jon Paulien, now (2019) dean of the school of religion at Loma Linda University, proposed a completely different interpretation. His proposal not only deviated from the original SDA position, but also from the centuries old Protestant position associating the fifth and sixth trumpets with Islam. While Paulien was on common ground with many other SDA scholars on the first three trumpets, which I adopted as well, he and some others have deviated from tradition on the fourth and fifth trumpets.<sup>282</sup> He proposed that the fourth depicted the rise of a new antagonist, secularism. The fifth, the growth and spread of secular atheism, Marxism, rationalism, Communism, Ecumenism, and other ism's all leading to Spiritualism.<sup>283</sup> He also completely abandons the possible prophetic time spans of five months, and the hour, day, month, and year. He claims the five months, shows a limiting of the destructive capacity.<sup>284</sup> The hour, day, month, and year, probably a decisive moment in time.<sup>285</sup> Paulien stated that the thing that first got him thinking along these lines was a comment by Ellen White in the Great Controversy.<sup>286</sup>

The war against the Bible, carried forward for so many centuries in France, culminated in the scenes of the Revolution. That terrible outbreaking was but the legitimate result of Rome's suppression of the Scriptures. It presented the most striking illustration which the world has ever witnessed, of the working out of the papal policy,—an illustration of the results to which for more than a thousand years the teaching of the Roman Church had been tending.

The suppression of the Scriptures during the period of papal supremacy was foretold by the prophets; and the Revelator points also to the terrible results that were to accrue especially to France from the domination of “the man of sin.” [White, Great Controversy, p269](#)<sup>287</sup>

While I agree that the spread, effect and the impact of the ism's today are undeniable, I'm not sure the militaristic imagery is fitting. He may have a more thorough write-up than I came across but there did not seem to be a lot of connecting symbols with details or elements in the ism's.

## Conclusion

I have found it difficult to identify with all the details of interpretation from a single source. I have some issues with the events and dates in the original SDA position, but agree with the Islam interpretation. I like the military symbolism as well as the colors in connection with the Muslim cavalry and the guns and cannons they used. I haven't tried to choose my own dates, but find I resonate most closely with those presented by Maxwell. He identified a period from the first fierce but failed attack on Constantinople in 674 to the last in 823, as a span of time one year short of 150. Secondly, from the fall of Constantinople, unquestionably in 1453, to 1844 around which time

<sup>280</sup> Steffanson. p129-130. [http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=142](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=142)

<sup>281</sup> Steffanson. p57-134. [http://btlb.org/From\\_Clear\\_Fulfillment\\_to\\_Complex\\_Prophecy\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Ad.pdf#page=70](http://btlb.org/From_Clear_Fulfillment_to_Complex_Prophecy_the_History_of_the_Ad.pdf#page=70)

<sup>282</sup> Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. “Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets.” Ministry, January 2012, Nampa, ID, p8. <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <http://btlb.org/MIN20120101-V84-01.pdf#page=8>, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/01/the-seven-trumpets-of-revelation>

<sup>283</sup> Paulien. p87-88. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting\\_the\\_Seven\\_Trumpets.pdf#page=87](http://btlb.org/Interpreting_the_Seven_Trumpets.pdf#page=87)

<sup>284</sup> Paulien. p16. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting\\_the\\_Seven\\_Trumpets.pdf#page=16](http://btlb.org/Interpreting_the_Seven_Trumpets.pdf#page=16)

<sup>285</sup> Paulien. p49. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting\\_the\\_Seven\\_Trumpets.pdf#page=49](http://btlb.org/Interpreting_the_Seven_Trumpets.pdf#page=49)

<sup>286</sup> Paulien. p86-87. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting\\_the\\_Seven\\_Trumpets.pdf#page=86](http://btlb.org/Interpreting_the_Seven_Trumpets.pdf#page=86)

<sup>287</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p269. <http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA269>, <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=269>

the Ottoman Empire had grown so weak that it was dependent on Western powers for protection, which was a period of 391 years.<sup>288</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe that this trumpet is another phase of the same entity described in the fifth?
- Do you think this is a time sensitive prophecy?
- Do you believe this trumpet to describe something from the past or future?

## Angel and the little book

### [Revelation 10:1-11](#)

[Revelation 10:1](#) I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow [was] on his head, his face [was] like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. <sup>2</sup> He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and [his] left [foot] on the land, <sup>3</sup> and cried with a loud voice, as [when] a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. <sup>4</sup> Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

<sup>5</sup> The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven <sup>6</sup> and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, <sup>7</sup> but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

<sup>8</sup> Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

<sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

<sup>10</sup> Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. <sup>11</sup> And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." [Revelation 10:1-11 NKJV](#)

First, I would like to point out that you didn't miss the chapter on the seventh trumpet. For some reason in the flow of Revelation, there are several chapters between the sixth and seventh trumpets. If you recall the last date mentioned in the sixth trumpet, 1844, then from a sequential standpoint, maybe there is a reason this content was inserted between six and seven.

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<sup>288</sup> Maxwell. p251,256.



## Examining the symbols

### *Mighty angel*

Interestingly this was said to be a strong angel, as if all angels weren't strong? I briefly examined the usage of the word angel in the [preface to the seven golden lampstands](#), from the first chapter of Revelation, where I said:

I began by looking up the word angel in the Bible. There were many occurrences of angels delivering messages from God. Angels were also mentioned as defending His people, such as the slaying of the first born in Egypt, driving out and destroying the Canaanites, destruction of the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time and others. Angels also executed judgment or punishment from God such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when David took a census, and when Herod accepted the people's worship as a god. But the majority of uses of the word angel were in the context of bringing messages from God. So, in the context of the angel of the church, the one that matches best would be the messenger, which would probably look like a leader, shepherd, pastor or prophet of the church.

I found "strong angel" once and "mighty angel," one other time, all in Revelation.

[Revelation 5:2](#) Then I saw a **strong angel** proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" [Revelation 5:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:21](#) Then a **mighty angel** took up a stone like a great millstone and threw [it] into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. [Revelation 18:21 NKJV](#)

Interestingly Revelation 5:2 also involved a book. I wonder if it was the same strong angel?

### *Clothed with a cloud*

The word cloud(s) appeared 164 times in the NKJV. The first mention of a cloud in the Bible is after the flood, when God set His bow in the cloud. I counted nearly 70 times, the mention of the cloud of God's presence, which led Israel, and provided shade in the desert, and partially shrouded His glory on Mt. Sinai, and in the Temple. God turned the cloud to darkness to impede the progress of the Egyptians chasing the Israelites. Job mentions cloud 5 times in several different contexts. Something that brings rain or lightning, something that is fleeting, something that comes and goes. God could also use clouds to cover or obscure something. Isaiah used the symbolism of the Lord riding on a swift cloud [\[19:1\]](#). Several times, thick clouds were said to obscure things such as the sun, moon, or symbolically transgressions, or God in his anger at Israel [\[Job 26:9, Ezekiel 32:7, Isaiah 44:22, Lamentations 2:1, Lamentations 3:44\]](#). When Jesus was transfigured, a cloud appeared and the voice of God came out of the cloud [\[Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:34-35\]](#). Several times it was mentioned that Jesus' second coming would be with clouds. Finally, literal clouds associated with rain was mentioned about 20 times.

As I scanned over all the hits, it was pretty easy to see that the majority of uses of the word cloud were as a shroud or symbol of His presence.

### *Rainbow on his head*

Rainbow was only mentioned 5 other times in the NKJV, so I will quote them all.

[Genesis 9:13](#) "I set My **rainbow** in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.  
<sup>14</sup> "It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the **rainbow** shall be seen in the cloud; <sup>15</sup> "and I will remember My covenant which [is] between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall

never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.<sup>16</sup> "The **rainbow** shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that [is] on the earth."

[Genesis 9:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 1:28](#) Like the appearance of a **rainbow** in a cloud on a rainy day, so [was] the appearance of the brightness all around it. This [was] the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw [it], I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking. [Ezekiel 1:28 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:3](#) And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and [there was] a **rainbow** around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. [Revelation 4:3 NKJV](#)

Interestingly, this is translated from the same Hebrew word that also means bow for shooting arrows.

The other two uses were in the detailed descriptions given by both Ezekiel and John of the throne room of God in heaven. In both instances, the rainbow was described surrounding the throne on which God was sitting. Ezekiel says the radiance surrounding God appeared like a rainbow.

### *Face like the sun, feet like pillars of fire*

There were two other verses that I found that described someone's face as shining like the sun.

[Revelation 1:15](#) His feet [were] like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;<sup>16</sup> He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance [was] like the sun shining in its strength. [Revelation 1:15-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:2](#) and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. [Matthew 17:2 NKJV](#)

Both referred to Jesus, and the first also describes the legs and feet in a very similar way. I have written previously, that Jesus was often referred to as the "angel of the LORD," which I discussed along with the [Sixth trumpet](#), and also in an [Appendix](#). Once again, if this strong angel is Jesus, the description of His face, legs, and feet, match very well with how John described Him in Revelation 1.

Feet were mentioned numerous times in the Bible. Washing feet was a common practice in bible times. During the Exodus we read repeatedly, about God being with the Israelites as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

### *Little book*

Book(s) were mentioned 186 times in the NKJV. I counted about 50 times that book was used in connection with the writings of Moses, also known as the book of the law. The five books written by Moses are considered sacred to three great religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. I counted about 45 times that the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah and Israel were mentioned. I would consider that a reference to the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. These two account for over half of the uses of the word book. Then I counted at least 18 times that book was used in reference to the writings of the psalms and prophets. The words book(s) were used 18 times in the book of Revelation alone. "Book of life" was mentioned 8 times [[Philemon 4:3](#), [Revelation 3:5](#), [Revelation 13:8](#), [Revelation 17:8](#), [Revelation 20:12](#), [Revelation 20:15](#), [Revelation 21:27](#), [Revelation 22:19](#)]. An unnamed book that God keeps (presumably the book of life) was mentioned twice in a conversation between Moses and God [[Exodus 32:32-33](#)], and once in [Daniel 12:1](#). A book of remembrance was mentioned once [[Malachi 3:16](#)]. Twice books were said to be sealed up, probably meaning they could not be understood [[Daniel 12:4](#), [Isaiah 29:11](#)].

Once in Revelation a sealed book containing seven seals was opened by the Lamb [[Revelation 5](#)] and finally, in [Revelation 22:10](#) a book was said to not be sealed because the time was near.

In summary, I would say that easily 75% of the uses of the word book referred to the Bible or portions of the Bible itself. The opening of a sealed book was symbolic of gaining a new understanding. But what is eating a book symbolic of?

### *One foot on the sea and one on the land*

In another study, I claimed that in prophecy, the sea represents populated regions of the earth, and land unpopulated [[The second trumpet](#)].

### *Roaring like a lion*

I found a verse in Hosea that said the Lord would roar like a lion and His sons would come [[11:10](#)]. Jeremiah, though not mentioning a lion, said the Lord would roar from on high [[25:30](#)]. He also wrote in a prophecy against Babylon, that they would roar, like the growl of lion cubs [[Jeremiah 51:38](#)]. Solomon wrote that a king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion [[Proverbs 19:12](#)]. He also wrote that a wicked ruler is like a roaring lion over a poor people [[Proverbs 28:15](#)]. An attacking nation is like a roaring lioness [[Isaiah 5:29](#)]. The conspiracy of wicked prophets is like a roaring lion tearing its prey [[Ezekiel 22:25](#)]. The princes of rebellious Jerusalem are roaring lions [[Zephaniah 3:3](#)]. The devil is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour [[1 Peter 5:8](#)]. There were a few instances of literal roaring lions.

### *Seven thunders*

It is strange that the seven thunders spoke. I only found one other verse where thunder spoke.

[Revelation 19:6](#) And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" [Revelation 19:6 NKJV](#)

Thunder(ed/ings) was used 33 times in the NKJV. 4 of them in Exodus were about the plague of thunder, hail and fire on Egypt [[9:23-34](#)]. 3 were at Mt Sinai, one of which was specifically said to be God speaking [[Exodus 19:16, 19, 20:18](#)]. In Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving, she said that God would thunder against those who contend with Him [[1 Samuel 2:10](#)]. God sent thunder to confuse the enemies of Israel [[1 Samuel 7:10](#)]. Samuel asked God to send thunder and rain out of season as a sign to the Israelites [[1 Samuel 12:17-18](#)]. Job directly speaks of or alludes to the thunder of God's voice 3 times [[26:14, 37:2, 40:9](#)]. He also speaks of the thunder of a captain's war cry [[39:25](#)]. Three times in Psalms, it seemed that thunder was associated with the might, or power of God [[77:18, 81:7, 104:7](#)]. God would punish Israel with thunder, earthquake, whirlwind, tempest, and fire [[Isaiah 29:6](#)]. Jesus called James and John sons of thunder because they were so volatile [[Mark 3:17](#)]. When the first of seven seals were broken, one of the four creatures spoke with a voice of thunder [[Revelation 6:1](#)]. Again, in Revelation, a voice spoke from heaven with a voice like the sound of many waters, like the sound of thunder, and like the sound of harpist playing on their harps [[14:2](#)].

It seems that there a quite a few references for voices from heaven, both God and angels, sounding like thunder.

### *Swore by Him who lives forever and created the heavens, earth, sea and all creatures*

Without doubt, it is God who created the heavens, earth, the sea and all creatures. This was quoted several times in the New Testament with slight variations, most likely from Psalms:

[Psalm 146:6](#) Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that [is] in them; Who keeps truth forever, [Psalm 146:6 NKJV](#)

Does the voice swearing by God mean that it is not God who is speaking in this instance, or would God swear by Himself?

[Genesis 22:16](#) and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only [son]-- [Genesis 22:16 NKJV](#)

Paul explains it this way:

[Hebrews 6:13](#) For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, [Hebrews 6:13 NKJV](#)

So, it seems God does swear by Himself, but if He does, He probably would just say so and not say He is swearing by Him who created heaven and earth.

### *Eat the book, sweet as honey, bitter in the stomach*

Aside from this, there was one other passage that used the phrase sweet as honey.

[Ezekiel 2:8](#) "But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you." <sup>9</sup> Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book [was] in it. <sup>10</sup> Then He spread it before me; and [there was] writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it [were] lamentations and mourning and woe. [Ezekiel 3:1](#) Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." <sup>2</sup> So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. <sup>3</sup> And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness. [Ezekiel 3:1-3 NKJV](#)

Interestingly it was very similar, in that it involved a prophet eating a scroll which was essentially the same as a book. Ezekiel was in vision and when this occurred, he was receiving his call or commission to be a prophet to the sons of Israel. What was different was that he saw what was written on the scroll, lamentations, mourning and woe. What was similar was that when he ate it, it was sweet as honey in his mouth.

The word honey was used 57 times in the NKJV. A great many of those times it described the Promised Land as flowing with milk and honey.

In Psalms, David wrote:

[Psalm 19:7](#) The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple; <sup>8</sup> The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes; <sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup> More to be desired [are they] than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. [Psalm 19:7-10 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 119:103](#) How sweet are Your words to my taste, [Sweeter] than honey to my mouth! [Psalm 119:103 NKJV](#)

The word bitter was used 43 times in the NKJV. A number of times as an adverb, such as bitter cry, bitter hard labor, bitter herbs, bitter destruction, bitter affliction, bitter soul, bitter speech, bitter weeping, bitter grief, bitter mourning, bitter anger, bitter day, bitter water, and bitter jealousy. When there was civil war between David and the son of Saul, Abner asked Joab to call off the pursuit, otherwise it would be bitter in the end.

## Interpreting the symbols

After examining the symbols associated with the strong angel, I was pretty convinced that it was Jesus. The face shining like the sun and radiating a rainbow, the legs and feet like fire, shrouded in a cloud, the voice like thunder, were all characteristics that were used to describe Jesus or God on His throne [[Revelation 1:12-16](#), [Revelation 4](#)]. The problem with this conclusion was that when this angel swore by God, it didn't seem to be in a way that a person would swear by them self. I guess this angel could be like one of the four creatures surrounding the throne that also spoke with a voice like thunder. I do not think the identity of this angel is critical to the interpretation of the vision.

The majority of uses of the word book had to do with the Bible, or at least the different parts of the Bible, such as the Law, the history, the songs, or the prophets or prophecies. The little book I believe to be related to a prophecy that was previously not understood.

Standing on the sea and the land, possibly that an understanding of the prophecy was arrived at in the old world and the new. In prophecy we interpret the symbol sea as "sea of humanity," or populated regions of the earth.

[Revelation 17:15](#) Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. [Revelation 17:15 NKJV](#)

If not literal, "land" could be the opposite, which would be unpopulated, sparsely populated or newly populated. In this case the sea could represent Europe and the land America.

If you recall, I had the sixth trumpet ending in 1844, with the end of the 391-year dominance of the Ottoman Empire. From my perspective as a Seventh-Day Adventist Christian, the Great Disappointment, a very significant event occurred in 1844. For those who don't know, the Great Disappointment was a movement that interpreted the 2300-year prophecy in [Daniel 8:14](#) to end on October 22, 1844. That prophecy stated that at the end of that time period, the sanctuary would be cleansed, and the leaders of the movement interpreted the sanctuary to mean the earth. Clearly that was an exciting and joyous message, represented by honey, even as the disappointment can easily be represented by the bitter after taste. I know this movement to have been centered in the Northeast region of the United States of America, the "land" or newly populated region of the earth. But did this movement, or discovery, or teaching also exist in Europe? Ellen White wrote in the *Great Controversy*:

Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Advent movement appeared in the different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America, men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians, who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Saviour's advent was near.

In 1821, three years after Miller had arrived at his exposition of the prophecies pointing to the time of the judgment, Dr. Joseph Wolff, "the missionary to the world," began to proclaim the Lord's soon coming...

Wolff believed the coming of the Lord to be at hand, his interpretation of the prophetic periods placing the great consummation within a very few years of the time pointed out by Miller. To those who urged from the scripture, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man," that men are to know nothing concerning the nearness of the advent, Wolff replied: "Did our Lord say that the day and hour should never be known? Did he not give us signs of the times, in order that we may know at least the approach of his coming, as one knows the approach of summer by the fig-tree putting forth its leaves? Are we never to know that period, whilst he himself exhorteth not only to read Daniel the prophet but to understand him? And in that very Daniel where it is said that the words were

shut up to the time of the end (which was the case in his time), and that 'many shall run to and fro' (a Hebrew expression for observing and thinking upon the time), and 'knowledge' (regarding that time) 'shall be increased.' Besides this, our Lord does not intend to say by this, that the approach of the time shall not be known, but that the exact 'day and hour knoweth no man.' He does say that enough shall be known by the signs of the times, to induce us to prepare for his coming, as Noah prepared the ark."

...

In South America, in the midst of barbarism and priestcraft, Lacunza, a Spaniard and a Jesuit, found his way to the Scriptures, and thus received the truth of Christ's speedy return. Impelled to give the warning, yet desiring to escape the censures of Rome, he published his views under the assumed name of "Rabbi Ben-Israel," representing himself as a converted Jew. Lacunza lived in the eighteenth century, but it was about 1825 that his book, having found its way to London, was translated into the English language. Its publication served to deepen the interest already awakening in England in the subject of the second advent.

In Germany the doctrine had been taught in the eighteenth century by Bengel, a minister in the Lutheran Church, and a celebrated Biblical scholar and critic ... The date which he fixed upon as the time of the second advent was within a very few years of that afterward held by Miller. [White, Great Controversy, p356-364](#)<sup>289</sup>

James White wrote:

The extent of this proclamation is worthy of notice. An English writer, Mourant Brock, thus remarks: "It is not merely in Great Britain that the expectation of the near return of the Redeemer is entertained, and the voice of warning raised, but also in America, India, and on the continent of Europe. In America about three hundred ministers of the word are thus preaching 'this gospel of the kingdom;' whilst in this country, about seven hundred of the church of England are raising the same cry." *Advent Tracts*, Vol ii p 135

"In Wirtemberg there is a Christian colony numbering hundreds, who look for the speedy advent of Christ; also another of like belief on the shores of the Caspian; the Molokaners, a large body of Dissenters from the Russian Greek church residing on the shores of the Baltic—a very pious people, of whom it is said, 'taking the Bible alone for their creed, the *norm* of their faith is simply the Holy Scriptures'—are characterized by the 'expectation of Christ's immediate and visible reign upon earth.' In Russia the doctrine of Christ's coming and reign is preached to some extent, and received by many of the lower class. It has been extensively agitated in Germany, particularly in the south part among the Moravians. In Norway, charts and books on the Advent have been circulated extensively, and the doctrine received by many. Among the Tartars in Tartary, there prevails an expectation of Christ's advent about this time. English and American publications on this doctrine have been sent to Holland, Germany, India, Ireland, Constantinople, Rome, and to nearly every missionary station on the globe. At the Turks Islands, it has been received to some extent among the Wesleyans. Mr. Fox, a Scottish missionary to the Telooqoo, people was a believer in Christ's soon coming. James McGregor Bertram, a Scottish missionary of the Baptist order at St. Helena, has sounded the cry extensively on that island, making many converts and premillennialists; he has also preached it at South Africa, at the missionary stations there. David N. Lord informs us that a large proportion of the missionaries who have gone from Great Britain to make known the gospel to the heathen, and who are now laboring in Asia and Africa, are Millennialists; and Joseph Wolfe DD

<sup>289</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p356-357.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAyAAJ&pg=PA356>,

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=356>

according to his journals between the years 1821 and 1845, proclaimed the Lord's speedy advent in Palestine, Egypt, on the shores of the Red Sea, Mesopotamia, the Crimea, Persia, Georgia, throughout the Ottoman Empire, in Greece, Arabia, Turkistan, Bokhara, Affghanistan, Cashmere, Hindostan, Thibet, in Holland, Scotland, and Ireland, at Constantinople, Jerusalem, St Helena, also on shipboard in the Mediterranean, and at New York city, to all denominations. He declares he has preached among Jews, Turks, Mohammedans, Parsees, Hindoos, Chaldeans, Yesedes, Syrians, Sabeans, to Pachas, Shieks, Shahs, the kings of Organtsh, and Bokhara, the queen of Greece, etc. And of his extraordinary labors the Investigator says 'No individual has, perhaps, given greater publicity to the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, than has this well-known missionary to the world. Wherever he goes he proclaims the approaching advent of the Messiah in glory.' *Voice of the Church* pp 342-344. [Life incidents, James White, p225-227](#)<sup>290</sup>

Joseph Wolff, mentioned above, wrote of his travels, and though later regretting it, he preached a date for the return of Christ.

... and he expounded to them his own doctrine on the personal reign of Christ, and the restoration of the Jewish nation to their own land, and their future conversion to Christianity. He also told them that those mighty events would take place in the year 1847; and if now an opponent were to ask Wolff, "Why did you fix that time?" he has but one answer to give which he candidly gives to every one, "Because I was a great ass." [Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff, Joseph Wolff, p407](#)<sup>291</sup>

Wolff was also invited to stay in the house of the Rev. Mr. Dealtry, who became Bishop of Madras; and he desired him to lecture on the personal reign of Christ, and state his proofs for believing that Christ would come upon the earth in 1847. Wolff did it with such modesty that he gained the affection of all; but Wolff bitterly regrets that he fixed date. [Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff, Joseph Wolff, p429](#)<sup>292</sup>

And in after ages it will be proved, that by God's infinite mercy, Wolff kindled a light from the Thames to the Oxus, and from the Oxus, to the Ganges which never went out, and which with God's grace will become a great flame; but the great consummation will take place neither by the labours of Francis Xavier, nor those of Joseph Wolff, but by the second coming of Christ in majesty and glory. [Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff, Joseph Wolff, p482](#)<sup>293</sup>

The Arabs of Hodeydah are in possession of a book, called "Seera" which gives notice of the second coming of Christ, and His reign in glory; and it says that great events would take place in the year 1840. Wolff then preached to the Arabs the renovation of the earth to its former beauty. [Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff, Joseph Wolff, p506](#)<sup>294</sup>

The second question was this: "Whether he knew when Jesus Christ would return here upon earth?" for his Majesty had heard that when Wolff was at Bokhara, many years before, he had said "that Christ would return after fifteen years." Wolff replied, that "since that time he had some doubts of the correctness of his calculation,

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<sup>290</sup> White, James. *Life incidents, in connection with the great advent movement, as illustrated by the three angels of Revelation 14*, Steam Press of the Seventh-Day Adventist Publishing Association, Battle Creek, MI, 1868, p225-227.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=K0U27opcBm0C&pg=PA225>

<sup>291</sup> Wolff, Joseph. *Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff*, London, Saunders, Otley and Co., 1861, p407.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA407>

<sup>292</sup> Wolff. p429. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA429>

<sup>293</sup> Wolff. p482. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA482>

<sup>294</sup> Wolff. p506. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA506>

for the meaning of the numbers mentioned by the Prophet Daniel admits of a twofold interpretation;” yet Wolff was convinced, by the signs of the times, that the time of the coming of Jesus was at hand. [Travels and Adventures of Rev. Joseph Wolff, Joseph Wolff, p566](#)<sup>295</sup>

Clearly, bitterness and disappointment but mostly regret are evident, in the 1861 publication of Joseph Wolff’s travels.

## Conclusion

I believe, given the placement of this content immediately after the sixth trumpet, it is not unreasonable to associate it with the great disappointment of the movement predicting the return of Christ in the mid 1800’s.

What do you believe?

- Do you think God could have given visions or dreams to correct the misinterpretation or scripture?
- Do you think the movement did more good than damage to the name of Christianity?
- Do you think there is another interpretation for this vision?

## The two witnesses

### [Revelation 11:1-14](#)

[Revelation 11:1](#) Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot [for] forty-two months. <sup>3</sup> "And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

<sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. <sup>6</sup> These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

<sup>7</sup> When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies [will lie] in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> Then [those] from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

<sup>10</sup> And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. <sup>13</sup> In the same hour there was a

<sup>295</sup> Wolff. p566. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA566>



great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

<sup>14</sup> The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. [Revelation 11:1-14 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Measuring the temple, alter and worshipers with a rod*

The first thing that comes to mind is a yardstick, though if like a staff it would probably be more sturdy than a yardstick. Where else does the Bible mention a measuring rod, or measuring?

[Revelation 21:15](#) And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. [Revelation 21:15 NKJV](#)

In this case John was taken away in vision to see the New Jerusalem, and his guide had a measuring rod which was used to measure the city. It was possibly cube shaped with walls that were over 200 feet thick.

Ezekiel [chapters 40-42](#) were all a vision given to Ezekiel, presumably about the future Temple in Jerusalem. In the vision, a man used a measuring rod or reed to measure things which were shown to Ezekiel. I found it somewhat interesting that there was a square court ([verse 47](#)). Which was apparently the case in the time of Jesus.<sup>296</sup> I don't think it is a coincidence that the New Jerusalem was also square.

[Zechariah 2:1](#) Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. <sup>2</sup> So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what [is] its width and what [is] its length." [Zechariah 2:1-2 NKJV](#)

Zechariah was also given a vision of future rebuilt Jerusalem. Like Ezekiel, in the vision there was a man with a measuring instrument, which was to be used to measure the city, though the measurements were not reported.

One major reason for measuring is so something can be made to match or to scale. In [Exodus 25-30](#) we read of the measurements God gave to Moses regarding the sanctuary they were to build. In [Genesis 6:13-22](#), we find the plans God gave to Noah for building the ark.

In this case John is told to measure the temple and the altar, which seems very similar to what was done by the man in Ezekiel's vision. But what does it mean to measure the people who are worshipping in the temple?

### *Court*

A word search reveals that court was used in a number of different ways many of which may be tied to the same root meaning. Some of the uses in the Bible were of course the sanctuary court, the court of a king's palace, a court where legal proceedings and decisions were made, the courts around their homes, and even animal pens. Approximately two thirds of the 131 occurrences of the word court in the NKJV were in relation to the court of the sanctuary or temple. Probably the meaning in this case is synonymous with the word courtyard which is the property that surrounds a building, usually with a wall or fence around the outer border. With a wall or fence, it clearly is not public property, but it is more accessible than the building.

John clearly states that it was the court of the Temple which was to be measured. The Old Testament Sanctuary built by the Israelites in the desert had a court surrounding it, which the people could enter to offer their sacrifices, but only the

<sup>296</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-did-the-temple-look-like-in-jesus-time/>

priests could enter the Sanctuary. At the time of Jesus, there was more than one court surrounding the Temple. Of course, only priests could enter the Temple itself, and I believe there was a small court that only the priests could enter. Then outside of that, there was the court where the altar of sacrifice was, but at the time of Jesus, women were not allowed. Surrounding that was the court of women into which Jewish women were allowed. Finally, the largest and outermost court was called the court of gentiles, where anyone was allowed.<sup>297</sup>

The treading under foot, possibly indicates that the city was under occupation, but what does that symbolize?

### *Forty two months*

This prophetic time period is used in only one other place in the Bible.

[Revelation 13:5](#) And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. [Revelation 13:5 NKJV](#)

But interestingly, I think it is the same duration as another prophetic time period that occurs numerous times. Refer to [Appendix B – Prophetic time](#), to see that we should count thirty days per month, giving us 1260 days. Does that number sound familiar? It should if you have studied the books of Daniel and Revelation. Also, from the same appendix, we should count the prophetic day as a literal year, which makes this a time span of 1260 literal years.

### *Two witnesses*

Next, we have two witnesses. Today the word refers to people who watch something happen or have seen something happen. It is a word commonly connected with court proceedings where people will tell the court what they saw. A number of times, in the same spirit, inanimate things were sometimes said to be a witness to the occurrence of something important. It states in the Law of Moses that a person should not be condemned based on the testimony of a single witness. It also clearly says that in order to receive the death penalty, two or three witnesses are required. [[Numbers 35:30](#), [Deuteronomy 17:6-7](#), [Deuteronomy 19:15](#), [2 Corinthians 13:1](#), [1 Timothy 5:19](#), [Hebrews 10:28](#)] It seems that witnesses were required to complete real estate transactions [[Ruth 4:9-11](#), [Jeremiah 32:10-44](#)]. Israel was supposed to be God's witness to the nations [[Isaiah 43:10-12](#), [Isaiah 44:8](#)]. Apostles were said to be witnesses to the people they ministered to of the things they saw and heard from Jesus [[John 1:7](#), [Luke 24:48](#), [Acts 1:8](#), [Acts 1:22](#), [Acts 2:32](#), [Acts 3:15](#), [Acts 5:32](#), [Acts 10:39](#), [Acts 10:41](#), [Acts 13:31](#), [Acts 22:15](#), [Acts 23:11](#), [Acts 26:16](#)]. Prophets bore witness [[Acts 10:43](#)]. The book of the Law was a witness for God [[Deuteronomy 31:26](#)]. One more interesting idea regarding the number two is that several times heaven and earth were said to be witnesses [[Deuteronomy 4:26](#), [Deuteronomy 30:19](#), [Deuteronomy 31:28](#)].

Since witnesses testify and give testimony, let's also examine some of them. The phrase "ark of the testimony" was used 13 times [[Exodus 25:22](#), [Exodus 26:33-34](#), [Exodus 30:6](#), [Exodus 30:26](#), [Exodus 39:35](#), [Exodus 40:3-5](#), [Exodus 40:21](#), [Numbers 4:5](#), [Numbers 7:89](#)], and once more in the book of Joshua [[Joshua 4:16](#)]. In fact, the whole Sanctuary was even said to be the "tabernacle of the testimony." [[Exodus 38:21](#)] So God's Law testifies to us about Him.

Here's another interesting fact about witnesses and testimony. The Law of Moses stated that a person could not be condemned to death by the testimony of one witness. At least two witnesses were required for someone to receive capital punishment.

<sup>297</sup> Jennings, David. *Jewish Antiquities*. London, William Baynes and son, 1823, p359.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=oK82AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA359>

[Numbers 35:30](#) "Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not [sufficient] testimony against a person for the death [penalty]. [Numbers 35:30 NKJV](#)

[John 8:17](#) "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. [John 8:17 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 10:28](#) Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. [Hebrews 10:28 NKJV](#)

My point is not about the punishment in this case, but that at least two witnesses were required to substantiate an accusation, or for my point here a claim. Jesus had many debates with the religious leaders of His day about who He was. Of course, they were not taking His word for it and were accusing Him of blasphemy. Jesus agreed with them that they should not accept His own word regarding who He was, but He claimed he had more than one witness testifying of who He was.

[John 5:31](#) "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. <sup>32</sup> "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. <sup>33</sup> "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup> "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. <sup>36</sup> "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. <sup>37</sup> "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. <sup>38</sup> "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. <sup>39</sup> "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. [John 5:31-39 NKJV](#)

In verse 33, He said John the Baptist bore witness about who He is. In verse 36, He said, better than John's witness were His actions, which testified about who He is. In verse 37, He said His father testified of Him. Got spoke audibly three times about Jesus being His Son. But more importantly, the scriptures (Old Testament) which they accepted as God's word testified about Him.

So, to wrap this up, the actions of Jesus are recorded for us in the New Testament of the Bible, so it could be said that the two witnesses testifying who Jesus is are the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible.

### *Twelve hundred and sixty days*

If we take this as a prophetic time period, it is 1260 years. As I said above, this time period, in its various forms has been mentioned several times, a couple of them in this passage in Revelation 11.

- Twelve hundred and sixty days [[Revelation 11:3](#)]
- One thousand two hundred sixty days [[Revelation 12:6](#)]
- Time, times and half or dividing of time [[Daniel 7:25](#), [Daniel 12:7](#), [Revelation 12:14](#)]
- Forty-two months [[Revelation 11:2](#), [Revelation 13:5](#)]

The big question is whether this time period refers to the same prophetic period in all cases.

### *Clothed in sackcloth*

This word is used 47 in the NKJV. The vast majority had to do with sadness, weeping and mourning. A few cases were from people showing humility. The two uses in Revelation along with one from Isaiah were symbolic.

[Isaiah 50:3](#) I clothe the heavens with blackness, And I make sackcloth their covering." [Isaiah 50:3 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:12](#) I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. [Revelation 6:12 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:3](#) "And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." [Revelation 11:3 NKJV](#)

### *Two olive trees and two lampstands*

It is pretty clearly stated that these two witnesses are also known as two olive trees and two lampstands. Olive tree(s) were specifically mentioned 22 times in the NKJV, only three of them in the New Testament. As useful and important as olives were, only a third of the times mentioned were in reference to literal olive trees, the remainder were symbolic.

Israel was likened to an olive tree.

[Psalm 52:8](#) But I [am] like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. [Psalm 52:8 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 11:16](#) The LORD called your name, Green Olive Tree, Lovely [and] of Good Fruit. With the noise of a great tumult He has kindled fire on it, And its branches are broken. [Jeremiah 11:16 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 14:6](#) His branches shall spread; His beauty shall be like an olive tree, And his fragrance like Lebanon. [Hosea 14:6 NKJV](#)

[Romans 11:17](#) And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ...<sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who [are] natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree? [Romans 11:17, 24 NKJV](#)

Seemingly relevant from another part of the Bible is the following chapter from Zechariah.

[Zechariah 4:1](#) Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. <sup>2</sup> And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there [is] a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the [stand] seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. <sup>3</sup> "Two olive trees [are] by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." <sup>4</sup> So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What [are] these, my lord?"

<sup>5</sup> Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

<sup>6</sup> So he answered and said to me: "This [is] the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. <sup>7</sup> 'Who [are] you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel [you shall become] a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" ' "

<sup>8</sup> Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: <sup>9</sup> "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish [it]. Then you will know That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. <sup>10</sup> For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."

<sup>11</sup> Then I answered and said to him, "What [are] these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" <sup>12</sup> And I further answered and said to him, "What [are these] two olive branches that [drip] into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden [oil] drains?"

<sup>13</sup> Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these [are]?" And I said, "No, my lord."

<sup>14</sup> So he said, "These [are] the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." [Zechariah 4:1-14 NKJV](#)

Maxwell concludes that these two olive trees represented Joshua and Zerubbabel, the secular and spiritual leaders of Israel at the time. And neither of them performed the signs mentioned.<sup>298</sup>

Olives were important as a source of oil, both for lamps and for cooking, but more relevantly as the fuel for the golden lampstand in the Sanctuary.

[Exodus 27:20](#) "And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. [Exodus 27:20 NKJV](#)

In the Bible, I would say that olives were generally thought of as a source of oil. Although I know that olives and its oil are an integral part of the cuisine of many countries around the Mediterranean, I didn't see any place in the Bible where it talked about eating olives.

The majority of the 41 times lampstand was used in the NKJV were about the seven-branch lampstand in the Sanctuary, known as the Jewish menorah today. It was the oil lamp mentioned above in [Exodus 27:20](#), which was made from pure gold. Lampstand was used 4 times in three of the Gospels by Jesus seemingly in reference to something that was not a lamp itself but would hold one up to allow its light to shine farther [[Matthew 5:15](#), [Mark 4:21](#), [Luke 8:16](#), [Luke 11:33](#)]. Two times in the Old Testament the word was used with the same meaning that Jesus used [[2 Kings 4:10](#), [Daniel 5:5](#)]. Finally, a symbolic reference in [Revelation 2:5](#) in the message to the church of Ephesus. The plural, lampstands, was used 12 times in the NKJV. Half were referring to the ten lampstands made for the first temple built by Solomon. It is not clear whether these ten lampstands replaced the seven branch lampstand that was used in the Sanctuary or were in addition to it [[1 Kings 7:49](#), [1 Chronicles 28:15](#), [2 Chronicles 4:7](#), [2 Chronicles 4:20](#), [Jeremiah 52:19](#)]. Maybe there were ten seven branch lampstands, lined up in two rows of five. After all the Temple was bigger than the Sanctuary, and Solomon had a new altar of incense and table made as well [[1 Kings 7:48](#)].

Obviously, there was a connection between the lampstands and olive trees through the olive oil.

### *Their powers*

#### Fire from their mouths to devour enemies

I examined these symbols for the [sixth trumpet](#), but I just wanted to mention one incident that came to mind. Elijah called fire down from heaven to destroy his enemies. Fire did not come from his mouth, but it is an instance of the side of God using fire to destroy its enemies [[2 Kings 1:1-16](#)].

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<sup>298</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p299.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is great power in the mouth, or tongue or words, for either good or evil, salvation or destruction. Words from the mouth of God were both literally and figuratively powerful, for creation or destruction.

### Able to stop rain

It is interesting having mentioned Elijah in the previous case, because he was also involved in an incident where rain was stopped for a while. Again, he did not do this with his power, but he spoke it on behalf of God and it happened.

[1 Kings 17:1](#) And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "[As] the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." [1 Kings 17:1 NKJV](#)

There were several other instances where God did or said He would "stop rain" to punish the disobedience of His people.

[Deuteronomy 11:16](#) "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, <sup>17</sup> "lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. [Deuteronomy 11:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 5:3](#) "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected [it] to bring forth [good] grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes? <sup>5</sup> And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; [And] break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. <sup>6</sup> I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds That they rain no rain on it." [Isaiah 5:3-6 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 14:1](#) The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts. <sup>2</sup> "Judah mourns, And her gates languish; They mourn for the land, And the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. <sup>3</sup> Their nobles have sent their lads for water; They went to the cisterns [and] found no water. They returned with their vessels empty; They were ashamed and confounded And covered their heads. <sup>4</sup> Because the ground is parched, For there was no rain in the land, The plowmen were ashamed; They covered their heads. [Jeremiah 14:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 14:16](#) And it shall come to pass [that] everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>17</sup> And it shall be [that] whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. <sup>18</sup> If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they [shall have] no [rain]; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. [Zechariah 14:16-18 NKJV](#)

### Turn water to blood

There was one case, the plague against Egypt, where water was actually turned to blood.

[Exodus 7:17](#) 'Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I [am] the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which [are] in the river with the rod that [is] in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. <sup>18</sup> "And the fish that [are] in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river." ' ' <sup>19</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in [buckets of] wood and [pitchers of]

stone.' " <sup>20</sup> And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that [were] in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that [were] in the river were turned to blood. [Exodus 7:17-20 NKJV](#)

The second trumpet in Revelation 8 spoke of a third of the sea turning to blood. This is most likely symbolic.

[Revelation 8:8](#) Then the second angel sounded: And [something] like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. [Revelation 8:8 NKJV](#)

Later in Revelation 16, when the bowls of wrath are poured out, the second and third angels will pour out their bowls turning water to blood. Again, this is most likely symbolic.

[Revelation 16:3](#) Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead [man]; and every living creature in the sea died. <sup>4</sup> Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. [Revelation 16:3-4 NKJV](#)

Able to strike the earth with any plague as often as they desire

The word plague was used 75 times, and the plural 22 times in the NKJV. Probably the first thing that comes to mind are the plagues on Egypt leading to the exodus of the Israelites [[Exodus 9:14](#), [Exodus 11:1](#), [Exodus 12:13](#)].

Interestingly the first mention of plagues was not at the Exodus but they were still on Pharaoh.

[Genesis 12:17](#) But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. [Genesis 12:17 NKJV](#)

From the earliest times, God let the Israelites know that if they took a census, each person must pay a ransom of half a shekel to the Sanctuary, otherwise a plague would break out on the people.

[Exodus 30:12](#) "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when [you] number them. <sup>13</sup> "This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel [is] twenty gerahs). The half-shekel [shall be] an offering to the LORD. <sup>14</sup> "Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. [Exodus 30:12-14 NKJV](#)

David actually triggered this plague when he took a census of the people to determine the military strength of his kingdom [[2 Samuel 24](#), [1 Chronicles 21](#)]. I wonder if each individual that was counted would have been spared the plague if they had paid the half shekel temple tax on their own initiative? After all the verse quoted above say that "each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD."

Probably a dozen or so times in the book of Numbers, plague was mentioned in connection with unbelief, rebellion, or sin among the Israelites in their wilderness wandering [[11:33](#), [14:37](#), [16:46-50](#), [25:8-9,18](#), [26:1](#), [31:16](#)].

Five times the book of Deuteronomy mentioned threats of plague if they Israelites rebelled and forsook God [[28:59](#), [29:22](#), [28:61](#), [32:24](#)].

Plagues were sent upon the Philistines when they stole the Ark of the Covenant, causing them to remember how Egypt was struck with plagues [[1 Samuel 6:4](#), [1 Samuel 4:8](#)].

Ezekiel predicted a plague on Israel for their rebelliousness [[5:12](#), [5:17](#), [6:11-12](#), [7:15](#), [14:19](#), [14:21](#)].

It seems that plague was often used as a punishment both against Israel for their disobedience and rebelliousness and against Israel's oppressors. Its cause was generally ascribed to God, rather than nature.

### *Two witnesses are killed*

The two witnesses, which prophesied for 1260 days were killed. I discussed witnesses already and I don't know what else to say about being killed.

### *Sodom and Egypt*

The witnesses were not buried but lay in the street of mystical Sodom and Egypt. Sodom is mentioned 49 times and Egypt 612 times in the NKJV. This passage clearly says mystical, so we are not talking about the literal cities of Sodom and Egypt. However, we may need to examine the literal cities to see what they represent. Both cities are mentioned way back in the first book of the Bible in the time of Abraham. But Sodom was destroyed during his time, and Egypt still exists to this day. I think it is fair to say that what Sodom is most known for is the way it was destroyed by God because of its wickedness. Egypt is well known for more than one incident, but perhaps it is most well-known for its oppression of God's people and the miraculous plagues leading to the exodus and the birth of the nation of Israel. There was only one verse in the Bible where literal Sodom and Egypt were both mentioned. In spite of the description "like the garden of the LORD," which I believe to mean the Garden of Eden, Sodom could not escape the mention of what it is most known for.

### Sodom

[Genesis 13:10](#) And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it [was] well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. [Genesis 13:10 NKJV](#)

Eight times Sodom was mentioned outside of the context of their destruction and wickedness when Lot was captured and rescued by his uncle Abram [[Genesis 14](#)].

Sodom's wickedness:

[Genesis 13:13](#) But the men of Sodom [were] exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. [Genesis 13:13 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 18:20](#) And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, [Genesis 18:20 NKJV](#)

Now for some specifics of the wickedness of Sodom, [Genesis 19](#) tells the story of how the angel visitors were treated. Two angels were sent by God to examine or experience firsthand the wickedness of the city.

[Genesis 19:4](#) Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them [carnally]." [Genesis 19:4-5 NKJV](#)

These verses tell us two things. The men of the city were more than inhospitable, they were violent toward visitors or strangers. And secondly, they intended to homosexually gang rape and probably kill the visitors. I would summarize that Sodom was most known for its destruction by God with fire and brimstone [[Genesis 19:24](#)], for their sexual immorality, and their violence toward visitors. But wait, that's not all. In a parable of Jerusalem's wickedness, she was compared to Sodom whose wickedness was stated differently:

[Ezekiel 16:49](#) "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. [Ezekiel 16:49 NKJV](#)



Nearly twenty times the wickedness of a city or a people were compared to Sodom or its destruction [[Deuteronomy 29:23](#), [Isaiah 1:9](#), [Isaiah 3:9](#), [Isaiah 13:19](#), [Jeremiah 23:14](#), [Jeremiah 49:18](#), [Jeremiah 50:40](#), [Lamentations 4:6](#), [Amos 4:11](#), [Zephaniah 2:9](#), [Matthew 10:15](#), [Matthew 11:23-24](#), [Luke 10:12](#), [Luke 17:29](#), [Romans 9:29](#), [2 Peter 2:6](#), [Jude 1:7](#)].

In a parable of Jerusalem's rebellion against God, [Ezekiel 16](#) tells a very uncomfortable and sordid story. He eventually arrives at comparisons with her older (bigger) sister Samaria, and her younger (little) sister Sodom. Samaria was literally the capital of the northern kingdom, and hence representative of the whole country. If we take that literally, it is hard to argue that Sodom is anything other than literal. Interestingly, the immorality of Sodom is not even mentioned in the comparison, but their arrogance and neglect of the poor and needy are mentioned as their sins.

According to Jude, Sodom was an example of how the wicked would ultimately be destroyed.

[Jude 1:7](#) as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. [Jude 1:7 NKJV](#)

## Egypt

I found it interesting that in the Bible, Egypt was the earliest mentioned country or kingdom that still exists today. Egypt, like Sodom was said to be beautiful and well-watered like the garden of the Lord [[Exodus 13:10](#)].

Egypt might be most known for their enslavement of the children of Israel, and the subsequent plagues and Exodus of the nation of Israel. But interestingly, the first story of Egypt in the Bible, is a foreshadowing of this event. Apparently, Egypt was less susceptible to famine than the surrounding countries, because that was what drove Abram there. During his time there, he got into a difficult situation from which God extracted him by sending plagues on Egypt prompting Pharaoh to expel him from the country [[Exodus 12:10-20](#)].

There were a few mentions of Egypt, before the next major story which was Joseph being sold into slavery there. Even though Egypt was said to be well watered like the garden of the Lord, there came a famine so bad that even they needed help. This where Joseph rose to prominence and power as God not only saved Egypt through him but enriched it from all the surrounding people that needed food. And so began the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt. You can read the whole story in Genesis and Exodus, but the Egyptians eventually enslaved the Israelites leading to the plagues and the Exodus. I counted roughly 75 times in the remainder of the Old Testament that the Israelites remembered or were reminded that they were brought out of Egypt, or that God was referred to as the One who brought them out of Egypt. Actually, it goes further than that because their annual festivals such as the Passover were instituted to remind them of their Exodus from Egypt.

Since Egypt existed before Israel was a nation, and has apparently continuously existed to this time, it is not unusual that it would have other interactions with Israel after the Exodus. The land that was promised to Israel, never included Egypt, but was often said to be from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates River [[Genesis 15:18](#), [1 Kings 4:21](#), [2 Chronicles 9:26](#)]. Solomon formed an alliance with Egypt and married the daughter of Pharaoh [[1 Kings 3:1](#)]. Solomon bought horses and chariots from Egypt [[1 Kings 10:28-29](#), [2 Chronicles 1:16-17](#), [2 Chronicles 9:28](#)]. Hadad, an adversary of Solomon, took refuge in Egypt [[1 Kings 11:14-22](#)]. Before he became the first king of the northern tribes, Jeroboam fled from the presence of Solomon, to Egypt [[1 Kings 11:40](#), [2 Chronicles 10:2](#)]. Rehoboam, the first king of Judah, lost the treasures of the House of the Lord, as well as his own royal treasures, the king of Egypt [[1 Kings 14:25-26](#), [2 Chronicles 12:9](#)]. Hoshea,

the last king of the northern kingdom of Israel, tried to make an alliance with Egypt [[2 Kings 17:4](#)]. It was a battle against Egypt that ended the life of the last good king of Judah [[2 Kings 23:29](#), [2 Chronicles 35:20-27](#)].

[Isaiah 19](#) is an interesting oracle to Egypt, which begins with Egyptians being stirred up against each other, then delivered into the hand of a cruel master. They will experience terrible drought and will be helpless and in fear of the land of Judah. In that day five cities will swear allegiance to the Lord of Hosts and there will even be an altar to the Lord in the midst of Egypt. The Lord will strike Egypt and they will return to the Lord and He will heal them. Then there will be a highway between Egypt and Assyria and they will travel back and forth and worship together, and Israel will be in the midst and will be a blessing to them. And the Lord of Hosts will say, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance." But when did this oracle find fulfillment or is it yet in the future? Egypt was indeed conquered by the cruel Assyrian kingdom in the past. According to Josephus, there was a time when an altar was setup in Egypt.<sup>299 300 301</sup> But I do not believe there was ever a time when Egypt, Assyria and Judah were all blessed by and worshipping the Lord together, so either this is symbolic or still in the future.

After Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Jerusalem, many people were talking about taking refuge in Egypt. Jeremiah strongly warned them not to, telling them that they would be cursed and suffer famine and pestilence, and die there if they went. But they refused to obey the word of God through Jeremiah and went anyway [[Jeremiah 42-44](#)]. Around the same time Ezekiel prophesied what Nebuchadnezzar would do to Egypt [[Ezekiel 29-32](#)].

There is an interesting prophecy in Daniel 11 about the king of the north and the king of the south. Egypt is specifically mentioned three times [[Daniel 11:8](#), [Daniel 11:42-43](#)], but the question is whether it is literal or symbolic. Many have associated the king of the south with Egypt in verse 8, making that reference most likely literal. The second is not quite as clear. There are several other countries [Edom, Moab, Ammon, Libya, Ethiopia] mentioned in those and the preceding verse. I would think that they would either all be literal or all symbolic.

Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, which he often calls Ephraim. That kingdom was finally conquered and dispersed by Assyria. Egypt was mentioned a number of times, some in remembrance of the birth of the nation, and I believe some in relation to where a portion of the people were dispersed. Possibly the most interesting verse:

[Hosea 11:1](#) "When Israel [was] a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. [Hosea 11:1 NKJV](#)

Because although this is clearly a reference to the Exodus, this was also considered a prophecy of Jesus' sojourn in Egypt as a baby when they took refuge there from King Herod.

[Matthew 2:15](#) and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." [Matthew 2:15 NKJV](#)

Aside from Matthew's telling of the flight to Egypt, the majority of the times Egypt was mentioned were connected with Israel's history.

So where does this leave us with regard to Egypt in the Bible? I think the primary symbolism is derived from the Exodus and all related events, beginning with Joseph, through the slavery, and the plagues. Pharaoh it seems would be a

<sup>299</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/onias-temple-of>

<sup>300</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/book-13/chapter-3.html>

<sup>301</sup> <https://books.google.com/books?id=6sovAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA79&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false>

prominent figure in the symbolism of Egypt. It is possible that there is some association of Egypt with atheism because of Pharaoh's statement:

[Exodus 5:2](#) And Pharaoh said, "Who [is] the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." [Exodus 5:2 NKJV](#)

### *Dead for three and a half days*

People gawked but would not allow the bodies to be buried for three and a half years. The people of the earth will gloat over these two witnesses who are additionally now called prophets. Since this appears to be a prophecy, the natural thing would be to apply the day/year principle, making this a time period of three and a half literal years.

### *Resurrected and taken to heaven*

There are some specific instances in the Bible of people being resurrected and taken to heaven. The first assumed resurrection would be Moses. The book of Deuteronomy tells us that Moses died, though there were no earthly witnesses.

[Deuteronomy 34:4](#) Then the LORD said to him, "This [is] the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see [it] with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there." <sup>5</sup> So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. <sup>7</sup> Moses [was] one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. [Deuteronomy 34:4-7 NKJV](#)

But the Gospels tell us that he appeared and talked with Jesus. Exactly how Peter immediately recognized the two visitors as Moses and Elijah, we are not told.

[Matthew 17:2](#) and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. <sup>4</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." [Matthew 17:2-4 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:2](#) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. <sup>4</sup> And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"-- [Mark 9:2-5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:28](#) Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe [became] white [and] glistening. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. <sup>33</sup> Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, [that] Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. [Luke 9:28-33 NKJV](#)

Jude gives us a little glimpse of a scene which mostly likely occurred at the resurrection of Moses. The assumption is that he was taken to heaven at that time.

[Jude 1:9](#) Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" [Jude 1:9 NKJV](#)

There were a number of others who were resurrected but not said to have been taken to heaven. Elijah raised a boy back to life [[1 King 17:17-24](#)]. Elisha raised a boy back to life [[2 Kings 4:32-36](#)]. A man who was about to be buried was instead hurriedly thrown into the grave of Elisha and he came back to life [[2 Kings 13:20-21](#)]. The rest were in the New Testament. Jesus raised the widow of Nain's son back to life [[Luke 7:11-17](#)]. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus back to life [[Luke 8:49-56](#)]. Jesus raised Lazarus back to life after he had been dead for four days [[John 11:1-44](#)]. Peter raised Tabitha back to life [[Acts 9:36-42](#)]. Paul raised Eutychus back to life [[Acts 20:7-12](#)].

At the time of Jesus' death there was an earthquake, and many tombs of the saints were opened and they were raised and went into the city and appeared unto many [[Matthew 27:50-54](#)]. Of course Jesus was resurrected [[Matthew 28:1-20](#); [Mark 16:1-20](#); [Luke 24:1-49](#); [John 20:1-21:25](#)]. And His ascension was recorded in the book of Acts [[Acts 1:9-11](#)]. The more difficult to prove would be that these saints that were resurrected at his death ascended to heaven as well. I'm going with some logic that says that Jesus would not resurrect saints in this specific instance, only to let them die again, along with the following verse from Paul.

[Ephesians 4:8](#) Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."

[Ephesians 4:8 NKJV](#)

In addition to this, I asserted that the 24 elders John saw surrounding the throne of God described in [Revelation 4](#), could very likely be composed of these saints that were resurrected. Before these saints would have been resurrected, the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel also saw a vision of the throne of God, and he did not mention these twenty four elders that John described [[Ezekiel 1](#), [Revelation 4](#)].

### *Earthquake destroying a tenth of the city*

For the [sixth seal](#) I did the biblical search for earthquake which I will mostly copy here.

It occurred 17 times in 14 verses in the NKJV, most frequently in Revelation (7 times in 5 verses). The first incident in the Bible used the word three times [[1 Kings 19:11-12](#)]. When Elijah was running away from Jezebel, he was exhausted and discouraged and wanted to die. He was awakened and fed by an angel twice, before going forty days without eating, arriving at Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah was having a conversation with God, as two people talk to each other, the way Moses spoke with God. It seems that God wished to manifest Himself to Elijah, even though he didn't ask for it like Moses did. God caused a terrible windstorm, followed by an earthquake and a then a firestorm but was not in any of them. Isaiah mentions in a warning to Jerusalem that an earthquake could be used to punish Israel [[Isaiah 29:6](#)]. Amos prophesies and Zechariah remembers years later a great earthquake in the time of king Uzziah [[Amos 1:1](#), [Zechariah 4:5](#)]. Ezekiel prophesies another great earthquake in Israel [[Ezekiel 38:19](#)]. In the New Testament, there was an earthquake when Jesus died and one when He was resurrected [[Matthew 27:54](#), [Matthew 28:2](#)]. There was a great earthquake mentioned in Acts when Paul and Silas were in prison [[Acts 16:26](#)]. It seemed to me that these earthquakes were all literal, but more half of them were not naturally occurring, mostly because they seemed to have been caused by God. In Revelation, the first earthquake mentioned was in the sixth seal [[Revelation 6:12](#)]. The remaining three, not including this one, were accompanied by thunder and lightning [[Revelation 8:5](#), [Revelation 11:19](#), [Revelation 16:18](#)].

It's difficult to know what to say about the instances in Revelation since I am in the midst of studying them, but the other earthquakes seems to all be literal, though not all naturally occurring.

### *7000 people died*

This one instance was the only mention of deaths as a result of the earthquake. Obviously, death is inevitable in great earthquakes, but this is the only one mentioned in the Bible that seemed to make a point of them. In addition to that it is interesting because it is a specific and relatively small number for a great earthquake. The number 7000 was actually used a number of other times in the Bible that I could find. Some translations used the numerical form 7,000 but it seems the NKJV stuck to the word form exclusively.

[2 Kings 24:16](#) All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all [who were] strong [and] fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. [2 Kings 24:16 NKJV](#)

[Romans 11:4](#) But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." [Romans 11:4 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 19:18](#) "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." [1 Kings 19:18 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 20:15](#) Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel--seven thousand. [1 Kings 20:15 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 18:4](#) David took from him one thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot [horses], except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots. [1 Chronicles 18:4 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 19:18](#) Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army. [1 Chronicles 19:18 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 29:4](#) "three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; [1 Chronicles 29:4 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 15:11](#) And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. [2 Chronicles 15:11 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 30:24](#) For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. [2 Chronicles 30:24 NKJV](#)

[Job 1:3](#) Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East. [Job 1:3 NKJV](#)

After all that, I can't say that any of these verses shed any light on the 7000 deaths from the earthquake.

### Interpreting the symbols

Measuring the temple and the altar and the worshippers could mean to study and understand the Sanctuary, which was misunderstood in the prophecy of the previous chapter.<sup>302</sup> It could also mean that God would begin judging the church, or the people of the earth through history who were or claimed to be His followers.<sup>303</sup>

I interpreted the symbol of the two witnesses in my examination of the words above. It seems the two witnesses, the two olive trees, and the two lampstands all refer to the same entity, which I concluded are the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The first which teaches about God through His Law and the prophets, and the second through the actions of God in Jesus, to save us from sin. These two witnesses preached during the 1260 years of papal darkness but were in sackcloth during this time. Sackcloth was generally always mentioned in connection with mourning. Restricting access to the Bible during those years was one of the ways the church kept its power over people. God's Word, specifically the commandments and the prophecies, also known as the Bible to us, was said to be a lamp to light our path [[Psalm 119:105](#), [Proverbs 6:23](#), [2 Peter 1:19](#)].

This 1260-year period is probably the most mentioned prophetic time period. In prior study, I have shown this period to be the era of Papal dominance which ended in 1798 [[Daniel – The Little Horn](#), [The Tribulation](#), [The third church](#), [Dark sun](#)].

The question now is when did the Bible or the Word of God to us exercise powers to protect itself? Specifically mentioned in the prophecy were fire from heaven, stop rain, turn water to blood, and strike the earth with plagues. I showed in the examination of the symbols where Elijah did the first two and Moses the third and fourth. But did anything similar happen during the 1260 years in question? There is historical record of terrible plagues during that time but were they the fulfillment of this prophecy? If we don't restrict ourselves to the 1260-year time period, Moses and Elijah could definitely be considered witnesses for God and were part or contributors to the Old Testament. Maxwell points out [Revelation 22:18](#) from the New Testament:<sup>304</sup>

[Revelation 22:18](#) For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; [Revelation 22:18 NKJV](#)

Killing of the two witnesses, the Bible as I have concluded, occurred near the end of the 1260-year period in France. As Ellen White describes it, the suppression of the Scriptures and the misrepresentation of the Character of God were major factors leading to the French Revolution.

The war against the Bible, carried forward for so many centuries in France, culminated in the scenes of the Revolution. That terrible outbreaking was but the legitimate result of Rome's suppression of the Scriptures. It presented the most striking illustration which the world has ever witnessed, of the working out of the papal policy,—an illustration of the results to which for more than a thousand years the teaching of the Roman Church had been tending.

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<sup>302</sup> Maxwell. p278.

<sup>303</sup> Thiele, Edwin R. *Outline Studies in Revelation II*. Avondale College, 1974, p188. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=8](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=8)  
<https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=34>

<sup>304</sup> Maxwell. p301.

The suppression of the Scriptures during the period of papal supremacy was foretold by the prophets; and the Revelator points also to the terrible results that were to accrue especially to France from the domination of “the man of sin.” [White, Great Controversy, p265](#)<sup>305</sup>

The backlash against the injustice, oppression and persecution, of the Roman Catholic Church and the ruling class against the serving class was undoubtedly a trigger for the Reign of Terror:

But the outworking of all this was widely different from what Rome had purposed. Instead of holding the masses in a blind submission to her dogmas, her work resulted in making them infidels and revolutionists. Romanism they despised as priestcraft. They beheld the clergy as a party to their oppression. The only god they knew was the god of Rome; her teaching was their only religion. They regarded her greed and cruelty as the legitimate fruit of the Bible and they would have none of it.

Rome had misrepresented the character of God, and perverted his requirements, and now men rejected both the Bible and its Author. She had required a blind faith in her dogmas, under the pretended sanction of the Scriptures. In the reaction, Voltaire and his associates cast aside God's Word altogether, and spread everywhere the poison of infidelity. Rome had ground down the people under her iron heel; and now the masses, degraded and brutalized, in their recoil from her tyranny cast off all restraint. Enraged at the glittering cheat to which they had so long paid homage, they rejected truth and falsehood together; and mistaking license for liberty, the slaves of vice exulted in their imagined freedom. [White, Great Controversy, p281](#)<sup>306</sup>

Whether motivated by anti-religious sentiment or not, the change from the Christian calendar to the ten-day week eliminated the Lords Day and emboldened some against the religious establishment. Though the idea of a National Church was not immediately done away with, there were laws against the Priests, and severe action was taken against those who did not take the oath to the new constitution. The leaders of the revolution were not unitedly against religion, and some were in favor of freedom of religion, but the public sentiment against Catholic Priests was high. In one public demonstration where some priests willingly burned their credentials, “a thousand cries arose: ‘Perish forever the memory of the priests! Perish forever Christian Superstition! Long live the sublime religion of Nature!’”<sup>307</sup>

They forced the bishop of Paris and his vicars to abjure Christianity at the bar of the convention, and the convention to decree that the worship of reason should be substituted for the Catholic worship. The churches were shut up, or transformed into temples of reason; and in all the towns festivals were established which exhibited scandalous scenes of atheism. [Mignet, History of the French Revolution](#)<sup>308</sup>

Jan Voerman did a study, assembling many quotes in support of this three-and-a-half-year period, beginning on November 26, 1793 and ending on July 17, 1997.<sup>309</sup> Though I did not examine every single one of his sources, I

<sup>305</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p265.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA265>,

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=265>

<sup>306</sup> White. p281. <http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA265>,

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=281>

<sup>307</sup> Kropotkin, Petr Alekseevich. *The Great French Revolution 1789-1793*, New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, London: William Heinemann, 1909, p519-520. <https://books.google.com/books?id=dvh80e5SgxC&pg=PA519#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>308</sup> Mignet, A. F. *History of the French Revolution*, London, H. L. Hunt, C. C. Clarke, 1826, p275.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=huPpjD4A1i0C&pg=PA275#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>309</sup> Voerman, Jan. *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 117-134,

would say that many of them appeared to be religious writers, some trying to prove the same. Doing my own research on the internet, it was not too difficult to see the anti-religious sentiment, especially against the priests, but I found it difficult to pinpoint from secular historical sources a starting and ending point for the three and a half years.

If Christianity and the Bible were resurrected and taken to heaven, what could that mean? Smith suggests we understand that in terms of [Daniel 4:22](#), ‘for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven.’ This from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream representing his greatness and success. After the power of the Papacy was broken, the emergence of Bible and missionary societies, funded and coordinated the distribution of Bibles all over the world.<sup>310</sup> These statistics are changing all the time, but according to the Wycliffe Global Alliance in 2019, the entire Bible has been translated into 698 languages, and the New Testament into 1548.<sup>311</sup>

Maxwell suggests the following about the earthquake and the tenth part.

The epicenter of the “earthquake” was located in a “tenth part” of the city and was observed at the close of the 1260 years, in the 1790s.

France was the oldest Christian nation in western Europe. It was this oldest of western Christian nations that so passionately apostatized and which so grotesquely overthrew its Christianity during the French Revolution. In this undeniably biblical sense, France cruelly crucified Christ.

But inasmuch as the earthquake occurred in only a “tenth” of the great city, we perceive that the great city as a whole is much larger than France. The great city is the whole community, that is, it is western European Christendom.<sup>312</sup>

This makes sense in light of the ten horns of the beast and the ten toes of the image representing the nations of Europe [[Divided kingdom](#)]. If this were the case, it seems the 7000 deaths from the earthquake could represent the casualties of the French Revolution.

## Conclusion

Though I personally didn’t come up with secular historical references for the start and end of the three-and-a-half-year period, I still believe the French Revolution to be the best fitting and most logical fulfillment of this prophetic scene.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think there were additional symbols given for the two witnesses?
- How would you explain the Bible tormenting those who dwell on the earth?

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<sup>310</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel and the Revelation (The response of history to the voice of prophecy)*. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p503. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/503/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/503/mode/2up)] [Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1897, p609 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA609>]

<sup>311</sup> <http://www.wycliffe.net/statistics>

<sup>312</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p303.



- Do you think the earthquake that occurred “in that hour” should have been something that occurred at the end of the three and a half years, rather than the whole event as I suggested?

## The seventh trumpet

### [Revelation 11:15-18](#)

[Revelation 11:15](#) Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become [the kingdoms] of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"  
<sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,  
<sup>17</sup> saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. <sup>18</sup> The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

### [Revelation 11:15-18 NKJV](#)

After the interlude of one and a half chapters following the sixth trumpet, we come to the seventh trumpet. I believe the events prophesied by the interlude fit chronologically between the sixth and seventh trumpets.

## Examining the symbols

### *Voices in heaven*

This is not the first time a voice has been heard from heaven, but it is the first time the words ‘voices in heaven’ have occurred in the NKJV. At least twenty times in the NKJV a voice was heard from heaven, most of them presumably the voice of God. There were a few other places in Revelation a loud voice or the voice of a great multitude were heard in heaven.

[Job 38:7](#) When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? [Job 38:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:11](#) Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud **voice**: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" <sup>13</sup> And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power [Be] to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" [Revelation 5:11-13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:10](#) Then I heard a loud **voice** saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. [Revelation 12:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:17](#) Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud **voice** came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" [Revelation 16:17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:1](#) After these things I heard a loud **voice** of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power [belong] to the Lord our God! [Revelation 19:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:6](#) And I heard, as it were, the **voice** of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! [Revelation 19:6 NKJV](#)

And what did these voices say? Essentially that Christ would become king over the earth and would reign forever. Where else do we see this language in the Bible?

[Exodus 15:18](#) "The LORD shall reign forever and ever." [Exodus 15:18 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 9:7](#) But the LORD shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment. [Psalm 9:7 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 10:16](#) The LORD [is] King forever and ever; The nations have perished out of His land. [Psalm 10:16 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:10](#) The LORD shall reign forever--Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD! [Psalm 146:10 NKJV](#)

[Micah 4:7](#) I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever. [Micah 4:7 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:33](#) "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." [Luke 1:33 NKJV](#)

### *Twenty-four elders*

These twenty-four elders are mentioned several other times in Revelation, but not in any other book of the Bible. I discussed them in some detail, including who I think they are when I studied the [throne room of God](#) in Revelation 4.

[Revelation 4:4](#) Around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. [Revelation 4:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:10](#) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: [Revelation 4:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:8](#) Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [Revelation 5:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:4](#) And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" [Revelation 19:4 NKJV](#)

### *Nations were angry*

The word nations occurred nearly 450 times in the NKJV, in 41 different books. The word angry was used 92 times in the NKJV, most of them literally.

Many times God was said to be angry with Israel because they strayed from Him.

Rage and enraged are synonyms also used in the NKJV. Let's examine some of the uses in prophetic context.

[Daniel 8:7](#) And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with **rage** against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. [Daniel 8:7 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 11:11](#) "And the king of the South shall be moved with **rage**, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his [enemy]. [Daniel 11:11 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 11:30](#) "For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in **rage** against the holy covenant, and do [damage]. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. [Daniel 11:30 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:17](#) And the dragon was **enraged** with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 12:17 NKJV](#)

All three in Daniel were essentially speaking of nations being enraged, because a beast or king were symbols of kingdoms or nations. It seems that a nation being enraged is often followed by it going to war.

### *Wrath of God*

The word wrath was used 189 times in the NKJV. The majority of them were in reference to the wrath of God, and most of those were directed toward the Israelites. The wrath of God was generally mentioned in connection with the disobedience of the Israelites and often was followed by some bad thing that happened to them. These bad things were often spoken of as God's punishment following the expression of His wrath for their disobedience.

[1 Thessalonians 1:10](#) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, [even] Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. [1 Thessalonians 1:10 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 5:9](#) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ [1 Thessalonians 5:9 NKJV](#)

I would say there are two classes of the wrath of God. One is the wrath against the Israelites in the Old Testament for their disobedience and rejection. Wrath was often followed by punishment, which at times resulted in them turning back to Him. It is my belief that in many cases, the punishment was a natural result of their actions, rather than something supernaturally imposed by God. The second category of the wrath of God is the final judgment and destruction of sin. I believe that many of the uses of that phrase in Revelation are this second class. The two verses quoted above illustrate that God through Jesus Christ does not want us to suffer His final wrath against sin and provided a way for us to be rescued from it.

### *Judgement of the dead*

The word judgment was used 190 times in the NKJV in a number of different ways. One of them, the execution of judgment is related to the wrath of God. I see it as the execution of the sentence or the penalty of being judged guilty. A part of the attire worn by the High Priest was called a breast piece of judgment. Another meaning is the act of deciding whether someone is guilty or not. Regarding this last definition, God warned the Israelites to give fair and impartial judgment.

[Leviticus 19:15](#) 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. [Leviticus 19:15 NKJV](#)

I believe God's judgment of the dead to mean that He is deciding whether, during their life, they had chosen to avail themselves of the salvation from the wrath of God. If not, the only alternative for them is to suffer the wrath of God and to be destroyed along with sin.

The following statements by Jesus written in Matthew were referring to this judgment of the dead.

[Matthew 10:15](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city! [Matthew 10:15 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:22](#) "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

[Matthew 11:22 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:24](#) "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you." [Matthew 11:24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:36](#) "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. [Matthew 12:36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:41](#) "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here. [Matthew 12:41 NKJV](#)

Jesus also explained that it is not the Father who judges the dead but Himself.

[John 5:22](#) "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, [John 5:22 NKJV](#)

[John 5:27](#) "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. [John 5:27 NKJV](#)

But they are always in agreement.

[John 5:30](#) "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. [John 5:30 NKJV](#)

[John 8:16](#) "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I [am] with the Father who sent Me. [John 8:16 NKJV](#)

After Jesus returned to heaven, the Apostles also mentioned this judgment.

[Romans 14:10](#) But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. [Romans 14:10 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:10](#) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things [done] in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. [2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 6:2](#) of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. [Hebrews 6:2 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 9:27](#) And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, [Hebrews 9:27 NKJV](#)

[1 John 4:17](#) Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. [1 John 4:17 NKJV](#)

Finally, the judgment of the dead was mentioned a couple additional times in Revelation.

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [Revelation 20:12 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:13](#) The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [Revelation 20:13 NKJV](#)

I guess I slipped in a few verses that referred to the end time judgment of the living. From the verses listed, it is pretty clear that there is a judgment at the end of the world for everyone.

### Interpreting the symbols

Starting from the top, there were other places in the Bible where multiple voices or loud voices were heard in or from heaven, but most of them were also from John's visions in Revelation. There was definitely at least one case, in [Revelation 5:11-13](#), where the voices of many angels were heard. There was another case in [Revelation 19:6](#), where the voice of a great multitude was heard. I believe this multitude to be the people who will be saved. In one case a loud voice is heard when the seventh bowl of wrath is poured out, which I believe to be picturing the same time frame as this seventh trumpet, and which also has some other parallels which will be discussed. The loud voice said, "it is done," which was essentially the same thing Jesus said, "it is finished," from the cross just as He died.

The twenty-four elders were mentioned specifically four times, all in Revelation. I believe these people were mentioned elsewhere in the Bible however, because I think they were the ones who were resurrected and went into the city when Jesus died.

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:8](#) Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." [Ephesians 4:8 NKJV](#)

Next, the nation's being enraged in Daniel and Revelation, usually was a prelude to them going to war. I believe this could be a reference to the following:

[Revelation 20:7](#) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number [is] as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. [Revelation 20:7-9 NKJV](#)

Notice the word nations in verse 8.

In my examination of the phrase wrath of God, I saw that it was primarily used two ways. First, the discipline of His people for their disobedience. Second, the destruction of sin at the end of time. I believe the use in this seventh trumpet to be the later.

### Conclusion

This trumpet is clearly about judgment, but does it have a timeline, or is it just the end of the world judgment? The end date that was mentioned in the sixth trumpet was 1844. The two scenes that were inserted between the sixth and seventh trumpets were details of events from a little before 1798 to 1844. So, to me it makes sense for this seventh trumpet to begin with 1844 and end with the return of Jesus. Going all the way back to Daniel 8:14,

[Daniel 8:14](#) And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." [Daniel 8:14 NKJV](#)

I concluded that the cleansing of the Sanctuary symbolized by the Jewish Day of Atonement, began in 1844. I also associated this cleansing with the judgment mentioned in Daniel.

[Daniel 7:26](#) 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy [it] forever. [Daniel 7:26 NKJV](#)

[See also [Sanctuary – Judgment](#)].

But this judgment sounds like it includes more finality, which includes rewarding prophets and saints who fear God, but also the destruction of those who destroy the world. It seems this trumpet begins in 1844 and extends to the judgment at the second coming of Jesus.

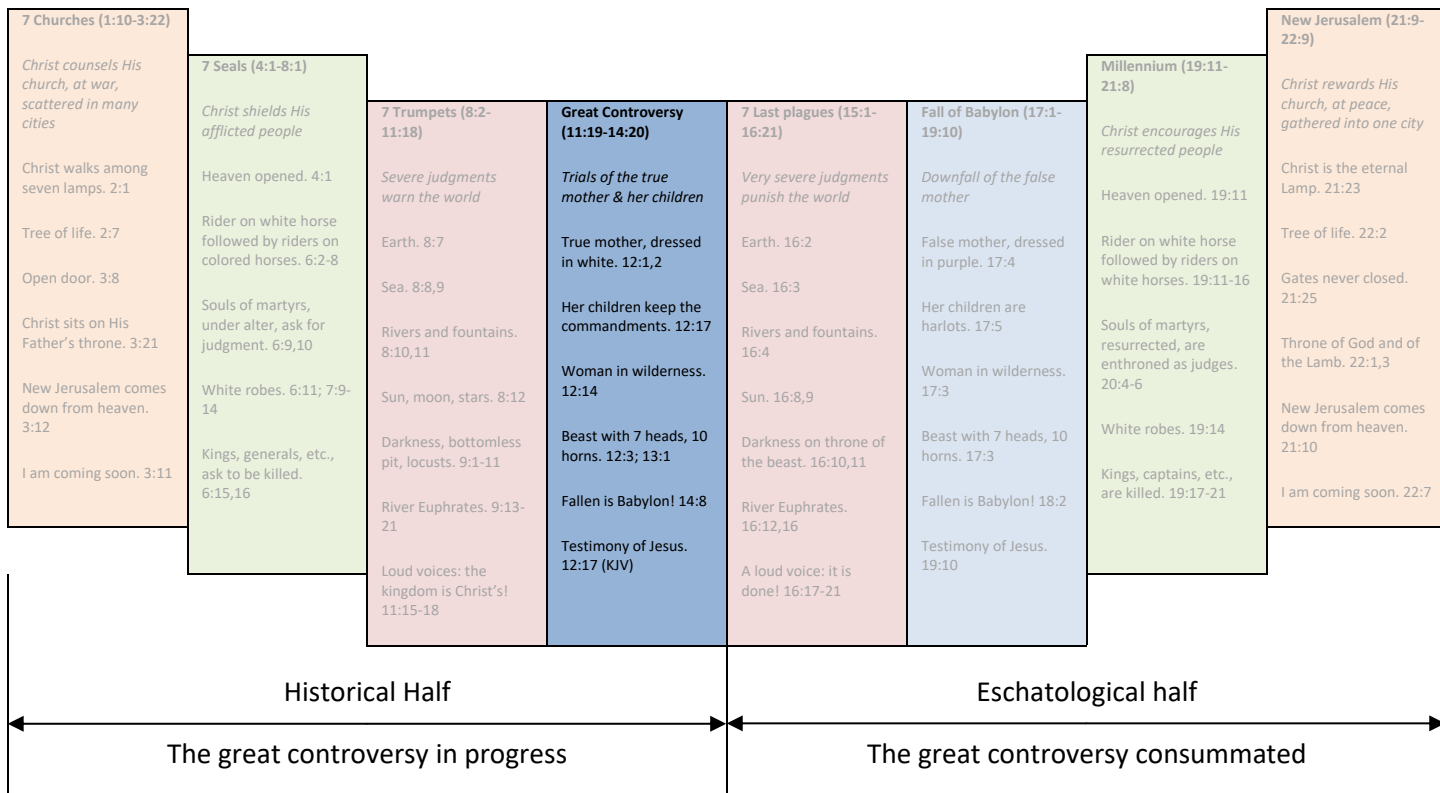
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What do you believe?

- What kind of judgment would be going on before the end of the world?
- Can people who are still living be judged before Jesus returns?
- Why specifically are those who destroy the world called out for destruction?

# Revelation 11:19-14:20 – Great controversy

As you can see from the outline below, we are starting into the fourth of eight sections as organized below.



## Preface – temple in heaven

### [Revelation 11:19](#)

[Revelation 11:19](#) Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. [Revelation 11:19 NKJV](#)

The word temple was used 370 times in the NKJV. There is another word which I believe, especially in this context, is relevant. “Sanctuary” was a word used to describe the predecessor to the Jewish Temple. During the time of Moses, God gave detailed plans to build this sanctuary, which was essentially a mobile temple. The word sanctuary was used 158 times in the NKJV, 55 times, prior to the construction of the Temple, and the vast majority after as another word for the Temple. The following verses were selected because they seem to be referring to a temple in heaven. Some were based on visions of things seen in heaven.

[Isaiah 6:1](#) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His [robe] filled the temple. [Isaiah 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 11:4](#) The LORD [is] in His holy temple, The LORD's throne [is] in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. [Psalm 11:4 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 18:6](#) In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, [even] to His ears. [Psalm 18:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 6:4](#) And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. [Isaiah 6:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:15](#) "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. [Revelation 7:15 NKJV](#)

The ark of the covenant was the most holy piece of furniture in the Sanctuary as well as in the first Jewish Temple. The word ark was used 229 times in the NKJV, with the vast majority of them referring to the ark of the covenant. The remainder, including 26 times in Genesis were about the ark that Noah built. "ark of the covenant" occurs 43 times but this is the only time that says "ark of His covenant." Is the ark that John saw in this vision different from the lost Old Testament ark of the covenant? Is this heaven's original to earth's copy?

The Bible doesn't really tell us anything about the ark after the destruction of Jerusalem and the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The book of Ezra does itemize some of the things he hauled off and were returned by Cyrus, and you would think that the ark would have been mentioned if it was included.

[2 Chronicles 36:7](#) Nebuchadnezzar also carried off [some] of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. [2 Chronicles 36:7 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 24:13](#) And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. [2 Kings 24:13 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:3](#) Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which [had been] in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. [Daniel 5:3 NKJV](#)

[Ezra 1:5](#) Then the heads of the fathers' [houses] of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which [is] in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> And all those who [were] around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all [that] was willingly offered. <sup>7</sup> King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; <sup>8</sup> and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. <sup>9</sup> This [is] the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, <sup>10</sup> thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar [kind, and] one thousand other articles. <sup>11</sup> All the articles of gold and silver [were] five thousand four hundred. All [these] Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem. [Ezra 1:5-11 NKJV](#)

The Jewish virtual library lists some of the more prominent theories about the whereabouts of the ark today.

The Ark remained in the Temple until its destruction at the hand of the Babylonian empire, led by Nebuchadnezzar. What happened to it afterward is unknown, and has been debated and pondered for centuries. It is unlikely that the Babylonians took it, as they did the other vessels of the Temple, because the detailed lists of what they took make no mention of the Ark. According to some sources, Josiah, one of the final kings to reign in the First Temple period, learned of the impending invasion of the Babylonians and hid the Ark. Where he hid it is also questionable – according to one midrash, he dug a hole under the wood storehouse on



the Temple Mount and buried it there (Yoma 53b). Another account says that Solomon foresaw the eventual destruction of the Temple, and set aside a cave near the Dead Sea, in which Josiah eventually hid the Ark (Maimonides, Laws of the Temple, 4:1). [jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)<sup>313</sup>

A very common, but in my opinion unconvincing, explanation floating about the internet is:

One of the most fascinating possibilities is advanced by Ethiopian Christians who claim that they have the Ark today. In Axum, Ethiopia, it is widely believed that the Ark is currently being held in the Church of Saint Mary of Zion, guarded by a monk known as the "Keeper of the Ark," who claims to have it in his possession. According to the Axum Christian community, they acquired the Ark during the reign of Solomon, when his son Menelik, whose mother was the Queen of Sheba, stole the Ark after a visit to Jerusalem. While in the not-so-distant past the "Ark" has been brought out for Christian holidays, its keeper has not done so for several years due to the tumultuous political situation in the country. The claim has thus been impossible to verify, for no one but the monk is allowed into the tent. [jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)<sup>314</sup>

Since its disappearance, some 2,000 years ago, numerous theories have arisen about its fate. One of the most well known holds that Levitical priests moved the Ark to Egypt just before the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem in 586 B.C. From there it was supposedly moved to Ethiopia, where it resides to this day in the town of Aksum, in the St. Mary of Zion cathedral. Only one man, a monk known as "the Guardian," is allowed to see the Ark, and church authorities have never allowed it to be studied to determine its authenticity. [history.com](http://www.history.com)<sup>315</sup>

But through the centuries, Ethiopian Christians have claimed that the ark rests in a chapel in the small town of Aksum, in their country's northern highlands. It arrived nearly 3,000 years ago, they say, and has been guarded by a succession of virgin monks who, once anointed, are forbidden to set foot outside the chapel grounds until they die. [smithsonianmag.com](http://www.smithsonianmag.com)<sup>316</sup>

I just have a very difficult time believing that the ark could have been stolen during Solomon's time and replaced with a fake for most of the history of the first Temple. I also have a hard time believing that the ark could be in this location for so long without someone coming with force to steal it.

A more plausible claim is that of archaeologist Leen Ritmeyer, who has conducted research on the Temple Mount and inside the Dome of the Rock. He claims to have found the spot on the Mount where the Holy of Holies was located during the First Temple period. In the precise center of that spot is a section of bedrock cut out in dimensions that may match those of the Ark as reported in Exodus. This section of the mount, incidentally, is the one from which the creation of the world began, according to midrash (T. Kedoshim, 10). Based on his findings, Ritmeyer has postulated that the Ark may be buried deep inside the Temple Mount. However, it is unlikely that any excavation will ever be allowed on the Mount by the Muslim or Israeli authorities. [jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)<sup>317</sup>

Theories about the ark's whereabouts would be incomplete in my opinion without mentioning the claims of amateur archaeologist Ron Wyatt. In 1982, after three years of excavating under the location where he believed Jesus was actually crucified, he claims to have found the ark. He made many fantastic claims, most of which could not be

<sup>313</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ark-of-the-convenant#where>

<sup>314</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ark-of-the-convenant#where>

<sup>315</sup> <https://www.history.com/news/fate-of-the-lost-ark-revealed>

<sup>316</sup> <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/keepers-of-the-lost-ark-179998820/>

<sup>317</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ark-of-the-convenant#where>

verified because the pictures he took were blurred. He claimed that he found dried blood that flowed 20 feet down through a crack in the rock that dripped on the mercy seat of the ark, and to have had the blood tested with some amazing results.<sup>318</sup> I get the sense that there is a group of devoted followers who believe his claims in spite of the lack of evidence, but most so called experts have discredited him, in part because he was not a trained or professional archaeologist.

Coming back to the biblical analysis of the ark, the temple being opened and the ark being exposed sort of brings to mind another scene that occurred when Jesus declared "it is finished," at the time of His death.

[Matthew 27:51](#) Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, [Matthew 27:51 NKJV](#)

The veil hiding the most holy place was torn and had the ark been there it would have been visible from inside the temple.

The word lightning(s) was used 27 times in the NKJV. There was thunder and lightning in the seventh plague on Egypt [[Exodus 19:16](#)]. There was thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai when God was there [[Exodus 20:18](#)]. David wrote of how God used thunder and lightning to route his enemies [[2 Samuel 22:14-15](#), [Psalm 18:13-14](#), [Psalm 44:6](#)]. Job spoke of thunder and lightning associated with God [[36:32](#), [37:2-5](#)]. Another Psalm, not by David, mentioned God's use of lightning in the plagues on Egypt [[78:48](#)]. In Jeremiah's satire on idolatry, he mentions lightning with the rain as something God causes [[10:13](#), [51:16](#)]. Ezekiel mentions lightning when describing the throne of God seen in vision [[1:13-14](#)]. In a parable Ezekiel also likens lightning to God' shining punishing sword [[21:10](#)]. Daniel describing, who I believe was Jesus see in vision, said His face had the appearance of lightning [[10:6](#)]. Nahum, in the overthrow of Nineveh, described chariots dashing to and fro in the streets as lightning [[2:4](#)]. Zechariah, in describing Israel's deliverance by God, mentions His arrow going forth like lightning [[9:14](#)]. Jesus described His second coming to be as visible as lighting striking from east to west [[Matthew 24:27](#), [Luke 17:24](#)]. In the transfiguration of Jesus, His appearance was like lightning [[Matthew 28:3](#)]. Finally, Jesus described Satan's fall from heaven like lightning [[Luke 10:18](#)]. Lightning was used four times in Revelation and will be discussed next.

The throne of God is said to be a source of lightning and in Revelation, thunder.

[Revelation 4:5](#) And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire [were] burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. [Revelation 4:5 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 1:13](#) As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance [was] like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.<sup>14</sup> And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning. [Ezekiel 1:13-14 NKJV](#)

The seventh seal and the seventh bowl of wrath were also accompanied by thunder, lightning and an earthquake.

[Revelation 8:5](#) Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw [it] to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. [Revelation 8:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:18](#) And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. [Revelation 16:18 NKJV](#)

<sup>318</sup> <https://wyattmuseum.com/the-ark-of-the-covenant-special-article/2011-338#>

If the three sevens represent the same time period, do the lightning, thunder and earthquake represent the same thing in these three sequences?

In most of the cases, lightning was associated with the presence and power of God.

Thunder(s/ed/ings) was used 39 times in the NKJV, many of which were together with the lightning. It was mentioned 4 times in Exodus 9 in conjunction with the seventh plague on Egypt [[23](#), [29](#), [33](#), [34](#)]. 3 times in Exodus in conjunction with the appearance of God on Mount Sinai [[19:16](#), [20:18](#)]. In her prayer of thanksgiving, Hannah said that those who contend with the Lord will be shattered by His thunder [[1 Samuel 2:10](#)]. God used thunder to confuse the enemies of Israel [[1 Samuel 7:10](#)]. God thundered at Samuel's request to show His displeasure in the Israelite's request for a king [[1 Samuel 12:17-18](#)]. Job spoke of God's voice as thunder [[26:14](#), [37:2](#), [39:25](#), [40:9](#)]. In the Psalms, thunder was used 3 times in association with God's greatness and power [[77:18](#), [81:7](#), [104:7](#)]. Isaiah said that God would use thunder and earthquake to punish Judah [[29:6](#)]. Jesus called James and John sons of thunder [[Mark 3:17](#)]. Thunder was used 9 times in Revelation. 3 times as already mentioned in conjunction with the seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl of wrath [[8:5](#), [11:19](#), [16:18](#)]. One time already mentioned above in the throne room of God in heaven. And 6 times in conjunction with a voice heard from heaven [[6:1](#), [10:3](#), [10:4](#), [14:2](#), [19:6](#)].

In many cases thunder was used together with lightning demonstrating the power of God. But I would say, more specifically, thunder was often associated with the voice of God or a voice from heaven.

For the [sixth seal](#) I did the biblical search for earthquake which I will mostly copy here.

It occurred 17 times in 14 verses in the NKJV, most frequently in Revelation (7 times in 5 verses). The first incident in the Bible used the word three times [[1 Kings 19:11-12](#)]. When Elijah was running away from Jezebel, he was exhausted and discouraged and wanted to die. He was awakened and fed by an angel twice, before going forty days without eating, arriving at Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah was having a conversation with God, as two people talk to each other, the way Moses spoke with God. It seems that God wished to manifest Himself to Elijah, even though he didn't ask for it like Moses did. God caused a terrible windstorm, followed by an earthquake and a then a firestorm but was not in any of them. Isaiah mentions in a warning to Jerusalem that an earthquake could be used to punish Israel [[Isaiah 29:6](#)]. Amos prophesies and Zechariah remembers years later a great earthquake in the time of king Uzziah [[Amos 1:1](#), [Zechariah 4:5](#)]. Ezekiel prophesies another great earthquake in Israel [[Ezekiel 38:19](#)]. In the New Testament, there was an earthquake when Jesus died and one when He was resurrected [[Matthew 27:54](#), [Matthew 28:2](#)]. There was a great earthquake mentioned in Acts when Paul and Silas were in prison [[Acts 16:26](#)]. It seemed to me that these earthquakes were all literal, but more half of them were not naturally occurring, mostly because they seemed to have been caused by God. In Revelation, the first earthquake mentioned was in the sixth seal [[Revelation 6:12](#)]. The remaining three, not including this one, were accompanied by thunder and lightning [[Revelation 8:5](#), [Revelation 11:19](#), [Revelation 16:18](#)].

In addition, the words earth shook occurred together 7 times in the NKJV in connection with the power of God. David wrote how God shook the earth to route his enemies [[2 Samuel 22:8](#)]. David composed a song of deliverance and in it spoke of the earth shaking and quaking and trembling from God's anger [[Psalm 18:7](#)]. At the time of Jesus' death, the earth quaked [[Matthew 27:51](#)]. David wrote of the earth trembling and shaking at the power of God [[Psalm 77:18](#)]. Paul wrote of the voice of God causing the earth to shake [[Hebrews 12:26](#)].

Finally, there is the great hail. Hail has been seen before in Revelation, specifically in the first trumpet scene. Hail, as in things falling from the sky, is used 35 times in the NKJV, most notably in Exodus regarding the plague on Egypt

where it was mentioned more than 15 times. Interestingly in the Egyptian plague, it was also accompanied by flashing fire, and thunder.

[Exodus 9:23](#) And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup> So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. [Exodus 9:23-24 NKJV](#)

In the plague on Egypt, the hailstorm was obviously punishment, but also a manifestation of the power of God over nature. It is notable also in that instance, that the hail didn't fall on the people of God [[Exodus 9:26](#)].

As in the three prior sections, the seven churches, seven seals, and seven trumpets, each began with a temple scene. There is an interesting progression in the display of God's power in these introduction scenes.

1. Seven churches introduced: light (not lightning, but the face of Jesus shining like the sun)
2. Seven seals introduced with: lightning and thunder.
3. Seven trumpets introduced with: lightning, thunder and earthquake.
4. This section is introduced with: lightning, thunder, earthquake and hail.

I think lightning, thunder and earthquake, especially together, were signs of the power, presence or approach of God. Frequently the voice of God or at a least a voice from heaven were said to sound like thunder. The introduction of the hail, as in the plague on Egypt, brings in an element of judgment from God.

Lastly, does the Bible teach that there was actually a piece of furniture in the temple in heaven that was the original of which the ark of the covenant was a copy of? I think this is the only passage that mentions an ark being seen in the temple in heaven. The reason I question this is that if you think about what the ark represents, the cherubim with wings outspread over the mercy seat, it seems to be a static image of the actual throne of God, with real cherubim surrounding it.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe the lightning, thunder and earthquake are literal or symbolic?
- Do you think John saw the earthly ark of the covenant in heaven?
- If the ark of the covenant were revealed or found do you think it would help people to become true believers in the Bible?

## The woman

### [Revelation 12:1-2](#)

[Revelation 12:1](#) Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup> Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

[Revelation 12:1-2 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

#### *A woman*

Clearly this is symbolic, because of the imagery of a very large woman in the heavens standing on the moon. So, I will not need to examine all the places in the Bible where it mentions a literal woman, after all the word was used

400 times in the NKJV. The plural, women, was used 192 times in the NKJV. I counted a number of times in the books of the prophets, predominantly Jeremiah, where extreme pain, suffering and agony were likened to a woman in labor or childbirth. The prophets also on occasion likened unfaithful Judah or Israel to an unfaithful or unclean wife:

[Jeremiah 3:20](#) Surely, [as] a **wife** treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 3:20 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 36:17](#) "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a **woman** in her customary impurity. [Ezekiel 36:17 NKJV](#)

Several times people were said to be like women, I believe meaning that they were powerless to defend themselves in this case [[Isaiah 9:16](#), [Jeremiah 50:37](#), [Jeremiah 51:30](#)].

Jerusalem or Judah and Israel were liked to unfaithful wives in [[Ezekiel 16, 23](#); [Hosea](#)].

Women were mentioned a couple times in Daniel 11, and are subject to interpretation. There is hardly any disagreement, that the woman mentioned in [Daniel 11:17](#), is Cleopatra, allying herself with Julius Caesar. The second, [Daniel 11:37](#) however, is not so unanimously agreed upon.

A woman and two women are mentioned in Zechariah. The first in [verse 7](#) is thought to represent the sinful church and unfaithful Judah.<sup>319</sup> The women in [verse 9](#), are thought to represent the nation, Rome that carried away the woman to her punishment.<sup>320</sup>

Outside of Revelation, woman or women were used pretty literally in the New Testament. The one possible exception is in [Galatians 4](#), where Paul speaks of the bond woman and the free woman who are metaphorically the mother of the Jews, and the latter of the Christians. What I believe he is teaching is that the Jews were slaves to their ceremonial and sacrificial laws which the death of Jesus set them free from. But rather than accept that emancipation, they chose to persecute the Christians, even as Ishmael persecuted Isaac as a child.

Finally, woman or women was used 16 times in Revelation, all of which are symbolic.

[Revelation 2:20](#) "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that **woman** Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. [Revelation 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:1](#) Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a **woman** clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. [Revelation 12:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:4](#) His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the **woman** who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. [Revelation 12:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:6](#) Then the **woman** fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. [Revelation 12:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:13](#) Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the **woman** who gave birth to the male [Child].<sup>14</sup> But the **woman** was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the

<sup>319</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Zec/Zec\\_005.cfm?a=916007](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Zec/Zec_005.cfm?a=916007)

<sup>320</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Zec/Zec\\_005.cfm?a=916009](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Zec/Zec_005.cfm?a=916009)

serpent. <sup>15</sup> So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the **woman**, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the **woman**, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And the dragon was enraged with the **woman**, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 12:13-17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:4](#) These are the ones who were not defiled with **women**, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from [among] men, [being] firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. [Revelation 14:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." <sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a **woman** sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The **woman** was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. <sup>6</sup> I saw the **woman**, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. <sup>7</sup> But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the **woman** and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. <sup>8</sup> "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. <sup>9</sup> "Here [is] the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the **woman** sits. [Revelation 17:1-9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:18](#) "And the **woman** whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

[Revelation 17:18 NKJV](#)

### *Clothed with the sun*

The word sun was found 161 times in the NKJV, most of them literal. Of course, the sun was a source of light, warmth and life. It was mentioned extensively in relation to its setting or rising which was usually in the context of the passing of time. Interestingly, the word was not used in the first instance that came to mind, creation.

[Genesis 1:16](#) Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. [He made] the stars also. [Genesis 1:16 NKJV](#)

The first dream based mention is even more interesting because it also mentions the moon and stars:

[Genesis 37:9](#) Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the **sun**, the **moon**, and the eleven **stars** bowed down to me." [Genesis 37:9 NKJV](#)

Though literal, the next mention of interest also included the moon and stars as well. It was a warning from God not to worship them. I will list a few other verses in the theme of sun worship.

[Deuteronomy 4:19](#) "And [take heed], lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and [when] you see the **sun**, the **moon**, and the **stars**, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. [Deuteronomy 4:19 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 17:3](#) "who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the **sun** or **moon** or any of the **host of heaven**, which I have not commanded, [Deuteronomy 17:3 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 23:5](#) Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the **sun**, to the **moon**, to the **constellations**, and to all the **host of heaven**. [2 Kings 23:5 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 23:11](#) Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the **sun**, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who [was] in the court; and he burned the chariots of the **sun** with fire. [2 Kings 23:11 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 8:2](#) "They shall spread them before the **sun** and the **moon** and all the **host of heaven**, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and which they have worshiped. They shall not be gathered nor buried; they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. [Jeremiah 8:2 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 8:16](#) So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, [were] about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the **sun** toward the east. [Ezekiel 8:16 NKJV](#)

In Psalms, I believe David is using the sun as a symbol of the Messiah, and God.

[Psalm 19:4](#) Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the **sun**, [Psalm 19:4 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 84:11](#) For the LORD God [is] a **sun** and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good [thing] will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. [Psalm 84:11 NKJV](#)

Multiple times in Psalms, the literal sun as something that is always present, is used as a symbol of the steadfastness of God.

[Psalm 72:5](#) They shall fear You As long as the **sun** and **moon** endure, Throughout all generations. [Psalm 72:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 72:17](#) His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the **sun**. And [men] shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed. [Psalm 72:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 89:36](#) His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the **sun** before Me; [Psalm 89:36 NKJV](#)

All creation, including the sun, moon and stars (which many thought were worthy of worship), are said to praise and worship God.

[Psalm 148:3](#) Praise Him, **sun** and **moon**; Praise Him, all you **stars** of light! [Psalm 148:3 NKJV](#)

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon used "under the sun" 29 times, mostly as an expression meaning everywhere and everything.

The sun and moon going dark on or near the day of Judgment, seemed to be a theme.

[Isaiah 13:10](#) For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The **sun** will be darkened in its going forth, And the **moon** will not cause its light to shine. [Isaiah 13:10 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 24:23](#) Then the **moon** will be disgraced And the **sun** ashamed; For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously. [Isaiah 24:23 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:10](#) The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The **sun** and **moon** grow dark, And the **stars** diminish their brightness. [Joel 2:10 NKJV](#)

[Joel 2:31](#) The **sun** shall be turned into darkness, And the **moon** into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Joel 2:31 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:15](#) The **sun** and **moon** will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. [Joel 3:15 NKJV](#)

[Amos 8:9](#) "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the **sun** go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight; [Amos 8:9 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 3:11](#) The **sun** and **moon** stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear. [Habakkuk 3:11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:29](#) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the **sun** will be darkened, and the **moon** will not give its light; the **stars** will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [Matthew 24:29 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:24](#) "But in those days, after that tribulation, the **sun** will be darkened, and the **moon** will not give its light; [Mark 13:24 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:25](#) "And there will be signs in the **sun**, in the **moon**, and in the **stars**; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; [Luke 21:25 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:20](#) The **sun** shall be turned into darkness, And the **moon** into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Acts 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:12](#) | looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the **sun** became black as sackcloth of hair, and the **moon** became like blood. [Revelation 6:12 NKJV](#)

In heaven we will no longer need the sun because the glory of God will be like the sun.

[Isaiah 60:19](#) "The **sun** shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the **moon** give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. <sup>20</sup> Your **sun** shall no longer go down, Nor shall your **moon** withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended. [Isaiah 60:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 4:2](#) But to you who fear My name The **Sun** of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves. [Malachi 4:2 NKJV](#)

[Acts 26:13](#) "at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the **sun**, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. [Acts 26:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:16](#) He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance [was] like the **sun** shining in its strength. [Revelation 1:16 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 10:1](#) | saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow [was] on his head, his face [was] like the **sun**, and his feet like pillars of fire. [Revelation 10:1 NKJV](#)



[Revelation 21:23](#) The city had no need of the **sun** or of the **moon** to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb [is] its light. [Revelation 21:23 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:5](#) There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the **sun**, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. [Revelation 22:5 NKJV](#)

This one in Jeremiah seems to be a reference to dying while still young.

[Jeremiah 15:9](#) "She languishes who has borne seven; She has breathed her last; Her **sun** has gone down While [it was] yet day; She has been ashamed and confounded. And the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword Before their enemies," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 15:9 NKJV](#)

It seems this verse in Micah likens prophets not getting word from God as darkness.

[Micah 3:6](#) "Therefore you shall have night without vision, And you shall have darkness without divination; The **sun** shall go down on the prophets, And the day shall be dark for them. [Micah 3:6 NKJV](#)

### *Standing on the moon*

The word moon was used 52 times in the NKJV, 12 of which were "new moon." The new moon is a significant topic, as it relates to the Jewish Sabbath and feast days, but I don't believe it is important to this symbol. I will not repeat the references which were covered with the sun, which leaves the following verses.

[Job 25:5](#) If even the **moon** does not shine, And the **stars** are not pure in His sight, [Job 25:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 8:3](#) When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The **moon** and the **stars**, which You have ordained, [Psalm 8:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 72:7](#) In His days the righteous shall flourish, And abundance of peace, Until the **moon** is no more. [Psalm 72:7 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 89:37](#) It shall be established forever like the **moon**, Even [like] the faithful witness in the sky." Selah [Psalm 89:37 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 136:9](#) The **moon** and **stars** to rule by night, For His mercy [endures] forever. [Psalm 136:9 NKJV](#)

The main themes I see in these verses are that God in His greatness made and has control over the moon, it rules the night, and it is enduring. From the verses including the sun, it was a lesser light to rule the night, even as the sun was a greater light to rule the day. Since God made them, He has the power to alter their behavior if He wishes.

### *Wearing a crown of 12 stars*

Star(s) were mentioned 65 times in the NKJV, more than 20 of which were already covered with the sun and moon. Very frequently, stars were used as an example of countless multitudes. Specifically, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were promised that their descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven [[Genesis 15:5](#), [Genesis 22:17](#), [Genesis 26:4](#), [Exodus 32:13](#), [Deuteronomy 1:10](#), [Deuteronomy 10:22](#), [Deuteronomy 28:62](#), [1 Chronicles 27:23](#), [Nehemiah 9:23](#), [Hebrews 11:12](#)].

The song of Deborah and Barak after the Israelites were delivered from king Jabin of Canaan mentioned the stars of heaven fighting for them.

[Judges 5:20](#) They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. [Judges 5:20 NKJV](#)

This next one is a response from God to Job, rhetorically asking him if he was there when He created the world.

[Job 38:7](#) When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? [Job 38:7 NKJV](#)

This one is from a song of praise to God.

[Psalm 147:4](#) He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. [Psalm 147:4 NKJV](#)

The next is from a taunt against Babylon for its fall from power, or possibly more specifically Nebuchadnezzar, though I think most apply it to the fall of Lucifer from heaven.

[Isaiah 14:12](#) "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [How] you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! <sup>13</sup> For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' <sup>15</sup> Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. [Isaiah 14:12-15 NKJV](#)

In Daniel's vision of the Ram and Goat, there was some star symbolism.

[Daniel 8:10](#) And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down [some] of the host and [some] of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. [Daniel 8:10 NKJV](#)

Daniel also said this about the time of the end.

[Daniel 12:3](#) Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever. [Daniel 12:3 NKJV](#)

Nations at their peaks were said to be as or among the stars of heaven.

[Obadiah 1:4](#) Though you ascend [as] high as the eagle, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," says the LORD. [Obadiah 1:4 NKJV](#)

[Nahum 3:16](#) You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away. [Nahum 3:16 NKJV](#)

The following verse from Jude is interesting.

[Jude 1:13](#) raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. [Jude 1:13 NKJV](#)

I had to look up wandering star because I was not familiar with the term. What I discovered is that it referred to a planet because it moved in a much different manner than actual stars. The reason, we now know, is that they are in orbit around the same sun with us, and of course they are closer making them appear to move faster. Jude is talking about some people in the church, whom he introduced in verse 4.

[Jude 1:4](#) For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. [Jude 1:4 NKJV](#)

I believe he is talking about certain ungodly people who have crept into the church, who practice sexual immorality, and reject some of the fundamental beliefs. He goes on to liken them to a number of things which are known to be hazardous, including wandering stars.

[Jude 1:13](#) raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. [Jude 1:13 NKJV](#)

Not completely sure what is hazardous about wandering stars, except that perhaps they are considered chaotic, and unreliable for guidance.

Next, in John's description of Jesus in Revelation 1, he describes Jesus holding seven stars in His hand. A few verses later, the symbol is conveniently interpreted for us.

[Revelation 1:16](#) He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance [was] like the sun shining in its strength. ... <sup>20</sup> "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. [Revelation 1:16, 20 NKJV](#)

Well at least sort of interpreted. If we assume the stars which represents angels of the seven churches, are the religious leaders of those churches, then the twelve stars in this case could also represent religious leaders or figureheads.

Just a couple verse after the two we are looking at in this chapter, is a scene most interpret to be Satan, taking a third of the literal angels in heaven, as he is cast out.

[Revelation 12:4](#) His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. [Revelation 12:4 NKJV](#)

Now, let's go back and examine the singular, "star."

[Numbers 24:17](#) "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult. [Numbers 24:17 NKJV](#)

This prophecy in Numbers uses a star to symbolize the Messiah, but I wonder how much of a part this symbol played in the visit of the wise men, who were looking for and followed a "literal star."

[Matthew 2:2](#) saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." [Matthew 2:2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 2:7](#) Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. [Matthew 2:7 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 2:9](#) When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. [Matthew 2:9-10 NKJV](#)

In review of Israel's apostate history, Stephen possibly drawing from Amos, described a star of their false gods.

[Amos 5:26](#) You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves. [Amos 5:26 NKJV](#)

[Acts 7:42](#) "Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices [during] forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? <sup>43</sup> You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.' [Acts 7:42-43 NKJV](#)

The symbol "morning star," was used three times, and defined in the last to be Jesus Christ Himself. The first two I believe are in the context of understanding of prophecy bringing new light.

[2 Peter 1:19](#) And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; [2 Peter 1:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:28](#) "and I will give him the morning star. [Revelation 2:28 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:16](#) "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." [Revelation 22:16 NKJV](#)

The fifth angel describes a falling star, which is pretty clearly a symbol of something.

[Revelation 8:10](#) Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. <sup>11</sup> The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. [Revelation 8:10-11 NKJV](#)

When I discussed this symbol for the third trumpet, I sort of concluded that the star most likely represented Satan, who fell from heaven, and in this instance, turned the pure, sweet Gospel of Jesus Christ into something bitter [[The third trumpet](#)].

Lastly, in the fifth trumpet, there is another falling star.

[Revelation 9:1](#) Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. [Revelation 9:1 NKJV](#)

This symbolism I interpreted to have something to do with the start of the Islamic religion [[the fifth trumpet](#)].

### *With child and about to give birth*

Birth was used 48 times in the NKJV. Interestingly I found the same word to occur more than twice as many times in the NASB, so I wondered what some of the other words were that were used in the NKJV. Genesis 4:1 used bore.

[Genesis 4:1](#) Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and **bore** Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." [Genesis 4:1 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 11:28](#) used "native land," instead of "land of his birth." [Genesis 24:7](#) used "land of my family," instead of "land of my birth." [Genesis 25:13](#) used "according to their generations," instead of "the order of their birth." [Exodus 1:16](#) said "duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women," instead of "helping the Hebrew women to give birth." [Leviticus 12:2](#) used "has conceived," instead of "gives birth." This is actually an interesting one because it makes a statement about when life begins. The Hebrew word [זָרָע, zara](#)<sup>321</sup>, was the same in both NASB and NKJV translations.

<sup>321</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2232&t=NKJV>

The definition given by Strong is: a primitive root; to sow; figuratively, to disseminate, plant, fructify:—bear, conceive seed, set with sow(-er), yield. And the outline of biblical use is:<sup>322</sup>

- I. to sow, scatter seed
  1. (Qal)
    - A. to sow
    - B. producing, yielding seed
  2. (Niphal)
    - A. to be sown
    - B. to become pregnant, be made pregnant
  3. (Pual) to be sown
  4. (Hiphil) to produce seed, yield seed

It would seem to me that the NKJV is a much more pro-life translation, but also more in line with the true meaning of the Hebrew word.

Naturally, most of them are literal references to the birth of someone. In the NASB, the first symbolic reference to birth that I found was in the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. However, as you can see, the NKJV used the word fathered instead.

[Deuteronomy 32:18](#) Of the Rock [who] begot you, you are unmindful, And have forgotten the God who fathered you.  
[Deuteronomy 32:18 NKJV](#)

When God spoke to Job about His power, He asked where many things in nature came from, implying that He made all things and had power over it all.

[Job 38:29](#) From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it **birth**? [Job 38:29 NKJV](#)

In this verse, the womb and birth are used as a symbol for the origin of something. A Psalm by Moses also spoke of birth (NASB) as a symbol of God's creation of the world. But the NKJV used "brought forth."

[Psalm 90:2](#) Before the mountains were **brought forth**, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You [are] God. [Psalm 90:2 NKJV](#)

Isaiah wrote in his oracle concerning the fall of Tyre.

[Isaiah 23:4](#) Be ashamed, O Sidon; For the sea has spoken, The strength of the sea, saying, "I do not **labor, nor bring forth** children; Neither do I rear young men, [Nor] bring up virgins." [Isaiah 23:4 NKJV](#)

What you just read has to be symbolism because the sea cannot talk, but I think Isaiah is saying in spite of the power of sea, it cannot give birth to people.

[Isaiah 33:11](#) You shall conceive chaff, You shall bring forth stubble; Your breath, [as] fire, shall devour you. [Isaiah 33:11 NKJV](#)

<sup>322</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H2232&t=NKJV>

This seems to be saying that if the Jews are being punished by God, their efforts to produce food will result in nothing more than the waste products of a harvest. The last chapter in Isaiah mentions birth in the context of a nation.

[Isaiah 66:7](#) "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child. <sup>8</sup> Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? [Or] shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children. <sup>9</sup> Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up [the womb]?" says your God. [Isaiah 66:7-9 NKJV](#)

Matthew Henry suggests that this is a prophecy regarding the re-birth of the Jewish nation after their Babylonian captivity. There is no travail, they are just suddenly released by Cyrus and allowed to go home.<sup>323</sup> In fact Cyrus even paid for the construction of the Temple [[Ezra 6:3-4](#)].

Now after what Babylon did to the Jews, there is a prophecy predicting its doom.

[Jeremiah 50:12](#) Your mother shall be deeply ashamed; She who bore you shall be ashamed. Behold, the least of the nations [shall be] a wilderness, A dry land and a desert. [Jeremiah 50:12 NKJV](#)

Ezekiel writes of the birth of a female as a symbol the nation of Israel.

[Ezekiel 16:3](#) "and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity [are] from the land of Canaan; your father [was] an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. <sup>4</sup> "[As for] your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse [you]; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. [Ezekiel 16:3-4 NKJV](#)

The last mention of birth before Revelation is from James.

[James 1:15](#) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. [James 1:15 NKJV](#)

Here, I believe, James is saying that sexual sin is born out of lust.

The last four occurrences of the word birth are from the scene in Revelation 12 that we are examining now.

### *Cried out in labor and pain*

In real life, birth and pain always come together. In symbolism, they are sometimes separated, but the first few examples I will present they are not separated.

[Isaiah 26:17](#) As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, [When] she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD. <sup>18</sup> We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. <sup>19</sup> Your dead shall live; [Together with] my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew [is like] the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. [Isaiah 26:17-19 NKJV](#)

The first couple verses here seems to be saying that the Jews' own effort and pain accomplished nothing, possibly also that the Messiah was not being born to them, and also that their population was dwindling. But God could even

<sup>323</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_066.cfm?a=745007](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_066.cfm?a=745007)

raise the dead back to life, whether literally or symbolically by re-invigorating them from their depressed and downtrodden state.

Jeremiah, most likely writing before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, likened their coming disaster to labor pains in child birth.

[Jeremiah 4:31](#) "For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child, The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself; She spreads her hands, [saying], 'Woe [is] me now, for my soul is weary Because of murderers!' [Jeremiah 4:31 NKJV](#)

In the next, I believe Micah likens the Babylonian captivity to labor pains.

[Micah 4:9](#) Now why do you cry aloud? [Is there] no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. <sup>10</sup> Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies. [Micah 4:9-10 NKJV](#)

The next few references will be about labor pain symbolizing something.

[Isaiah 13:6](#) Wail, for the day of the LORD [is] at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. <sup>7</sup> Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt, <sup>8</sup> And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of [them]; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces [will be like] flames. [Isaiah 13:6-8 NKJV](#)

The following seems to be written about the king of Babylon during the fall of his empire to the Medes and Persians.

[Isaiah 21:3](#) Therefore my loins are filled with pain; Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor. I was distressed when [I] heard [it]; I was dismayed when [I] saw [it]. [Isaiah 21:3 NKJV](#)

The prophet Jeremiah ministered during the start of the Babylonian captivity.

[Jeremiah 4:31](#) "For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child, The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself; She spreads her hands, [saying], 'Woe [is] me now, for my soul is weary Because of murderers!' [Jeremiah 4:31 NKJV](#)

Jeremiah prophesied the following about Moab, and the next about Edom.

[Jeremiah 48:41](#) Kerioth is taken, And the strongholds are surprised; The mighty men's hearts in Moab on that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs. [Jeremiah 48:41 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 49:22](#) Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, And spread His wings over Bozrah; The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs. [Jeremiah 49:22 NKJV](#)

Paul wrote the following about the day of the Lord.

[1 Thessalonians 5:2](#) For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. [1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 NKJV](#)

## Interpreting the symbols

In the Old Testament, a woman in Biblical symbolism was used to represent Israel and Judah. Their unfaithfulness to God was represented by calling them treacherous, unfaithful wives and adulterers. In the New Testament, in the message to the Church of Thyatira, Jezebel was said to lead God's people astray. Later on, in [Revelation 17](#), we see the symbol of the harlot, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots. This chapter, [Revelation 12](#), is about a pure woman. I think it's pretty easy to see that a woman can represent God's people, the Israelites in the Old Testament, and the Christian church in the New. An impure woman represents God's chosen or called people being unfaithful to Him.

In both the Old and New Testaments, we have the notion of the glory of God being like the sun, or brighter than the sun, and eventually replacing the need for the sun. I believe the Psalms used the sun as a symbol of the Messiah and God. Malachi wrote of the Messiah as the sun of righteousness [[Malachi 4:2](#)]. I believe the goodness, glory, and steadfastness of God is represented by the sun, but there were repeated warnings and condemnations against worshipping the literal sun. I believe the symbol of the woman being clothed with the sun represents God's chosen people, clothed with the glory of the goodness of God, and the good news of salvation. Another couple verses that may be relevant here.

[Matthew 17:2](#) and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. [Matthew 17:2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 61:10](#) I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks [himself] with ornaments, And as a bride adorns [herself] with her jewels. [Isaiah 61:10 NKJV](#)

Being clothed with the sun could also be seen as our sins being covered by the righteousness of Christ.

The moon being one of the great lights in the sky, though less than the sun in power and glory, was also prone to being worshipped. But I think the key to interpreting this symbol is [Genesis 1:16](#) where it says the moon was said to be a lesser light to the greater light which is the sun.

The next symbol is the twelve stars. The word twelve is used 187 times in the NKJV. Maybe most would immediately think of either the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve disciples. To me the key to interpreting this are the following verses.

[Genesis 37:9](#) Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." <sup>10</sup> So he told [it] to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What [is] this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

[Genesis 37:9-10 NKJV](#)

Twelve stars, twelve brothers, and consequently twelve tribes. But there is no reason to leave out the twelve disciples.

[Revelation 21:12](#) Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: <sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. <sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. [Revelation 21:12-14 NKJV](#)



That was from a vision near the end of Revelation where John described the New Jerusalem.

## Conclusion

It is impossible to conclude the interpretation of these two verses without looking ahead to the next few verses. So, with that in mind, I believe the woman represents two phases of God's chosen people, who were to spread the light of Him to the world. The first being the twelve tribes of Israel, who with the tabernacle and the sacrificial system had the symbolism for the plan of salvation. The second phase with the twelve disciples and Jesus in person among them, were able to give a much clearer picture of the plan of salvation. In fact, the death of Jesus on the cross was what the Old Testament symbolism was pointing to. The Christian church beginning with the twelve apostles stood on the good news of Salvation through Jesus Christ which was represented by the woman clothed with the sun. Before Christ came, the twelve tribes of Israel possessed the symbolism of salvation, hence the woman standing on the moon, which shined with a reflection of the light from the sun.

Finally, we have the woman in labor about to give birth. These two verses I am covering mention the labor but the birth is yet to come. So, if we peek ahead, we can see that the birth is the impending literal birth of the Messiah, and the symbolic birth of the Christian church.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think a woman is used as a symbol of God's people rather than a man?
- Do you think it's correct to interpret two phases of the woman but just one birth?
- Do you agree that the stars represent both the tribes and the disciples, or do you think they should just represent one or the other?

## The red dragon, Satan

### [Revelation 12:3-4](#)

[Revelation 12:3](#) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup> His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. [Revelation 12:3-4 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *The great fiery red dragon*

The word dragon was used 13 times in the NKJV, all were in Revelation. Half were in the scenes of this vision in Revelation 12.

Legends and myths of dragons today picture them as very large, on the scale of a dinosaur, with what could be described as a serpentine body with wings and a mouth breathing fire. I'm guessing our legends of dragons, came from ancient times, and hence would describe a similar creature.

In the Old Testament:

[Isaiah 27:1](#) In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that [is] in the sea. [Isaiah 27:1 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 51:9](#) Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD! Awake as in the ancient days, In the generations of old. [Are] You not [the arm] that cut Rahab apart, [And] wounded the serpent? [Isaiah 51:9 NKJV](#)

It seems there was a creature or possibly legend of a creature called a leviathan or dragon. This was a sea creature, as opposed to flying, perhaps the legend of a sea dwelling dinosaur, sea serpent, or possibly a saltwater crocodile. Whether actual or legend, Isaiah seems to use it to symbolize oppressors of God's people, such as Pharaoh of Egypt, Sennacherib of Assyria, or Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

At first, I thought that all mention of dragons in the New Testament except the following one are a symbol of Satan.

[Revelation 13:11](#) Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. [Revelation 13:11 NKJV](#)

But that seems to not be the case because there is a dragon standing on the shore in Revelation 13 when a beast comes out of the water, whose description sounds suspiciously similar to the dragon in Revelation 12.

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. [Revelation 13:1 NKJV](#)

### *Seven heads*

The word seven is used 461 times in the NKJV. I was surprised that it was only used 54 times in Revelation, because there seemed to be so many sevens up to this point in my study. I did a very abbreviated analysis of the word seven at the start of the seven trumpets [see [The first trumpet/Examining the symbols](#)]. In this case, the emphasis should be more on the "seven heads," rather than just the word seven.

Where have we heard of beasts, heads and horns before in in Bible prophecy? Daniel's beasts were the first to come to mind. The beasts in Daniel 7, which represented kingdoms from his time, down through the close of history, had a total of seven heads. One on the lion of Babylon [\[7:4\]](#), one on the bear of Medo-Persia [\[7:5\]](#), four on the leopard of Greece [\[7:6\]](#), and one on the beast representing Rome [\[7:7\]](#). Interestingly, the fourth beast also had ten horns.

There are some interesting connections between Daniel's chapter 7 beasts just mentioned and the beast of Revelation 13.

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. [Revelation 13:1-2 NKJV](#)

Notice the leopard, bear, and lion characteristics. I think this beast is sort of a combination of all the beasts of Daniel 7. Next it seems we see this same beast again in Revelation 17.

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." <sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. [Revelation 17:1-3 NKJV](#)

Later in the same chapter, an angel offers some explanation:

[Revelation 17:7](#) But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. <sup>8</sup> "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. <sup>9</sup> "Here [is] the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. <sup>10</sup> "There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, [and] the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. <sup>11</sup> "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. <sup>12</sup> "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. <sup>13</sup> "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup> "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those [who are] with Him [are] called, chosen, and faithful." <sup>15</sup> Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup> "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup> "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." [Revelation 17:7-18 NKJV](#)

### *Ten horns*

"Ten horns" was used 9 times in the NKJV. They are all the same locations already mentioned above with the seven heads [[Daniel 7](#), [Revelation 12](#), [13](#), [17](#)].

### *Seven diadems*

This phrase "seven diadems" was used only this once in the NKJV. The word diadem was translated from the Greek [διάδημα](#), *diadēma*<sup>324</sup>, which is essentially a crown and was used two other times in the New Testament. Most likely seven crowns on the seven heads.

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten [crowns](#), and on his heads a blasphemous name. [Revelation 13:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:12](#) His eyes [were] like a flame of fire, and on His head [were] many [crowns](#). He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. [Revelation 19:12 NKJV](#)

### *Third of the stars*

Star(s) were mentioned 65 times in the NKJV. I just did a fairly thorough word search on star(s) when we read about the twelve stars [[wearing a crown of twelve stars](#)]. The phrase, "third of the stars," was used twice in the NKJV. Once in [Revelation 8:12](#), and once here in the verses we are analyzing.

### *Devour the child*

The word devour was used 66 times in the NKJV. Its context was generally negative, and it was often done by real or symbolic beasts. God was said to devour the enemies of His people, but His own when unfaithful. Here are some of the things that were said to devour:

- sword [[Deuteronomy 32:32](#), [2 Samuel 2:26](#), [Isaiah 31:8](#), [Jeremiah 46:10](#), [Nahum 2:13](#)]
- locust [[2 Chronicles 7:13](#)]
- fire [[Psalm 21:9](#), [Isaiah 10:17](#), [Isaiah 26:11](#), [Jeremiah 17:27](#), [Jeremiah 21:14](#), [Jeremiah 50:32](#)]

<sup>324</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G1238&t=NKJV>

- words [[Psalm 54:2](#)]
- teeth [[Proverbs 30:14](#)]
- beasts [[Jeremiah 12:9](#), [Jeremiah 15:3](#), [Daniel 7:5](#), [Daniel 7:23](#)]
- new moon [[Hosea 5:7](#)]
- strangers [[Hosea 7:9](#)]
- pharisees [[Matthew 23:14](#), [Mark 12:40](#), [Luke 20:47](#)]
- devil [[1 Peter 5:8](#)]

The verse we're looking at in [Revelation 12:4](#) is the only one that used the two words devour child, but there are some other references that generally speak of attempting to kill a child. Why would anyone want to kill a child? It has been known to happen, throughout history, to prevent an heir from inheriting something when they grow up. Possibly the most common example would be to kill a child with royal bloodlines to prevent them from inheriting a kingdom. Prior to the birth of Moses, Pharaoh issued a command to kill all male Israelite infants as they were born [[Exodus 1:16](#)]. The purpose being to stop the growth of the male population, because militarily, they are more of a threat, and also because I think he had heard that they were expecting a savior to be born who would lead them out of slavery. King Solomon proposed killing a child but cutting it in half to solve a parental dispute [[1 Kings 3:16-22](#)]. The royal line of David in Jerusalem continued until the last king before the Babylonian captivity although there was one case where a usurper tried to kill out the royal bloodline [[2 Kings 11:1](#), [2 Chronicles 22:10](#)]. The northern kingdom had several dynasty changes which was generally accompanied by the murder of all the royal bloodline of the former dynasty [[2 Kings 10:1-11](#)]. Possibly most relevant, Herod killed all the children in Bethlehem in an attempt to eliminate the Messiah [[Matthew 2:1-18](#)].

[Matthew 2:16](#) Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: <sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping [for] her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." [Matthew 2:16-18 NKJV](#)

### Interpreting the symbols

The dragon in heaven could represent Satan, who took a third of the angels with him when he was cast out. But since there are other attributes to this dragon that I will try to apply to an earthly symbol, let's look more closely at those. On earth Satan works through people, institutions, nations or empires. When opposing the birth of Israel as God's chosen, the dragon worked through Pharaoh. In fact, Pharaoh went as far as to attack the children. When attacking them later on in their history, Satan worked through Assyria, Babylon and others. I would add that John is merely describing things he sees in terms of things people could relate to. Sneaking a quick peak ahead, there is a beast that is described very much like this dragon in [Revelation 13](#).

Seven heads could be a reference to the seven hills on which ancient Rome was said to be built. I would also add that looking ahead to chapter 13 and the animal characteristics of that beast, perhaps, the seven heads could refer to a conglomeration of all the beasts mentioned by Daniel, which had a total of seven heads. Ten horns of course correspond to the ten horns of Daniel's beast representing Rome [[Daniel 7](#)].

If looking for an interpretation for the third of stars being cast down by the earthly symbol of the dragon, Smith writes:

If the twelve stars with which the woman is crowned, here used symbolically, denote the twelve apostles, then the stars thrown down by the dragon before his attempt to destroy the man child, or before the Christian era, may denote a portion of the rulers of the Jewish people. That the sun, moon, and stars are sometimes used in this symbolic sense, we have already had evidence in chapter 8:12. The dragon, being a symbol, could deal only with symbolic stars; and the chronology of the act here mentioned would confine it to the Jewish people. Judea became a Roman province sixty-three years before the birth of the Messiah. The Jews had three classes of rulers,— kings, priests, and the Sanhedrim. A third of these, the kings, were taken away by the Roman power.

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Attempting to devour the child would most likely be an attempt to kill or destroy the child.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, I believe that in addition to Satan, who motivated all of them, the beast represented the different kingdoms, nations or empires that opposed God's people, but in this particular instance, Rome. Herod, representing Rome in this case, did indeed try to destroy the child.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the dragon and the beast are the same creature?
- If the seven heads represented the seven hills that Rome was built on, why are there seven crowns for one empire?
- Do you think the third of the stars is a symbol of angels in heaven or to something on earth?

## The male child

### [Revelation 12:5-6](#)

[Revelation 12:5](#) She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. <sup>6</sup> Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. [Revelation 12:5-6 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Male child*

I already examined the symbolism of birth [see [The woman: with child and about to give birth](#)]. In Bible times male children were very important. In the Jewish culture, the family line was carried on through male children. If a father didn't have a son, he had no one to pass his land on to, and his family line essentially ended. But there is another reason male children were very important to Jews. It had to do with the promise given to Adam and Eve shortly after their sin.

[Genesis 3:15](#) And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." [Genesis 3:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>325</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel and the Revelation (The response of history to the voice of prophecy)*. [Battle Creek, MI, Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1897, p510. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/510/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/510/mode/2up)] [Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1897, p621 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA621>]

Of course, there are many other promises of the Messiah in the Old Testament, but this one refers to Him as the seed of the woman.

### *Rule all nations with a rod of iron*

The term “rod of iron” was found 4 times in the NKJV, including the one we are attempting to interpret in Revelation 12.

[Psalm 2:9](#) You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' " [Psalm 2:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:27](#) 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'--as I also have received from My Father; [Revelation 2:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:5](#) She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. [Revelation 12:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:15](#) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [Revelation 19:15 NKJV](#)

I was puzzled with this phrase because it didn't seem like the Messiah ruled with a rod of iron. Perhaps we should look at the Greek words which were translated to “rod of iron.”

- rod - [ῥάβδος, rhabdos](#)<sup>326</sup> which is used 12 times in the New Testament. 6x as rod, 4x as staff and 2x as scepter. The outline of biblical usage:
  - I. a staff, a walking stick, a twig, rod, branch
  - II. a rod with which one is beaten
  - III. a staff
    - a) as used on a journey, or to lean upon, or by shepherds
    - b) when applied to kings
      - i) with a rod of iron, indicates the severest, most rigorous rule
      - ii) a royal scepter
- of iron - [σιδηροῦς, sidērous](#)<sup>327</sup> which was used 5 times in the New Testament, all having to do with iron or made of iron. Once in [Acts 12:10](#) speaking of an iron gate. The remainder were from Revelation, 3x in “rod of iron,” [[2:27](#), [12:5](#), [19:15](#)] and once describing breastplates [[9:9](#)].

### *Caught up to God and His throne*

Caught was cross referenced in the NKJV to two other verses in the New Testament. The first was about the two witnesses that went up to heaven with their enemies watching.

[Revelation 11:12](#) And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. [Revelation 11:12 NKJV](#)

The second, when Jesus ascended to heaven with the disciples watching.

<sup>326</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4464&t=NKJV>

<sup>327</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4603&t=NASB>

[Mark 16:19](#) So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. [Mark 16:19 NKJV](#)

I did a word search of "caught up" which came up with 4 hits including our [Revelation 12:5](#). The other three pretty clearly refer to being caught up to heaven.

[2 Corinthians 12:2](#) I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven. [2 Corinthians 12:2 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:4](#) how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. [2 Corinthians 12:4 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:17 NKJV](#)

God and His throne only seems to reinforce the idea that it is heaven that the male child is being caught up to.

### *Fled to wilderness*

First, I looked up the word fled which was used 145 times in the NKJV. Most of the time the word referred to someone, a group, an army, or even a nation fleeing usually from someone trying to harm them. There were a few times in battle, where those fleeing were doing it not in fear but to lead their pursuers, only to turn and attack them. A few references that seemed particularly relevant because someone or a group fled into the wilderness to escape death or persecution.

[Genesis 16:6](#) So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid [is] in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she **fled** from her presence. <sup>7</sup> Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. [Genesis 16:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 2:15](#) When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses **fled** from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. [Exodus 2:15 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 14:5](#) Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had **fled**, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" [Exodus 14:5 NKJV](#)

Numerous times David fled from Saul, and at least once, was known to be hiding in the wilderness.

[1 Samuel 19:10](#) Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David **fled** and escaped that night. [1 Samuel 19:10 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 19:12](#) So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and **fled** and escaped. [1 Samuel 19:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 19:18](#) So David **fled** and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. [1 Samuel 19:18 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 20:1](#) Then David **fled** from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What [is] my iniquity, and what [is] my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" [1 Samuel 20:1 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 21:10](#) Then David arose and **fled** that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. [1 Samuel 21:10 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 23:15](#) So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David [was] in the **Wilderness** of Ziph in a forest. [1 Samuel 23:15 NKJV](#)

Later David had to flee into the wilderness from his own son, Absalom.

[2 Samuel 15:14](#) So David said to all his servants who [were] with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us **flee**, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." ... <sup>23</sup> And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the **wilderness**. [2 Samuel 15:14, 23 NKJV](#)

The next one didn't actually use the word "fled," but the meaning was the same.

[1 Kings 19:1](#) And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do [to me], and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." <sup>3</sup> And when he saw [that], he arose and **ran for his life**, and went to Beersheba, which [belongs] to Judah, and left his servant there. <sup>4</sup> But he himself went a day's journey into the **wilderness**, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I [am] no better than my fathers!" [1 Kings 19:1-4 NKJV](#)

### *Nourished for 1260 days*

In prior study, I have I have analyzed this period [[Two witnesses](#)].

If we take this as a prophetic time period, it is 1260 years. It has been mentioned before in various forms.

- Twelve hundred and sixty days [[Revelation 11:3](#)]
- One thousand two hundred sixty days [[Revelation 12:6](#)]
- Time, times and half or dividing of time [[Daniel 7:25](#), [Daniel 12:7](#), [Revelation 12:14](#)]
- Forty two months [[Revelation 11:2](#), [Revelation 13:5](#)]

The big question is whether this time period refers to the same prophetic period in all cases.

### **Interpreting the symbols**

I believe the male child to be Jesus Christ, born to a Jewish mother, but Savior of the world. The ruling with a rod of iron puzzled me because clearly it doesn't seem applicable to the ministry of Jesus prior to His death. I think the key to this phrase is "is to," referring to something that will happen in the future. The child was taken to heaven, where the devil represented by Satan, or wicked people cannot persecute him anymore. Being taken as a child can represent that His ministry was relatively short, and also that He was taken before His reign would begin. The woman after the birth of the male child clearly represents the Christian phase of God's people, who were persecuted by the Roman civil authority, and later by the Christian phase of Rome, represented by the beast. Fleeing to the wilderness represented escaping death by a persecutor, and the time period, 1260 years of Papal dominance from 538 to 1798. I pointed out above that this time period, though in different forms, is mentioned at least 7 times in the Bible [for other mention of this time period along with references, see [Daniel – The Little Horn](#), [The Tribulation](#), [The third church](#), [Dark sun](#)].

### **Conclusion**

This part of the vision begins with the birth of Jesus and extends through the end of the 1260-year persecution.



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What do you believe?

- What do you think it means when the vision seems to describe the son being taken to heaven while still a child?
- What do you think the ruling all nations with a rod of iron means?
- If the Roman Papacy represented a phase of the beast, and the woman represented the Christian Church, then did the church become the beast?

## War in heaven

### [Revelation 12:7-12](#)

[Revelation 12:7](#) And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. <sup>9</sup> So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. <sup>11</sup> "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. <sup>12</sup> "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." [Revelation 12:7-12 NKJV](#)

It seems that this next section has taken a bit of a departure from the symbolism. In fact, I believe the first three verses literally describe the beginning of the great controversy between God and Satan, and good and evil. I wrote an [Appendix on Michael the Archangel](#), concluding He was Jesus, and hence God. I mentioned previously that the dragon in this chapter appeared to represent Satan at times, and nations of the world at other times. I believe verse 9 to be the former when it describes the dragon as the serpent of old, the devil and Satan.

Ellen White wove together various verses of the Bible that we interpret to be about Satan, with some plausible details for a back story in the 29<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Great Controversy.

Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God, and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of Heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. "Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering." "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." [Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17.]

Lucifer might have remained in favor with God, beloved and honored by all the angelic host, exercising his noble powers to bless others and to glorify his Maker. But, says the prophet, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." [Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17.] Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation. "Thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God." "Thou hast said: ... I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation." "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." [Ezekiel 28:6; Isaiah 14:13, 14.] Instead of

seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of his creatures, it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself. And, coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon his Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield.

All Heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator's glory and to show forth his praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celestial harmonies. The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator's plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God's glory was supreme. The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of his law. God himself had established the order of Heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined.

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God, and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the counsels of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is he thus honored above Lucifer?"

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will. He sought to create sympathy for himself, by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of Heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.

God, in his great mercy, bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in Heaven. Again and again he was offered pardon, on condition of repentance and submission. Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise, were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in Heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all Heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been re-instated in his office. But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker.

All the powers of his master-mind were now bent to the work of deception, to secure the sympathy of the angels that had been under his command. Even the fact that Christ had warned and counseled him, was

perverted to serve his traitorous designs. To those whose loving trust bound them most closely to him, Satan had represented that he was wrongly judged, that his position was not respected, and that his liberty was to be abridged. From misrepresentation of the words of Christ, he passed to prevarication and direct falsehood, accusing the Son of God of a design to humiliate him before the inhabitants of Heaven. He sought also to make a false issue between himself and the loyal angels. All whom he could not subvert and bring fully to his side, he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly beings. The very work which he himself was doing, he charged upon those who remained true to God. And to sustain his charge of God's injustice toward him, he resorted to misrepresentation of the words and acts of the Creator. It was his policy to perplex the angels with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. His high position, in such close connection with the divine administration, gave greater force to his representations, and many were induced to unite with him in rebellion against Heaven's authority.

God in his wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God's government included not only the inhabitants of Heaven, but of all the worlds that he had created; and Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of Heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great, and by disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood he had gained an advantage. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character, or see to what his work was leading.

Satan had been so highly honored, and all his acts were so clothed with mystery, that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, sin would not appear the evil thing it was. Heretofore it had had no place in the universe of God, and holy beings had no conception of its nature and malignity. They could not discern the terrible consequences that would result from setting aside the divine law. Satan had, at first, concealed his work under a specious profession of loyalty to God. He claimed to be seeking to promote the honor of God, the stability of his government, and the good of all the inhabitants of Heaven. While instilling discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he had artfully made it appear that he was seeking to remove dissatisfaction. When he urged that changes be made in the order and laws of God's government, it was under the pretense that these were necessary in order to preserve harmony in Heaven.

In his dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God, and had misrepresented his plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of Heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from his creatures, he was seeking merely the exaltation of himself. Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of Heaven as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, his law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works.

The discord which his own course had caused in Heaven, Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him.

Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in Heaven, infinite wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of his creatures must rest upon a conviction of his justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of Heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear, rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of his law might forever be placed beyond all question.

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and his law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures he has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its punishment.

To the very close of the controversy in Heaven, the great usurper continued to justify himself. When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law. He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right. He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty, and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of Heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence.

With one accord, Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reprov'd, they would never have rebelled. Thus stubborn and defiant in their disloyalty, seeking vainly to overthrow the government of God, yet blasphemously claiming to be themselves the innocent victims of oppressive power, the arch-rebel and all his sympathizers were at last banished from Heaven. [White, Great Controversy, p493-500](#)<sup>328</sup>

The announcement of the loud voice in [verse 10](#) that stated, "the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down," I believe to be referring to a different event than his being thrown down to the earth in [verse 9](#).

[Revelation 12:10](#) Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. <sup>11</sup> "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. [Revelation 12:10-11 NKJV](#)

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<sup>328</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p493-500.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAyAAJ&pg=PA493>,  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=493>

Based on the story of Satan appearing with the sons of God in heaven in Job, he apparently still had access to heaven after he was initially cast out.

[Job 1:6](#) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." <sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that [there is] none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" <sup>9</sup> So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" <sup>10</sup> "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup> "But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" <sup>12</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has [is] in your power; only do not lay a hand on his [person]." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. [Job 1:6-12 NKJV](#)

Also, in the Old Testament, Zechariah had a vision of Satan standing before God, next to Joshua the high priest, accusing him. This was probably symbolic, but the idea of Satan in heaven accusing humanity, and I would add possibly harassing the good angels, was not an unknown thing.

[Zechariah 3:1](#) Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! [Is] this not a brand plucked from the fire?" <sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. <sup>4</sup> Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." <sup>5</sup> And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by. [Zechariah 3:1-5 NKJV](#)

I think that once the sacrifice of Jesus was successfully completed, Satan was no longer allowed in heaven, to bring his accusations against us. I believe that is what the second casting down is referring to.

[Revelation 12:10](#) Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. [Revelation 12:10 NKJV](#)

After that humanity overcame Satan's accusations through, the literal blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, and no longer the blood of symbolic sacrificial lambs. In addition to that they had the testimony of His life and what He did while here on earth. As a result, they were emboldened to the point of being faithful to death, knowing what their reward would be after they were resurrected.

[Revelation 12:11](#) "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. [Revelation 12:11 NKJV](#)

After Jesus had successfully paid the price to allow sinners to repent and be forgiven, Satan knew how things would end. He no longer had the possibility of destroying or disrupting God's plan of redemption, so now he knows there will be an end to his reign of terror. Now he wants to make the most of the short time he has left to do as much damage as he can.

[Revelation 12:12](#) "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

[Revelation 12:12 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- Are you ok with the more literal interpretation of these verses in the midst of the historical timeline presented by the surrounding verses?
- Why do you think Satan was still allowed access to heaven after he was initially cast out?
- Do you think the heavens can rejoice because Satan has been banned from them?

## Persecuting the woman

[Revelation 12:13-17](#)

[Revelation 12:13](#) Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male [Child]. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 12:13-17 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

Some of the symbols in this part of the vision were examined already. I will not repeat them again here, so the symbols you read about below will be the new ones.

### *Persecuted the woman*

The words persecute, persecuted and persecuting were found 19, 18, and 7 times in the NKJV.

The word persecute was understandably found in Job 2 times [[19:22](#), [19:28](#)]. David in Psalms used the phrase "persecute me," 5 times [[7:1](#), [31:15](#), [119:84](#), [119:86](#), [119:161](#)]. Jeremiah also used the phrase "persecute me," surprisingly only once [[Jeremiah 17:18](#)]. Seven times it was used by Jesus to describe how His followers would be treated.

[Matthew 5:11](#) "Blessed are you when they revile and **persecute** you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. [Matthew 5:11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:44](#) "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and **persecute** you, [Matthew 5:44 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:23](#) "When they **persecute** you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. [Matthew 10:23 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:34](#) "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: [some] of them you will kill and crucify, and [some] of them you will scourge in your synagogues and **persecute** from city to city, [Matthew 23:34 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:49](#) "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and [some] of them they will kill and **persecute**,' [Luke 11:49 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:12](#) "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and **persecute** [you], delivering [you] up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. [Luke 21:12 NKJV](#)

[John 15:20](#) "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they **persecuted** Me, they will also **persecute** you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. [John 15:20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:10](#) Blessed [are] those who are **persecuted** for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:10 NKJV](#)

The prophets of the Old Testament were also persecuted.

[Acts 7:52](#) "Which of the prophets did your fathers not **persecute**? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, [Acts 7:52 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:12](#) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great [is] your reward in heaven, for so they **persecuted** the prophets who were before you. [Matthew 5:12 NKJV](#)

God will eventually punish those who persecute His people.

[Deuteronomy 30:7](#) "Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who **persecuted** you. [Deuteronomy 30:7 NKJV](#)

The Apostle Paul wrote that he had persecuted the followers of Jesus.

[Acts 22:4](#) "I **persecuted** this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, [Acts 22:4 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:9](#) For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I **persecuted** the church of God. [1 Corinthians 15:9 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 1:23](#) But they were hearing only, "He who formerly **persecuted** us now preaches the faith which he once [tried to] destroy." [Galatians 1:23 NKJV](#)

Paul was also persecuted, and he wrote that the followers of Jesus would be persecuted.

[Galatians 5:11](#) And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer **persecution**? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. [Galatians 5:11 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 6:12](#) As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these [would] compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer **persecution** for the cross of Christ. [Galatians 6:12 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 3:12](#) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer **persecution**. [2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV](#)

Persecuting was found only in the New Testament. The first occurrence describing what the Jews did to Jesus.

[John 5:16](#) For this reason the Jews **persecuted** Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. [John 5:16 NKJV](#)

The remaining six were how Jesus described what Saul was doing to Him.

[Acts 9:4](#) Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you **persecuting** Me?"

<sup>5</sup> And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are **persecuting**. It [is] hard for you to kick against the goads." [Acts 9:4-5 NKJV](#)

[Acts 22:7](#) "And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you **persecuting** Me?' <sup>8</sup> "So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are **persecuting**.' [Acts 22:7-8 NKJV](#)

[Acts 26:14](#) "And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you **persecuting** Me? [It is] hard for you to kick against the goads.' [Acts 26:14 NKJV](#)

### *Two wings of the great eagle*

I did a search for (eagles wings) and it yielded 2 hits, which are possibly the best match for interpreting the expression "wings of the great eagle."

[Exodus 19:4](#) 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on **eagles' wings** and brought you to Myself. [Exodus 19:4 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 40:31](#) But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew [their] strength; They shall mount up with **wings like eagles**, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. [Isaiah 40:31 NKJV](#)

The following are from a search on (eagle wings). The first is from a song that God directly spoke to Moses and instructed him to write it down for the people of Israel to memorize.

[Deuteronomy 32:11](#) As an **eagle** stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its **wings**, taking them up, Carrying them on its **wings**, [Deuteronomy 32:11 NKJV](#)

Obviously, it's been translated but it's pretty amazing to think that these were words literally spoken by God.

Jeremiah and Daniel spoke of eagles as symbols in prophecy, but I believe they were about strength and swiftness of attack rather than carrying to safety [[Jeremiah 48:40](#), [Jeremiah 49:22](#), [Daniel 7:4](#)].

### *Nourished for a time times and half a time*

I have concluded that this time period is the same 1260 day/year time period mentioned a few verses back. I wrote about it when I discussed the male child [[The male child – Nourished for 1260 days](#)].

### *Serpent*

Serpent was mentioned 43 times in the NKJV. I discussed the serpent as synonymous with the dragon, the devil, and Satan a few verses back, in my chapter titled [War in heaven](#). The serpent, the devil and Satan are no doubt connected through the verses in Genesis 3, describing the introduction of sin into the world.

[Genesis 3:1](#) Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"



<sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> "but of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

<sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> " For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree [was] good for food, that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make [one] wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they [were] naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where [are] you?"

<sup>10</sup> So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

<sup>11</sup> And He said, "Who told you that you [were] naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

<sup>12</sup> Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD God said to the woman, "What [is] this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You [are] cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

<sup>16</sup> To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire [shall be] for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

<sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed [is] the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat [of] it All the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. <sup>19</sup> In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you [are], And to dust you shall return." [Genesis 3:1-19 NKJV](#)

In the Bible, when not a symbol for Satan, serpents were usually mentioned in the context of craftiness, poisonous, biting, deadly, slithering on the ground, and in a few cases flying. I think I only found one positive reference to serpents, and that was when God commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent on a pole, which if looked upon, people who had been bitten by deadly serpents in the wilderness would be healed. The story was from Numbers 21, and Jesus drew the parallel to Himself in the book of John.

[Numbers 21:8](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery [serpent], and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole;

and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. [Numbers 21:8-9 NKJV](#)

[John 3:14](#) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, [John 3:14 NKJV](#)

### *Water like a flood out of the serpent's mouth*

The word flood was used 33 times in the NKJV. The flood in Noah's is probably the first thing that comes to mind, but there are other verses that seemed more applicable.

[Job 22:12](#) "Is not God in the height of heaven? And see the highest stars, how lofty they are! <sup>13</sup> And you say, 'What does God know? Can He judge through the deep darkness? <sup>14</sup> Thick clouds cover Him, so that He cannot see, And He walks above the circle of heaven.' <sup>15</sup> Will you keep to the old way Which wicked men have trod, <sup>16</sup> Who were cut down before their time, Whose foundations were swept away by a **flood**? <sup>17</sup> They said to God, 'Depart from us! What can the Almighty do to them?' <sup>18</sup> Yet He filled their houses with good [things]; But the counsel of the wicked is far from me. <sup>19</sup> "The righteous see [it] and are glad, And the innocent laugh at them: <sup>20</sup> 'Surely our adversaries are cut down, And the fire consumes their remnant.' [Job 22:12-20 NKJV](#)

[Job 27:20](#) Terrors overtake him like a **flood**; A tempest steals him away in the night. [Job 27:20 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 32:6](#) For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a **flood** of great waters They shall not come near him. [Psalm 32:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 69:15](#) Let not the **floodwater** overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit shut its mouth on me. [Psalm 69:15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 90:5](#) You carry them away [like] a **flood**; [They are] like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass [which] grows up: [Psalm 90:5 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 9:26](#) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it [shall be] with a **flood**, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. [Daniel 9:26 NKJV](#)

[Nahum 1:8](#) But with an overflowing **flood** He will make an utter end of its place, And darkness will pursue His enemies. [Nahum 1:8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:48](#) "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the **flood** arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. [Luke 6:48 NKJV](#)

I examined the word mouth when I was discussing the fire and smoke that was coming out of the mouths of the horse-like creatures in the sixth trumpet [[The sixth trumpet – Mouths expelling fire, smoke and brimstone](#)]. My conclusion there was: The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is great power in the mouth, or tongue or words, for either good or evil, salvation or destruction. Word's from the mouth of God were both literally and figuratively powerful, for creation or destruction.

### *The earth swallowed up the flood*

The earth swallowing up a flood was literally what happened after the flood in Noah's day. A few of the "flood" verses above are applicable here for deliverance.

[Psalm 32:6](#) For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. <sup>7</sup> You [are] my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah [Psalm 32:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 69:15](#) Let not the **floodwater** overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit shut its mouth on me. [Psalm 69:15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:48](#) "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the **flood** arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. [Luke 6:48 NKJV](#)

### *Dragon enraged, made war with those who keep the commandments*

We've already examined the dragon, who was also called the serpent in the middle of this passage. Those who keep the commandments could be said to be those who keep all of the Ten Commandments, or it could be another way of saying God's true followers.

### **Interpreting the symbols**

In these verses, the male child, Jesus, has been born and returned to heaven. Satan has been cast from heaven for good or banned from ever entering again. Now that Jesus has gone back to heaven, Satan, working through his followers turns his attention to the people of God.

There are many instances of God's people being persecuted. Jesus was persecuted and warned His followers that they would be persecuted. They were even persecuted by the Jews who were supposed to be God's chosen people. It can also be seen through history that the apostate Christian church persecuted true followers of God.

In [Exodus 19:4](#) God told the new Israelite nation that He had born them up on His wings out of Egypt. I believe it is a symbol of His direct intervention in the affairs of this world to preserve the true knowledge of Him in this world. I believe God has always had true followers throughout the history of the world, and they have always been a minority, and they have always been persecuted, but when necessary, He has miraculously preserved them. I don't mean to say that He always saves their lives, because all but one of the twelve apostles lost their lives to persecution. I mean to say that He keeps alive the knowledge, and the truth of Him.

The time period of "a time, times and half a time" has been studied and mentioned before. I believe it to represent 3.5 (time=1, times=2, half time=0.5) prophetic years [[Time, times, and half a time](#)], which can be interpreted to be 1260 literal years. This time period has been mentioned at least seven times in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

- Twelve hundred and sixty days [[Revelation 11:3](#)]
- One thousand two hundred sixty days [[Revelation 12:6](#)]
- Time, times and half or dividing of time [[Daniel 7:25](#), [Daniel 12:7](#), [Revelation 12:14](#)]
- Forty-two months [[Revelation 11:2](#), [Revelation 13:5](#)]

Two of those seven were from this chapter, Revelation 12, and one would have to ask if they are referring to two different periods of time. Because the 1260-year period is mentioned so many times, I believe it is very important, and that they all refer to the same time period, and that the two mentions in chapter 12 are for emphasis. The brief recap of my conclusion is that the Christian Church became the Roman church which became the Roman Catholic Church which persecuted the true followers of God for 1260 years from 538-1798. This is strange, because in essence, the woman became the dragon, the serpent and the beast, persecuting what the woman continued to

represent which is God's people. For other discussion of this time period along with references, see [Daniel – The Little Horn](#), [The Tribulation](#), [The third church](#), [Dark sun](#).

I believe the serpent is synonymous with the dragon, but I don't know if John means for us to draw anything else from this scene by mentioning the dragon at the beginning and the end of this passage, but the serpent in the middle. The persecution by the serpent would be as powerful as a flash flood, yet God would preserve the knowledge of the Truth, miraculously if needed, in His true followers.

So far in Daniel and later on Revelation, there are beasts coming up out of the sea. It can be said that in the Bible, the sea can represent populated regions of the earth, and more specifically people who are not followers of God.<sup>329</sup>

[Revelation 17:15](#) Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. [Revelation 17:15 NKJV](#)

Jesus used the symbol of fishing to represent evangelizing.

[Matthew 4:18](#) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." [Matthew 4:18-19 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:47](#) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, <sup>48</sup> "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. <sup>49</sup> "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, <sup>50</sup> "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 13:47-50 NKJV](#)

In [Revelation 13:11-18](#) I will make the case that the prophecy of a beast coming up out of the earth represents a nation rising up in a sparsely populated region of the literal earth. So, it could be said that God's true followers found refuge from persecution in sparsely populated regions, the wilderness, mountains, caves, etc... This will make more sense when we come to it in Revelation 13, but I believe the beast coming up out of the earth represents America, which toward the end of the 1260 years was a refuge for those fleeing persecution.

After the dragon was unsuccessful at destroying the woman with the flood, those who keep the commandments, continued to be attacked by him.

## Conclusion

I believe this last portion of chapter 12 covers the time period that begins immediately after the ascension of Jesus and extends all the ways up to the continued persecution of God's people after 1798, described as those who keep the commandments of God.

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What do you believe?

- Do you have a problem with interpreting the last half of Revelation 12 to be repeating the same 1260 year period several times, or do you think they should be referring to a series of events?
- Why do you think John mentions the dragon, then the serpent, then the dragon again in these few verses?

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<sup>329</sup> <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/4342/Sea-as-Symbol.htm>

- Are you ok with the idea that what started out as the woman, the early church, became the dragon during the 1260-year period?

## The beast from the sea

### [Revelation 13:1-4](#)

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" [Revelation 13:1-4 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

At first glance, one might think this beast is the same as the red dragon described in [Revelation 12:3](#), but on closer examination, there is a difference, not to mention that the dragon was watching this new beast come up out of the sea. They both had seven heads and ten horns, but the red dragon had diadems (crowns) on his seven heads, while this new beast had the diadems on each of his ten horns. Many of the symbols for the beast were the same as the dragon and will not be repeated here again. First of all, when looking the beast as a whole, it is difficult to miss the similarity to the beast pictures in Revelation 17.

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." <sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. [Revelation 17:1-3 NKJV](#)

### Coming out of the sea

Jesus used the symbol of fishing from the sea to represent evangelizing.

[Matthew 4:18](#) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." [Matthew 4:18-19 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:47](#) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, <sup>48</sup> "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. <sup>49</sup> "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, <sup>50</sup> "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 13:47-50 NKJV](#)

### Like a leopard

I think there is only one verse that is relevant here. It is from the book of Daniel where a sequence of beasts rose up out of the sea, representing world empires.

[Daniel 7:6](#) "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. [Daniel 7:6 NKJV](#)

### *Blasphemous names*

Blasphemy is from the Greek word, [βλασφημία, blasphēmia](#)<sup>330</sup>, which was not always specifically related to God, as a man could make blasphemous statements about another man. Since this beast is not said to be saying blasphemous things against a man or God, but having blasphemous names, one might think that it applies only to names, but I wouldn't rule out actions. The following are verses where Jesus was accused of blasphemy for saying or doing things that only God could do.

[Luke 5:21](#) And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" [Luke 5:21 NKJV](#)

[John 10:33](#) The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." [John 10:33 NKJV](#)

### *Feet like a bear*

Likewise, there is also only one verse that is relevant here.

[Daniel 7:5](#) "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and [had] three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' [Daniel 7:5 NKJV](#)

### *Mouth like a lion*

[Daniel 7:4](#) "The first [was] like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. [Daniel 7:4 NKJV](#)

### *Interpreting the symbols*

Probably the biggest clue to interpreting the sea from which these beasts came, is from a vision that doesn't even mention sea, but water. So if you are willing to make the connection that the sea from which the beasts came out of can be interpreted in the same way as the waters that the great harlot in [Revelation 17](#), sat on, it can be said that in prophecy, the sea can represent populated regions of the earth.<sup>331</sup>

[Revelation 17:15](#) Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. [Revelation 17:15 NKJV](#)

You could add to that, that a couple times Jesus symbolized evangelizing as gathering fish from the sea.

I believe the dragon is partly the same as that mentioned in chapter 12 which represented both Satan and the empires or civil authorities he motivated. The reason I say partly is because in chapter 12, the dragon played both parts that are now played by the dragon and the beast. In other words, the latter phase of the dragon from chapter 12 is shared by the dragon and the beast in chapter 13. The dragon watched as another beast that looked eerily similar to him came up out of the sea. I believe this depicts the rise of the Roman Catholic Church in power. There are several contributing factors to this increase in power. The first being the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine who made Christianity the religion of the state. Although the Empire was still in power at the time, it is not difficult to see how this would give a lot of power to the leadership of the church. Constantine had moved the capitol of the Empire to Constantinople, 800 miles east while Rome slowly crumbled in the west, finally receiving its death blow in 476. This left a power vacuum in Rome which the church stepped in to fill. The church claimed the

<sup>330</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G988&t=NKJV>

<sup>331</sup> <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/4342/Sea-as-Symbol.htm>

power and authority of Rome, hence the likeness to the dragon. [[The little horn, Message to the Church in Smyrna, Pergamum](#)]<sup>332 333</sup>

Looking ahead to Revelation 17, without the benefit of having dug deeply into it yet, we can read what the angel says about a very similarly described beast.

[Revelation 17:7](#) But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.<sup>8</sup> "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.<sup>9</sup> "Here [is] the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.<sup>10</sup> "There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, [and] the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.<sup>11</sup> "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.<sup>12</sup> "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.<sup>13</sup> "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. [Revelation 17:7-13 NKJV](#)

Seven mountains sound very much like "seven hills," which was very much a part of the founding of Rome. For many years Protestants have made this association between the seven headed beast and the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>334 335</sup>  
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The beast assumed blasphemous names, which I interpret to be both names and authority that belong only to God. When examining the word blasphemy, it was used against Jesus for forgiving sins, of course assuming He was not God. The Roman Catholic Church has been well known for having confessionals and priests that absolve people of their sins. But during the 1260-year period, it was much worse. The papacy offered indulgences to people who enlisted in their crusades to kill heretics, and one of the points that Martin Luther protested was the abuse of the sale of indulgences.<sup>337</sup>

This might be a good place to clarify what an indulgence is for those who are not Catholics. In my own words, the complete absolution of sins has two parts. First the confession, which must be true and sincere, but which doesn't do away with the penalty of the sin. That of course is covered by the death of Christ, but Catholics have used verses like the following to show that we have a part to pay, which doesn't cover the cost but could be looked at as discipline:

[Colossians 1:24](#) I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, [Colossians 1:24 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 12:6](#) For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." [Hebrews 12:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>332</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p324-328.

<sup>333</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14257a.htm>

<sup>334</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_hills\\_of\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_hills_of_Rome)

<sup>335</sup> [https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Ancient\\_History/Rome/Early\\_Rome\\_\(the\\_Seven\\_Hills\)](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Ancient_History/Rome/Early_Rome_(the_Seven_Hills))

<sup>336</sup> <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-seven-hills-of-rome.html>

<sup>337</sup> Vincent. p337. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA337>

[Philippians 2:12](#) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; [Philippians 2:12 NKJV](#)

In theory, never earning an indulgence will not keep someone from getting to heaven, because they can take their discipline by time served in purgatory. The theory is that an indulgence can, reduce or eliminate the time in purgatory. An indulgence is a certificate from the Church indicating that some amount of penance has been performed. Penance has taken many forms over the years, but saying the rosary, studying the scriptures, prayer and charitable deeds are some. This is not an entirely foreign idea from an Old Testament perspective, as the confession and forgiveness of sin in that era was accompanied by a sacrifice which cost the life of an animal, and the sinner something financially. The definition of charitable deeds is where the potential abuse crept into the church. Financially contributing to a charity would be considered a charitable deed, but who defines the charity. Building a church or a hospital could easily be said to be good charitable causes, but who collects the money and who takes a cut? The church doesn't make any attempt to hide the fact that reforms were needed and were made at the Council of Trent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>338 339 340</sup>

With my understanding of indulgences, I wouldn't say it constitutes blasphemy. But the Church clearly teaches that priests actually have the authority to grant forgiveness to people for sins confessed. So, if the Catholic priesthood is not God, then clearly they are blaspheming according to [Luke 5:21](#) and [John 10:33](#).

But it goes beyond that. Quotes like the following are not discouraged by the Papacy, or even spoken by Popes themselves.<sup>341</sup>

"take care that we lose not that salvation, that life and health which thou hast given us, for thou art shepherd, thou art physician, thou art governor, thou art husbandman, thou finally art another God upon earth."<sup>342</sup>

Against this background of love towards Holy Church, "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15), we readily understand the devotion of Saint Francis of Assisi for "the Lord Pope", the daughterly outspokenness of Saint Catherine of Siena towards the one whom she called "sweet Christ on earth" ...<sup>343</sup>

But the supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Union of minds, therefore, requires, together with a perfect accord in the one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff, as to God Himself.<sup>344</sup>

As the beast fully came up out of the water, John noticed that it had characteristics of a leopard, bear and a lion. In Daniel, we saw that these beasts represented world empires that preceded Rome [[Daniel 7](#), [Daniel's dream of world](#)

<sup>338</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/10/nyregion/10indulgence.html>

<sup>339</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/tract/myths-about-indulgences>

<sup>340</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/penance>

<sup>341</sup> [https://amazingdiscoveries.org/R-Pope\\_Rome\\_blasphemy\\_power\\_Jesus](https://amazingdiscoveries.org/R-Pope_Rome_blasphemy_power_Jesus)

<sup>342</sup> Hislop, Alexander. The Light of Prophecy, Edinburgh, William Whyte and Co., 1846, p91.

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=XykEAAAQAAJ&pg=PA91>, Letters between a Catholic and a Protestant on the doctrines of the Church of Rome originally published in Borrow's Worcester Journal (Worcester Journal, 1827)

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=OdfPP9YLRVkc&pg=RA1-PA29>, [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z\\_1692-1769\\_Mansi\\_JD\\_Sacrorum\\_Conciliarum\\_Nova\\_Amplissima\\_Collectio\\_Vol\\_032\\_LT.pdf.html](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_1692-1769_Mansi_JD_Sacrorum_Conciliarum_Nova_Amplissima_Collectio_Vol_032_LT.pdf.html)

<sup>343</sup> Pope John Paul II, Vita Consecrata (March 25, 1996): [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_25031996\\_vita-consecrata.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031996_vita-consecrata.html)

<sup>344</sup> Pope Leo XIII, Sapientiae Christianae: On Christians as Citizens (January 10, 1890). <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13sapie.htm>



[kingdoms](#)]. I believe this to mean that that the beast coming up out of the sea had characteristics of those past world empires. For example, the philosophy, culture and language of Greece were very much a part of the Rome.

Regarding the wound, I believe it occurred in 1798, at the end of the 1260-year period that I have mentioned multiple times already. Regarding the loss of its power, in 1798 Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner by the armies of Napoleon I and died in captivity in France.<sup>345 346 347 348 349</sup> But when was the wound healed? During my study on the little horn from Daniel's vision, it appears that the beast would receive another wound in 1870, or was it still as dead from the first wound? It received another blow on 20 September 1870 when the Papal States were annexed to the kingdom of Italy.<sup>350 351 352 353</sup> So, I would conclude that the wound was not healed until after 1870. In fact, 1929, could be seen as a starting point for the healing, when the Church became an independent state again under the sovereignty of the Holy See.<sup>354 355 356 357 358</sup>

I believe some of this down time must have been spent rehabilitating the image and practices of the church. An interesting Wall Street Journal web page presented some statistics regarding the Catholic Church and other religions from 1965-2010. The second Vatican Council, 1962-1965, ushered in the modern age of Catholicism through reforms in traditions and teachings. Some of the points I drew from the page were:<sup>359</sup>

- Christianity as a whole combining Catholics and Protestants is the largest religion in the world at roughly two billion as of 2010
- Islam is rapidly closing the gap at 1.5 billion in 2010
- It was about an even split of one billion each for Catholics vs. Protestants, but the latter was somewhat more difficult to quantify because of the fractured beliefs, including who should be counted as Christian
- Catholicism is clearly the largest Christian denomination, with universal doctrines, traditions, and beliefs, and a single leader, the Pope

In 2017, according to the National Catholic Reporter, Church membership topped 1.28 billion.<sup>360</sup> Toward the end of 2018, with the world population at 7.35 billion, Catholic membership stood at 1.3 billion.<sup>361</sup>

<sup>345</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Catholic\\_Church#1600.E2.80.931800](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Catholic_Church#1600.E2.80.931800)

<sup>346</sup> Legge. p150. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA150>

<sup>347</sup> Thiers, M.A.; Shoberl, Frederick. *The History of the French Revolution - Volume V*. London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1838, p204. <http://books.google.com/books?id=imkEAAAQAAJ&pg=PA204>

<sup>348</sup> De Montor, Artaud. *The Lives and Times of the Popes*. New York, The Catholic Publication Society of America, 1911, p275. <http://books.google.com/books?id=kr8jAQAAIAAJ&pg=PA275>

<sup>349</sup> Clare. p327. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA327>

<sup>350</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal\\_States#Italian\\_nationalism\\_and\\_the\\_end\\_of\\_the\\_Papal\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_States#Italian_nationalism_and_the_end_of_the_Papal_States)

<sup>351</sup> Clare. p413. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA413>

<sup>352</sup> Gregorovius, Ferdinand. *The History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages - Volume 8, part 2*. London, George Bell & Sons, 1902, p509. <http://books.google.com/books?id=NIIZAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA509>

<sup>353</sup> De Cesare, Rafael. *The Last Days of Papal Rome*. Boston & New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909, p444-

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0XcpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA446>

<sup>354</sup> <https://vatican.com/The-Lateran-Treaty/>

<sup>355</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Lateran-Treaty>

<sup>356</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran\\_Treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran_Treaty)

<sup>357</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_papacy#From\\_the\\_creation\\_of\\_Vatican\\_City\\_\(1929\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_papacy#From_the_creation_of_Vatican_City_(1929))

<sup>358</sup> <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/va-lateran-treaties.htm>

<sup>359</sup> <http://graphics.wsj.com/catholics-world/>

<sup>360</sup> <https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/global-catholic-population-tops-128-billion-half-are-10-countries>

<sup>361</sup> [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64944-VATICAN\\_CATHOLIC\\_CHURCH\\_STATISTICS\\_2018](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64944-VATICAN_CATHOLIC_CHURCH_STATISTICS_2018)

What better way to increase power and authority than by reunification? The term “ecumenism” refers specifically to the idea of developing closer relationships and more unity among Christian denominations.<sup>362</sup> This inevitably comes with compromises, but in the case where there are nearly 1.3 billion united under a single leader, the Pope, and on the other hand, nearly a billion severely fractured Protestant denominations, who do you think would have to compromise in order to achieve unity? The following was written in theguardian.com on October of 2017.

Last week, Pope Francis said Catholics and Protestants were now enjoying a relationship of “true fraternity” based on mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

He told Derek Browning, moderator of the Church of Scotland, who was visiting the Vatican as part of the Reformation commemorations, that the two traditions were “no longer ... adversaries, after long centuries of estrangement and conflict”.

The pontiff added: “For so long we regarded one another from afar, all too humanly, harbouring suspicion, dwelling on differences and errors, and with hearts intent on recrimination for past wrongs.”

The 95 Theses, written in Latin, was a backlash against increasing corruption in the Catholic church and, in particular, the highly profitable sale of “indulgences”. These promised a fast-track to heaven and were sold to fund the building of St Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

Luther argued that salvation could not be bought or brokered by the church, but was a matter between an individual and God.

His challenge to the authority and elitism of the Catholic church was translated into German and other European languages. Thanks to revolutionary new printing presses, his message spread rapidly and was taken up by others, including the French theologian John Calvin.

Rome condemned Luther as a heretic and launched the Counter-Reformation, but by the end of the 16th century most of northern Europe was Protestant.

...

In 1999, the Catholic and Lutheran churches agreed a “joint declaration on the doctrine of justification” that resolved many of the theological issues at the heart of the schism. This document has now been welcomed and affirmed by the Anglican communion.<sup>363</sup>

The idea of reunification between Catholics and Protestants is appealing to some, but unthinkable to others. I think that generations of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have embraced the idea of walls coming down and global community. But is it possible that those most seeking global unity, are the ones more likely to compromise on religious beliefs to achieve their “more important” goals of global peace? A pew research study conducted in 2017, the 500-year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, showed that only 30 percent of US Protestants believe in both sola fide and sola scriptura, which were a couple of the pillars of the reformation. Only 27% know that sola fide

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<sup>362</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenism#Three\\_approaches\\_to\\_Christian\\_unity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenism#Three_approaches_to_Christian_unity)

<sup>363</sup> The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/31/catholic-and-protestant-leaders-unite-mark-start-reformation-archbishop-canterbury-service>

is a protestant teaching. More than half of American Protestant Christians believe that faith and good works are needed for salvation. 33% of US Protestants believe in purgatory.<sup>364</sup>

In response to those who say that peace, love, unity and compromise are the most important thing, this is what Jesus said.

[Matthew 10:34](#) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. <sup>35</sup> "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; <sup>36</sup> "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.' <sup>37</sup> "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. [Matthew 10:34-39 NKJV](#)

## Conclusion

I believe that the beast that came up out of the water is a symbol representing the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church as a civil power. The Catholic Church teaches that it was given the right, by Jesus, to forgive sins.<sup>365</sup> Several quotes were included above which showed that Popes have accepted or claimed names and titles that should belong to God alone. I believe that the deadly wound took place in 1798 at the end of the 1260-year period which will be mentioned in the next section, but the main point here is that it was healed, and the beast gradually regained its power again and accepted worship of the whole world. I believe that the dragon giving its power to the beast symbolizes civil powers or nations of the world allowing the church to exercise its power and influence over their citizens.

What do you believe?

- What do you believe about the relationship between the dragon and the beast?
- What do you think it means that the world worshipped the dragon instead of the beast?
- Do you think it means something that all seven heads had blasphemous names, but only one received a deadly wound?

## Forty-two months

### [Revelation 13:5-10](#)

[Revelation 13:5](#) And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. <sup>8</sup> All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. <sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear. <sup>10</sup> He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. [Revelation 13:5-10 NKJV](#)

<sup>364</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/31/u-s-protestants-are-not-defined-by-reformation-era-controversies-500-years-later/>

<sup>365</sup> [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p123a10.htm](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p123a10.htm)

## Examining the symbols

Verse 5 begins a new scene because we come to that 1260-year period again, which ended with the deadly wound. I've examined blasphemies under [blasphemous names](#). [Forty-two months](#) has been mentioned multiple times.

### *Book of life*

These are the verses in the NKJV that specifically mentioned a book of life.

[Philippians 4:3](#) And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names [are] in the **Book of Life**. [Philippians 4:3 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 3:5](#) "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the **Book of Life**; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. [Revelation 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:8](#) All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the **Book of Life** of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. [Revelation 13:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:8](#) "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the **Book of Life** from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. [Revelation 17:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the **Book**] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ... <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the **Book of Life** was cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:12, 15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:27](#) But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's **Book of Life**. [Revelation 21:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:19](#) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the **Book of Life**, from the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book. [Revelation 22:19 NKJV](#)

An unnamed book that God keeps (presumably the book of life) was mentioned twice in a conversation between Moses and God and once in Daniel.

[Exodus 32:32](#) "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, I pray, blot me out of **Your book** which You have written." <sup>33</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of **My book**." [Exodus 32:32-33 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 12:1](#) "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands [watch] over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, [Even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in **the book**." [Daniel 12:1 NKJV](#)

A book of remembrance was mentioned once.

[Malachi 3:16](#) Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard [them]; So a **book of remembrance** was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. [Malachi 3:16 NKJV](#)

## Interpreting the symbols

I did some historical research into the arrogance and power of the Papacy at least at times during this 1260-year period when I was studying the little horn from Daniel's vision.

In 741, Pope Zacharias crowned Pepin king of the Franks, and the king proclaimed the successors of St. Peter sovereign Pontiffs, and lords of the city and territories of Rome.<sup>366</sup> In 1077, Emperor Henry IV was made to wait for three days in the snow before he was allowed to appear before Pope Gregory VII to be released from excommunication.<sup>367</sup> This implied that the head of the Roman Church should be the real emperor and every king the creature and puppet of the Pope. The "Dictates," drawn up by Hildebrand contain the following propositions: The Roman Church was founded by the Lord alone. Only the Pope may wear the imperial insignia. All princes are to kiss the Pope's feet only. His name stands alone in the world. He can be judged by no one. No one can pass sentence on one who appeals to the apostolic throne. The Roman Church has never erred, and, according to the testimony of Scripture, never will err. The Pope can depose the Emperor. Only the Roman bishop is rightly styled universal. The mature embodiment of these ideas, from 1049 to 1216, marks the culmination of papal power and a period known as the age of Hildebrand.<sup>368 369</sup> The organization of the Inquisition was given by the bull of Innocent IV, issued on the 15th of May 1252, a carefully considered and elaborate law which should establish the machinery for systematic persecution "as an integral part of the social edifice in every city and state." The state was bound to arrest all accused persons, to hold them in prison. The ruler was, moreover required to inflict torture on those who would not confess and betray all the heretics of their acquaintance.<sup>370</sup> Towards the close of the fifteenth century, the profligacy of the Pontiffs, 'more notorious than could be paralleled in the darkest age that had preceded,' must be regarded as the foremost amongst those general causes which heralded the decrepitude of the Papacy.<sup>371</sup>

## Conclusion

This scene rewinds a little from the previous as it repeats the 1260-year time period which ended in 1798. During the period, the Roman Catholic Church effectively ruled western civilization, persecuting those who dared to disagree with her. It had great power over its subjects, but it is clear that there were some who did not bow to its authority. These were referred to twice as saints, and also distinguished by saying, their names were written in the Lamb's book of life. Those who remained true to God, were persecuted and killed by the very organization that had once been the representatives of the good news of Salvation.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think this 1260-year time period keeps getting mentioned again and again?
- Do you think there is a literal book of life, or is it a symbol?
- Do you think there were any whose names were written in the book of life that were not persecuted?

<sup>366</sup> Legge. p23. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA23>

<sup>367</sup> Clare. p161. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA161>

<sup>368</sup> Vincent, Martin R. *The Age of Hildebrand*. New York, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909, p1. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUkXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA1>

<sup>369</sup> Legge. p36. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA36>

<sup>370</sup> Vincent. p396-397. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUkXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA396>

<sup>371</sup> Legge. p98. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA98>

## The beast from the earth

### [Revelation 13:11-18](#)

[Revelation 13:11](#) Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. <sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. <sup>15</sup> He was granted [power] to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. <sup>16</sup> He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup> and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number [is] 666. [Revelation 13:11-18 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

#### *Coming up out of the earth*

Earth was mentioned 941 times in the NKJV, the vast majority of which were literal. None of them actually gave me any clue as to how to interpret this instance. However, the interpretation of the sea from which the first beast came out of could infer what the earth or land represents. This will be discussed further when interpreting the symbols.

#### *Two horns like a lamb*

The main other place where two horns is mentioned in Bible prophecy is in [Daniel 8](#).

[Daniel 8:3](#) Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the **two horns** [were] high; but one [was] higher than the other, and the higher [one] came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor [was there any] that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. [Daniel 8:3-4 NKJV](#)

Later in the same vision, Daniel is conveniently told what the two horns on the ram represent.

[Daniel 8:20](#) "The ram which you saw, having the **two horns**--[they are] the kings of Media and Persia. [Daniel 8:20 NKJV](#)

So, the beast represented an empire, but it seems it was an alliance of two kingdoms. They were not completely equal in this alliance because it is pointed out that one horn was longer than the other.

The phrases "like a lamb," or "as a lamb," were only used a few times in the NKJV.

[Isaiah 53:7](#) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led **as a lamb** to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. [Isaiah 53:7 NKJV](#)

[Acts 8:32](#) The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And **as a lamb** before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. [Acts 8:32 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 53](#) is a prophecy of the Messiah, so the lamb is a symbol of Jesus.

[Hosea 4:16](#) "For Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn calf; Now the LORD will let them forage **Like a lamb** in open country. [Hosea 4:16 NKJV](#)

In Hosea, during Israel's apostasy, they are likened to a stubborn heifer (cow) in a large field. I don't see any significance in the mention of a lamb.

### *Spoke like a dragon*

In the second half of the book of Revelation, the dragon is mentioned 13 times. I discussed in recent chapters that the dragon was symbolic of Satan, but also the persecuting world power in times after Jesus returned to heaven [[The great red dragon](#), [The beast from the sea](#)].

[Revelation 12:3](#) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red **dragon** having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup> His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the **dragon** stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. <sup>5</sup> She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. <sup>6</sup> Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. <sup>7</sup> And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the **dragon**; and the **dragon** and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. <sup>9</sup> So the great **dragon** was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. <sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. <sup>11</sup> "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. <sup>12</sup> "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." <sup>13</sup> Now when the **dragon** saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male [Child]. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the **dragon** had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And the **dragon** was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 12:3-17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The **dragon** gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the **dragon** who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" [Revelation 13:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:13](#) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [coming] out of the mouth of the **dragon**, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. [Revelation 16:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:2](#) He laid hold of the **dragon**, that serpent of old, who is [the] Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; [Revelation 20:2 NKJV](#)

### *Great signs*

The word “signs” was used 73 times in the NKJV. It was used a few times in relation to signs in the heavens, which was different from the majority of uses.

[Genesis 1:14](#) Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for **signs** and seasons, and for days and years; [Genesis 1:14 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 10:2](#) Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the **signs** of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. [Jeremiah 10:2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:3](#) "and in the morning, '[It will be] foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot [discern] the **signs** of the times. [Matthew 16:3 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:11](#) "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great **signs** from heaven. [Luke 21:11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:25](#) "And there will be **signs** in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; [Luke 21:25 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:19](#) | will show wonders in heaven above And **signs** in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. [Acts 2:19 NKJV](#)

This one in Psalms appears to be describing things in and around the temple that were symbols or reminders of God’s presence, which were replaced by enemies who devastated the land.

[Psalm 74:4](#) Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place; They set up their banners [for] **signs**. [Psalm 74:4 NKJV](#)

The word was used in the context of making gestures to communicate without speaking.

[Luke 1:62](#) So they made **signs** to his father--what he would have him called. [Luke 1:62 NKJV](#)

The majority of other uses was as synonymous with miracles, many of them regarding the ten plagues on Egypt. Signs and wonders appeared together in about 30 verses, pretty evenly between the two Old and New Testaments. For the most part, around 60 times, there were good signs or miracles originating from God, but a few cases below were considered false signs, originating from the evil one.

[2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, **signs**, and lying wonders, [2 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:14](#) For they are spirits of demons, performing **signs**, [which] go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. [Revelation 16:14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked **signs** in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. [Revelation 19:20 NKJV](#)



*Fire coming down from heaven*

There seemed to be a several varied instances of fire from heaven in the Bible, most literal, and supernatural. The first is a case of God personally and literally raining down fire on a select group of people to punish and destroy them before the end time judgment. Why He chose to do this, rather than letting them exercise the free will and live their sinful lives, the Bible doesn't really say.

[Genesis 19:24](#) Then the LORD rained brimstone and **fire** on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD **out of the heavens**. [Genesis 19:24 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:29](#) "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained **fire** and brimstone **from heaven** and destroyed [them] all. [Luke 17:29 NKJV](#)

The following seems a little harsh, but God honored Elijah's request and sent down fire from heaven to destroy the men.

[2 Kings 1:9](#) Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!' " <sup>10</sup> So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I [am] a man of God, then let **fire come down from heaven** and consume you and your fifty men." And **fire came down from heaven** and consumed him and his fifty. <sup>11</sup> Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!' " <sup>12</sup> So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I [am] a man of God, let **fire come down from heaven** and consume you and your fifty men." And the **fire of God came down from heaven** and consumed him and his fifty. <sup>13</sup> Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. <sup>14</sup> "Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight." [2 Kings 1:9-14 NKJV](#)

The next is also involving Elijah, who was a prophet during the very wicked reign of Ahab, over the kingdom of Israel. Through Elijah, God was giving a miraculous sign to show that He is God, and not the false gods they were worshipping at the time.

[1 Kings 18:36](#) And it came to pass, at [the time of] the offering of the [evening] sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You [are] God in Israel and I [am] Your servant, and [that] I have done all these things at Your word. <sup>37</sup> "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You [are] the LORD God, and [that] You have turned their hearts back [to You] again." <sup>38</sup> Then the **fire of the LORD fell** and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that [was] in the trench. <sup>39</sup> Now when all the people saw [it], they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He [is] God! The LORD, He [is] God!" [1 Kings 18:36-39 NKJV](#)

Fire from God to ignite or consume the sacrifice was not a regular occurrence. The fire from such occurrences at the sanctuary or temple were kept burning and called holy fire. In the first case it was an immediate sign of His acknowledgement when David sinned and was seeking atonement so the punishment would stop. I didn't find a specific verse where it mentions God sending fire from heaven to consume the first Sanctuary sacrifice. However, we do have specific mention of Him doing so for the dedication of the Temple.

[1 Chronicles 21:26](#) And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and He answered him **from heaven by fire** on the altar of burnt offering. [1 Chronicles 21:26 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 7:1](#) When Solomon had finished praying, **fire came down from heaven** and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. [2 Chronicles 7:1 NKJV](#)

The next was an unusual case, where I believe Satan was given power to use fire from the sky to destroy life in order to prove a point.

[Job 1:16](#) While he [was] still speaking, another also came and said, "The **fire of God fell from heaven** and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" [Job 1:16 NKJV](#)

The disciples James and John must have been well familiar with the story of Elijah, as they asked Jesus if they could call down fire from heaven to destroy a town who rejected them.

[Luke 9:54](#) And when His disciples James and John saw [this], they said, "Lord, do You want us to command **fire to come down from heaven** and consume them, just as Elijah did?" [Luke 9:54 NKJV](#)

The last I believe to be a description of what happened after the return of Jesus and the saints at the end of the millennium, to take possession of the earth. This is the time that sin will finally be destroyed forever.

[Revelation 20:9](#) They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And **fire came down from God out of heaven** and devoured them. [Revelation 20:9 NKJV](#)

### *Image to the beast*

The word image was used 110 times in the NKJV. The first was when it said that man was made in the image of God. What exactly that means, I cannot say because clearly, we are not a clone or copy of God. In fact, the Bible says God is Spirit [[John 4:24](#)], so clearly our body of head, two arm, and two legs is not what God looks like. Many have speculated that ability to create life is a way that we are said to be in the image of God.

Probably the most common use of the word in the Bible is about images that were worshipped, which were usually carved from stone or wood, or molten metal. There were many warnings from God not to make or worship them. Then there are also many instances mentioned where people worshipped them. In the New Testament, Paul reminds us that God intended every person to become like His Son, and that by beholding and contemplating Him we can become transformed into His image. Paul also reminds us that Jesus is the image of God. In other words, we cannot see God, but through Jesus, we can see and know what God is like.

But I think by far the most relevant parallel in the Bible is a story in Daniel 3. In this story, we have a civil authority erecting an image, and then commanding all to worship it or be killed. We even have a sixty, and a six in the story.

[Daniel 3:1](#) Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height [was] sixty cubits [and] its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup> And King Nebuchadnezzar sent [word] to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>3</sup> So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>4</sup> Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, <sup>5</sup> "[that] at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; <sup>6</sup> "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

<sup>7</sup> So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, [and] lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down [and] worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. <sup>9</sup> They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! <sup>10</sup> "You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; <sup>11</sup> "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. <sup>12</sup> "There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. <sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "[Is it] true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, [that] you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? <sup>15</sup> "Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, [good]! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who [is] the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> "If that [is the case], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver [us] from your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup> And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who [were] in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, [and] cast [them] into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>21</sup> Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their [other] garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. <sup>23</sup> And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste [and] spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

<sup>25</sup> "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

<sup>26</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace [and] spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come [here]." Then Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. <sup>27</sup> And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

<sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! <sup>29</sup> "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

<sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon. [Daniel 3:1-30 NKJV](#)

### *Mark on the right hand or forehead*

This same mark is apparently mentioned twice later in Revelation.

[Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives [his] **mark on his forehead or on his hand**, [Revelation 14:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:4](#) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then [I saw] the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received [his] **mark on their foreheads or on their hands**. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4 NKJV](#)

Also in Revelation, was the mark of the beast which did not specifically mention the hand or forehead, but which I believe to be the same thing.

[Revelation 14:11](#) "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the **mark** of his name." [Revelation 14:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:2](#) So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the **mark** of the beast and those who worshiped his image. [Revelation 16:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the **mark** of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. [Revelation 19:20 NKJV](#)

Otherwise, the word mark is used 32 times in the NKJV. Numerous times as the proper name Mark, some as a target, marks on things, and property boundary marks. I will concentrate only on those that were related to marks on a person. Ezekiel spoke of a mark on the forehead that seems quite relevant, though opposite because it seems to be God's mark.

[Genesis 4:15](#) And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a **mark** on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. [Genesis 4:15 NKJV](#)

[Job 10:14](#) If I sin, then You **mark** me, And will not acquit me of my iniquity. [Job 10:14 NKJV](#)

[Job 31:35](#) Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my **mark**. [Oh, that] the Almighty would answer me, [That] my Prosecutor had written a book! [Job 31:35 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 9:4](#) and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a **mark on the foreheads** of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." <sup>5</sup> To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. <sup>6</sup> "Utterly slay old [and] young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom [is] the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who [were] before the temple. [Ezekiel 9:4-6 NKJV](#)

### *Mark or name or the number of his name*

The following verse that I quoted above seem to be particularly relevant because it mentions the mark of his name.

[Revelation 14:11](#) "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the **mark** of his name." [Revelation 14:11 NKJV](#)

### **Interpreting the symbols**

The first symbol is a beast, a political power or a nation, arising out of a sparsely populated region of the earth. It was also described as having two horns like a lamb. A lamb is generally considered a gentle creature, and horns are symbols of kings. Given the timeline, following the 1260-year reign of the beast from the sea, I believe this new beast to be the United States, who declared independence from England in 1776, a mere 22 years before the end of the 1260-year time period. In my opinion, two horns could easily represent two ruling powers, or political parties, which has essentially been the case since its second election in 1797. Gentleness of a lamb could be symbolic of its civil and religious freedoms and government which was designed to serve the people and not rule over them. A lamb also could represent the youthfulness of the nation in 1798, the end of the 1260-year period. Small horns of a lamb could also potentially depict a bison, which John may have seen but not know how else to describe. Clearly the religious freedoms granted by this country provided fertile grounds for the growth of Protestantism, and hence was of importance to God's people, which is why it would be mentioned in prophecy.

Some of the symbols are already applied but some are still in the future. Clearly the USA exhibited great power (as a dragon) and leadership, including dropping fire from the sky in World War II. But is that what those symbols are describing? Perhaps the speaking like a dragon, great signs and fire from heaven could have multiple meanings. I don't think the USA has actually spoken in the ways that the beast from the sea was known for doing. Also, the vision implies that the signs and the fire from heaven were intended to deceive, not as instruments of war. I believe we are still looking for fulfillments to those symbols, when it makes an image to the first beast, and begins to persecute God's people as a church and state power like the first beast did.

I realize that some may disagree, but I believe that America was founded as a Protestant nation, but with religious freedom. Its constitution forbade it from interfering with the free exercise of religion by its citizens, and also did not allow any test of faith to serve in government. Of course, there are always times when humans lean one way or another when implementing an idea. But with the founders fleeing the persecution of a church state entity, they were very careful to not implement the same in their new home.

So, what would cause the USA to abandon its founding principles and act like the first beast? Some have suggested that a terrible disaster, whether natural, financial or other, could cause many to say that it is a curse from God for straying from Him, and that the nation must return to Him. With so many people of varied beliefs, the only way they could achieve this goal would be to legislate and enforce the religion of choice, Protestant Christianity. But Protestant Christianity lacks unity and leadership, so which brand of Protestantism should be implemented? I have mentioned before the idea and effort of Catholic and Protestant reunification. After all there are many common beliefs, the most important being the same God, and for the most part the Bible. I think the image to the beast is a

brand of Protestantism, under the leadership of the Papacy, which uses the civil government of the USA to enforce it religion. Of course, governments have various means to enforce laws, including the ultimate deterrent, the death penalty. One of the most logical things to legislate and enforce is the weekly worship on Sunday, a day which Catholics and most Protestants already agree on. So, the government could take away the ability to buy or sell from anyone who refuses to worship on the national day of worship, Sunday.

But what about the signs to deceive? When discussing this vision, Smith points out that the birthplace of modern Spiritism was in Hydesville, New York in 1848, with the family of John D. Fox.<sup>372</sup> A large part of Spiritism had to do with communication with the spirits of the dead, who were supposedly communicating from the afterlife. You might ask what Spiritism has in common with Christianity? I would say, the vast majority of Christians believe that when a person dies, they go immediately to heaven or hell or purgatory in the case of Catholics. How many people have you heard speak of a deceased loved one looking down on them or being with them in the present? Spiritism teaches that we can communicate with them. It should be pointed out that this is in direct conflict with what the Bible says as I have pointed out in [[Death word search - Conclusion](#)].

[Job 14:10](#) But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last And where [is] he? <sup>11</sup> [As] water disappears from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dries up, <sup>12</sup> So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens [are] no more, They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep. <sup>13</sup> "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> If a man dies, shall he live [again]? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes. <sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. [Job 14:10-15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 6:5](#) For in death [there is] no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? [Psalm 6:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 115:17](#) The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence. [Psalm 115:17 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:3](#) This [is] an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing [happens] to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness [is] in their hearts while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead. <sup>4</sup> But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. <sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun. [Ecclesiastes 9:3-6 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:10](#) Whatever your hand finds to do, do [it] with your might; for [there is] no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. [Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV](#)

So, if Satan can trick people into thinking they are talking to their loved ones when they are in fact communicating with Him and his fallen angels, he can tell them anything and they will be inclined to believe. Furthermore, as a spirit, Satan can perform signs, which would seem miraculous to us, thus causing many to believe.

As for the mark of the beast on the hand or forehead, I do not believe it is a physical mark or tattoo. It is quite possible that some kind of technology could be used to implement the mark. I believe like in the story of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, the three Hebrews did not have the mark because they refused to worship the

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<sup>372</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation*. Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 2005. pp411-412

<http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA411>; Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. pp467-468

<http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA467>

image. They were subsequently targeted for punishment and death. Likewise, I believe that in this case, a law which is contrary to God's law will be established by the Protestant/USA image of the beast. Those who refuse to obey this law will not receive the mark of the beast and will consequently not be allowed to buy or sell. In a culture and economic system such as exists in the USA where people generally don't have more than a few days, or possibly a week's worth of food at a time, one could go hungry very quickly if they were not allowed to buy. Also, for those who live paycheck to paycheck, not having the ability to "sell" would make it difficult to acquire money, if they could even use it.

If this image were to legislate worship contrary to God's Law, clearly it is not going to be to worship of an idol or image. After all neither Protestants nor Catholics do that. Yes, Catholics do have images of saints that they revere, but that is one of the differences between Protestants and Catholics. But Sunday worship, which is contrary to God's Law is something they do agree upon. So, motivated by a time of great national crisis, a Protestant movement, unified with the Catholic Church under the Pope could convince the government through the people that this crisis can only be alleviated by returning to their Christian roots. Under circumstances like this, a law would be like Nebuchadnezzar's command to bow down and worship the image, with severe consequences for disobedience.

Finally, I would add based on something I heard from Emmanuel Baek which made a lot of sense. The mark in the hand represents those who don't really believe that Sunday is the correct day of worship but do so because they fear the consequences. The mark in the forehead represents those who actually believe that Sunday is really the Lords Day, and the correct day of worship.<sup>373</sup>

## Conclusion

My conclusion is that the beast from the earth is the United States of America. I believe it was a force for good initially, as a lamb (often a symbol for Jesus), but later spoke as a dragon (often a symbol for Satan). Working together with the beast, the Roman Catholic Church, it will make a law that is contrary to the Law of God. Just as Nebuchadnezzar made a law to bow down and worship his image, this law will be a test to show who is truly faithful to God in spite of the danger to their life.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe that the beast from the earth is the USA?
- What do you think the signs will be that the beast performs to convince people to obey?
- Do you believe that the USA could abandon its principles of religious freedom?

## The Lamb and the 144,000

### [Revelation 14:1-5](#)

[Revelation 14:1](#) Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred [and] forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup> They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred [and] forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb

<sup>373</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kln-oMxDRQ&list=PLWUxCrdrDmx0LknCes14gSk-gK6cCPQL0&index=17&t=3360s>

wherever He goes. These were redeemed from [among] men, [being] firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.<sup>5</sup> And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. [Revelation 14:1-5 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

By this point in Revelation, we have seen many of these symbols before.

### *The Lamb*

The word lamb was used 102 times in the NKJV 27 of which are in Revelation. The vast majority of times lambs were mentioned in the Old Testament were in relation to sacrifices. These lambs that were sacrificed were a symbol of Jesus, the Lamb of God, but I think in many cases this symbolism was completely lost sight of. After all the Jews were looking for a conquering king as their Messiah.

Isaiah wrote a prophecy of a suffering servant that turned out to be the Messiah.

[Isaiah 53:7](#) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. [Isaiah 53:7 NKJV](#)

John the Baptist, speaking through inspiration, made the connection to Isaiah's prophecy, when he called Jesus the Lamb of God. But I don't think John even fully understood the meaning.

[John 1:29](#) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" [John 1:29 NKJV](#)

[John 1:36](#) And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" [John 1:36 NKJV](#)

Phillip explained to the Ethiopian eunuch that Jesus was the Lamb that Isaiah wrote about.

[Acts 8:32](#) The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth." [Acts 8:32 NKJV](#)

Peter draws the connection between the Jewish sacrifices, shedding the blood of a spotless unblemished lamb to the blood of Christ.

[1 Peter 1:19](#) but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. [1 Peter 1:19 NKJV](#)

There can be no doubt that the Lamb in Revelation is none other than the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

### *Mount Zion*

The word Zion was used 160 times in the NKJV, but "mount zion" only 21 times. I do not believe however, that the true meaning of Mount Zion can be understood without looking at the references to Zion. The first occurrence clearly identifies itself.

[2 Samuel 5:7](#) Nevertheless David took the stronghold of **Zion** (that [is], the City of David). [2 Samuel 5:7 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 11:5](#) But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of **Zion** (that is, the City of David). [1 Chronicles 11:5 NKJV](#)

This first reference says that the Jebusite city, also known as the stronghold of Zion, which David conquered became known as the city of David. This was prior to the construction of the first temple by Solomon, so I would say that the



name Zion first referred to the Jebusite stronghold but was retained after David took over and made his residence there. The very next reference in 1 Kings, makes it seem that at the time the temple was first built, its location was not referred to as Zion, because the Ark of the Covenant was moved from the city of David, which is Zion.

[1 Kings 8:1](#) Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which [is] **Zion**. [1 Kings 8:1 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 5:2](#) Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the City of David, which [is] **Zion**. [2 Chronicles 5:2 NKJV](#)

In the Psalms, many of which are written by David, Zion is mentioned 38 times, and "Mount Zion" 5. That name would have very recently been attributed to the Jebusite stronghold which became David's home or palace, also known as David's city. However, it is pretty clear that it quickly comes to mean much more than that. In many cases, if not most I believe it means all of Jerusalem, the Capitol City of Israel. There is a very large sense that Zion is God's city, and that He dwells there. Remember that in this time frame, the Temple had not been built yet.

[Psalm 9:11](#) Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in **Zion**! Declare His deeds among the people. [Psalm 9:11 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 74:2](#) Remember Your congregation, [which] You have purchased of old, The tribe of Your inheritance, [which] You have redeemed--This **Mount Zion** where You have dwelt. [Psalm 74:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 76:2](#) In Salem also is His tabernacle, And His dwelling place in **Zion**. [Psalm 76:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 132:13](#) For the LORD has chosen **Zion**; He has desired [it] for His dwelling place: [Psalm 132:13 NKJV](#)

He reigns from there and blesses from there. In some of these cases, I think Zion may refer to where God is in heaven.

[Psalm 20:2](#) May He send you help from the sanctuary, And strengthen you out of **Zion**; [Psalm 20:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 84:7](#) They go from strength to strength; [Each one] appears before God in **Zion**. [Psalm 84:7 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 99:2](#) The LORD [is] great in **Zion**, And He [is] high above all the peoples. [Psalm 99:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 102:21](#) To declare the name of the LORD in **Zion**, And His praise in Jerusalem, [Psalm 102:21 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 128:5](#) The LORD bless you out of **Zion**, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life. [Psalm 128:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 134:3](#) The LORD who made heaven and earth Bless you from **Zion**! [Psalm 134:3 NKJV](#)

God chose Zion and installed His king (David?) there.

[Psalm 2:6](#) "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of **Zion**." [Psalm 2:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 78:68](#) But chose the tribe of Judah, **Mount Zion** which He loved. [Psalm 78:68 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 87:2](#) The LORD loves the gates of **Zion** More than all the dwellings of Jacob. [Psalm 87:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 110:2](#) The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of **Zion**. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! [Psalm 110:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 132:13](#) For the LORD has chosen **Zion**; He has desired [it] for His dwelling place: [Psalm 132:13 NKJV](#)

The third and fourth uses of the word Zion and the first of Mount Zion were a message from God through the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah. This took place many years after David and Solomon's time, when the Assyrians were surrounding Jerusalem in a siege. Though it seemed hopeless at the time, God's response was a message of hope and deliverance. In it I believe God referred to Jerusalem as Zion,

[2 Kings 19:21](#) "This [is] the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: 'The virgin, the daughter of **Zion**, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken [her] head behind your back! [2 Kings 19:21 NKJV](#)

Then He makes the first reference to Mount Zion, which also appears to be synonymous with Jerusalem.

[2 Kings 19:31](#) For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, And those who escape from **Mount Zion**. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.' [2 Kings 19:31 NKJV](#)

I will say however, that in both verses, I interpret it as a repetition, but if it is not that, then Jerusalem and Zion are not equated.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah account for nearly half of the occurrences of the word Zion in the bible, with roughly the same ratio for "Mount Zion." Zion was spoken of as a woman or at least having sons or daughters at least 20 times [[Isaiah 1:8](#), [Isaiah 3:16-17](#), [Isaiah 4:4](#), [Isaiah 10:32](#), [Isaiah 16:1](#), [Isaiah 37:22](#), [Isaiah 51:3](#), [Isaiah 52:2](#), [Isaiah 62:11](#), [Isaiah 66:8](#), [Jeremiah 4:31](#), [Jeremiah 6:2](#), [23](#), [Lamentations 1:6](#), [Lamentations 2:1](#), [4](#), [8](#), [10](#), [13](#), [18](#), [Lamentations 4:2](#), [22](#)].

But it seems at least 10 times Zion is also used as another name for Jerusalem, or at least the Temple in Jerusalem [[Isaiah 4:3](#), [Isaiah 30:19](#), [Isaiah 31:9](#), [Isaiah 33:20](#), [Isaiah 37:32](#), [Isaiah 52:1](#), [Isaiah 64:10](#), [Jeremiah 14:19](#), [Jeremiah 26:18](#), [Jeremiah 51:35](#), [Lamentations 5:11](#)].

### **144,000**

This number has been seen before in Revelation. In fact, it was back in Revelation 7 where it spoke of 144,000 being sealed [see [Sealing of the 144,000](#)].

[Revelation 7:4](#) And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred [and] forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [were] sealed: [Revelation 7:4 NKJV](#)

Can there be any doubt that this seal is the same as the name of the Lamb and the name of God on the forehead and the 144,000 in this vision? These are the only two places in the Bible that his number is mentioned.

### **God's name on their forehead**

In another place in Revelation, it specifically talks about God's name being on the forehead.

[Revelation 22:1](#) And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. <sup>2</sup> In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, [was] the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each [tree] yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His

servants shall serve Him. <sup>4</sup> They shall see His face, and His **name** [shall be] on their **foreheads**. <sup>5</sup> There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. [Revelation 22:1-5 NKJV](#)

As I mentioned above, I believe God's name on the forehead is the same as the seal mentioned in Revelation 7.

[Revelation 7:2](#) Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their **foreheads**." <sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred [and] forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [were] sealed: [Revelation 7:2-4 NKJV](#)

The word forehead(s) was used 24 times in the NKJV, but in the Old Testament another expression "between your eyes," seemed to be more common in the verses I was interested in.

[Exodus 13:8](#) "And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, '[This is done] because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' <sup>9</sup> "It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial **between your eyes**, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. [Exodus 13:8-9 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 13:16](#) "It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets **between your eyes**, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt." [Exodus 13:16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 28:36](#) "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, [like] the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. <sup>37</sup> "And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. <sup>38</sup> "So it shall be on Aaron's **forehead**, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. [Exodus 28:36-38 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 6:8](#) "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets **between your eyes**. [Deuteronomy 6:8 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 11:18](#) "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets **between your eyes**. [Deuteronomy 11:18 NKJV](#)

Revelation 7 was mentioned just above, but Ezekiel and Revelation 9 and 22 also mention God's name or a seal of God on the forehead.

[Ezekiel 9:4](#) and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the **foreheads** of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." [Ezekiel 9:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:3](#) saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their **foreheads**." [Revelation 7:3 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:4](#) They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their **foreheads**. [Revelation 9:4 NKJV](#)

The next is sort of the opposite, but the beast also has a seal that he wishes to put on the hand or the forehead.

[Revelation 13:16](#) He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their **foreheads**, [Revelation 13:16 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:9](#) Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his **forehead** or on his hand, [Revelation 14:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:5](#) And on her **forehead** a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. [Revelation 17:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:4](#) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then [I saw] the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received [his] mark on their **foreheads** or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4 NKJV](#)

### *Voice from heaven like many waters and thunder*

I found a few places in the Bible where it also mentions a voice like many waters.

[Ezekiel 43:2](#) And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His **voice [was] like the sound of many waters**; and the earth shone with His glory. [Ezekiel 43:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:15](#) His feet [were] like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His **voice as the sound of many waters**; [Revelation 1:15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:6](#) And I heard, as it were, the **voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters** and as the sound of mighty **thunderings**, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" [Revelation 19:6 NKJV](#)

There were also several other places in the Bible where it mentions a voice like thunder.

[Job 37:2](#) Hear attentively the **thunder of His voice**, And the rumbling [that] comes from His mouth. [Job 37:2 NKJV](#)

[Job 40:9](#) Have you an arm like God? Or can you **thunder with a voice** like His? [Job 40:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:1](#) Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a **voice like thunder**, "Come and see." [Revelation 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 10:3](#) and cried with a loud voice, as [when] a lion roars. When he cried out, seven **thunders uttered their voices**.<sup>4</sup> Now when the **seven thunders uttered their voices**, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the **seven thunders uttered**, and do not write them." [Revelation 10:3-4 NKJV](#)

### *New song*

The words "new song" together were used 9 times in the NKJV, including the one we are examining.

[Psalm 33:3](#) Sing to Him a **new song**; Play skillfully with a shout of joy. [Psalm 33:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 40:3](#) He has put a **new song** in my mouth--Praise to our God; Many will see [it] and fear, And will trust in the LORD. [Psalm 40:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 96:1](#) Oh, sing to the LORD a **new song**! Sing to the LORD, all the earth. [Psalm 96:1 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 98:1](#) A Psalm. Oh, sing to the LORD a **new song**! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. [Psalm 98:1 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 144:9](#) I will sing a **new song** to You, O God; On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, [Psalm 144:9 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 149:1](#) Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a **new song**, [And] His praise in the assembly of saints. [Psalm 149:1 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 42:10](#) Sing to the LORD a **new song**, [And] His praise from the ends of the earth, You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, You coastlands and you inhabitants of them! [Isaiah 42:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:9](#) And they sang a **new song**, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, [Revelation 5:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:3](#) They sang as it were a **new song** before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred [and] forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. [Revelation 14:3 NKJV](#)

The ones in Psalms do not seem particularly relevant to this case. Isaiah was a prophecy about Jesus, and Matthew Henry says the new song the offering of the gospel of salvation to the gentiles.<sup>374</sup> It is the 24 elders that surround the throne of God that sang the new song in Revelation 5. In this case, the words of the song are given, so it doesn't seem like a song that no one else could learn. In fact, it says they sang the song before those same 24 elders and that no one could learn the song except the 144,000.

There were 80 uses of the word song in the NKJV. Songs were used by God to teach the Israelites thing He wanted them to remember. This should not be surprising, as most people today realize that they can remember words better when they are set to a tune. It should not be surprising that 47 of the 80 occurrences were from Psalms. In addition to remembering things, songs or singing in the Bible was also a way of praising and worshiping God. There did not seem to be any other verses that were particularly relevant or helpful in interpreting the song of the 144,000.

#### *Four creatures and elders*

The four creatures and 24 elders were extensively covered in a prior chapter where they were first introduced. For my description of the throne room in heaven, see [Description of the room](#). Let's look again briefly at the references to the four creatures.

[Revelation 4:6](#) Before the throne [there was] a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, [were] **four living creatures** full of eyes in front and in back. [Revelation 4:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:8](#) [The] **four living creatures**, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" [Revelation 4:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>374</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_042.cfm?a=721010](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_042.cfm?a=721010)

[Revelation 5:6](#) And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the **four living creatures**, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. [Revelation 5:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:8](#) Now when He had taken the scroll, the **four living creatures** and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [Revelation 5:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:14](#) Then the **four living creatures** said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. [Revelation 5:14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:1](#) Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the **four living creatures** saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." [Revelation 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:6](#) And I heard a voice in the midst of the **four living creatures** saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." [Revelation 6:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:11](#) All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the **four living creatures**, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [Revelation 7:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:3](#) They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the **four living creatures**, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred [and] forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. [Revelation 14:3 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 15:7](#) Then one of the **four living creatures** gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. [Revelation 15:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:4](#) And the twenty-four elders and the **four living creatures** fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" [Revelation 19:4 NKJV](#)

Next let's list the references in Revelation to the 24 elders.

[Revelation 4:4](#) Around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw **twenty-four elders** sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. [Revelation 4:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:10](#) the **twenty-four elders** fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: [Revelation 4:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:8](#) Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the **twenty-four elders** fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [Revelation 5:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:16](#) And the **twenty-four elders** who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, [Revelation 11:16 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:4](#) And the **twenty-four elders** and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" [Revelation 19:4 NKJV](#)

I previously stated that I think the 24 elders are those, mentioned below, who were resurrected when Jesus died [see [Description of the room](#)].

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:8](#) Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."  
[Ephesians 4:8 NKJV](#)

### *Not defiled with women*

I believe that being defiled with women means being sexually immoral with someone who is not your wife. In a spiritual sense, with women often representing religious organizations, this would mean being spiritually unfaithful to God. Idolatry was often represented in the Bible as spiritual harlotry. So, the NOT would mean that the 144,000 have not been spiritually unfaithful to God.

[Genesis 34:13](#) But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had **defiled** Dinah their sister. [Genesis 34:13 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 18:20](#) 'Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to **defile** yourself with her. [Leviticus 18:20 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 19:31](#) 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be **defiled** by them: I [am] the LORD your God. [Leviticus 19:31 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 2:23](#) "How can you say, 'I am not **polluted**, I have not gone after the Baals'? See your way in the valley; Know what you have done: [You are] a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways, [Jeremiah 2:23 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 5:11](#) 'Therefore, [as] I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have **defiled** My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish [you]; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. [Ezekiel 5:11 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 23:30](#) 'I will do these [things] to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become **defiled** by their idols. [Ezekiel 23:30 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 36:17](#) "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they **defiled** it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. <sup>18</sup> "Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols [with which] they had **defiled** it. [Ezekiel 36:17-18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." <sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. <sup>6</sup> I saw the

woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. [Revelation 17:1-6 NKJV](#)

### *Firstfruits*

“Firstfruits” was mentioned 33 times in the NKJV. Fruit was symbolic of any food cultivated and harvested, but first literally meant the first of the harvest to ripen. In the Old Testament, the term was almost always used in terms of offerings to God, and usually carried the meaning of giving our first and best to Him. The New Testament were somewhat more symbolic and diverse. They are all included below except for our current reference from [Revelation 14:4](#).

[Romans 8:23](#) Not only [that], but we also who have the **firstfruits** of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. [Romans 8:23 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:20](#) But now Christ is risen from the dead, [and] has become the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by man [came] death, by Man also [came] the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**, afterward those [who are] Christ's at His coming. [1 Corinthians 15:20-23 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 16:15](#) I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the **firstfruits** of Achaia, and [that] they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints-- [1 Corinthians 16:15 NKJV](#)

[James 1:18](#) Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of **firstfruits** of His creatures. [James 1:18 NKJV](#)

### *No lies, blameless*

“No lie” was only used one other time in the NKJV.

[1 John 2:21](#) I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that **no lie** is of the truth. [1 John 2:21 NKJV](#)

In the Old Testament, “no lies” was found in a prophecy from Zephaniah.

[Zephaniah 3:12](#) I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people, And they shall trust in the name of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness And speak **no lies**, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed [their] flocks and lie down, And no one shall make [them] afraid." [Zephaniah 3:12-13 NKJV](#)

The word lie is translated from the Greek word [ψεῦδος, pseudos](#)<sup>375</sup>, which was used 9 times in the KJV.

[John 8:44](#) "You are of [your] father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a **lie**, he speaks from his own [resources], for he is a liar and the father of it. [John 8:44 NKJV](#)

[Romans 1:25](#) who exchanged the truth of God for the **lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. [Romans 1:25 NKJV](#)

<sup>375</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G5579&t=NKJV>



[Ephesians 4:25](#) Therefore, putting away **lying**, "[Let] each one [of you] speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. [Ephesians 4:25 NKJV](#)

[2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and **lying** wonders, [2 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV](#)

[2 Thessalonians 2:11](#) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe **the lie**, [2 Thessalonians 2:11 NKJV](#)

[1 John 2:21](#) I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no **lie** is of the truth. [1 John 2:21 NKJV](#)

[1 John 2:27](#) But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a **lie**, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. [1 John 2:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:27](#) But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a **lie**, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. [Revelation 21:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:15](#) But outside [are] dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a **lie**. [Revelation 22:15 NKJV](#)

Blameless was found 47 times in 45 verses in the NKJV. Naturally God was said to be blameless. Another synonym is perfect which was used 61 times in the NKJV.

[2 Samuel 22:26](#) "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself **blameless**; [2 Samuel 22:26 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 18:25](#) With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself **blameless**; [Psalm 18:25 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 51:4](#) Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done [this] evil in Your sight--That You may be found just when You speak, [And] **blameless** when You judge. [Psalm 51:4 NKJV](#)

Satan was implied to be perfect until he sinned.

[Ezekiel 28:15](#) You [were] **perfect** in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. [Ezekiel 28:15 NKJV](#)

Noah was said to be perfect; Abram was asked to be blameless, and God Himself called Job blameless.

[Genesis 6:9](#) This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, **perfect** in his generations. Noah walked with God. [Genesis 6:9 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 17:1](#) When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I [am] Almighty God; walk before Me and be **blameless**. [Genesis 17:1 NKJV](#)

[Job 1:8](#) Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that [there is] none like him on the earth, a **blameless** and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" [Job 1:8 NKJV](#)

Samson, who was far from righteous, claimed blamelessness in taking action against the Philistines, because they did something to him first.

[Judges 15:3](#) And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be **blameless** regarding the Philistines if I harm them!"

[Judges 15:3 NKJV](#)

The Israelites were to be blameless by not following the spiritualistic practices of the inhabitants of the land they were going to possess.

[Deuteronomy 18:13](#) "You shall be **blameless** before the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 18:13 NKJV](#)

Solomon, in Proverbs contrasted the blameless against the perverse, the evil, the wicked, and those who shed blood [[Proverbs 11:5](#), [20](#), [Proverbs 13:6](#), [Proverbs 28:10](#), [Proverbs 29:10](#)].

Following are other variations of the idea translated from the word [ἄμωμος, amōmos](#)<sup>376</sup>.

[Ephesians 1:4](#) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, [Ephesians 1:4 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 5:27](#) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. [Ephesians 5:27 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 1:22](#) in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- [Colossians 1:22 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 9:14](#) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? [Hebrews 9:14 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:19](#) but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. [1 Peter 1:19 NKJV](#)

[Jude 1:24](#) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present [you] faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, [Jude 1:24 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:5](#) And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

[Revelation 14:5 NKJV](#)

## Interpreting the symbols

The Lamb is clearly Jesus. The question is whether the Mount Zion where He is standing is in heaven or on earth. I found Zion to refer to the Jebusite stronghold, the city of David, Jerusalem, the Temple, the Temple mount, and where God reigns and blesses and helps from. Regarding the last one, the question is whether it is from the Old Testament Sanctuary, where His presence was manifest, that He was doing these things from or from Heaven? Well, considering that they sang a song before the throne of God, and the four creatures and the twenty-four elders, this is most likely in heaven. I say most likely because there is a question of whether the throne of God is mobile [recall all the wheels in in the throne scene in [Ezekiel 1:15-21](#)].

I discussed the possible identity of the 144,000 when I studied it with [Revelation 7:1-8](#) [[Sealing of the 144,000](#)]. I concluded that these people were taken to heaven without dying, at the time of the second coming of Jesus. I believe the special song they sang, that no other could sing indicates a unique experience that they shared. I speculated that

<sup>376</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G299&t=NKJV>

these could have been the only ones to live, from the time they were sealed, to the return of Jesus. Possibly meaning a period of time living as Jesus did on earth, living with God's help without sinning. I didn't conclude whether this would be all those translated to heaven at the Second Coming, or a subset. I shied away from the literalness of the number and the literal composition being 12,000 from each tribe of Israel. I believe the name of the Lamb and of God on the forehead in [14:1](#), is the same as the seal of God mentioned in [chapter 7](#). It was symbolic of those who at the specific time, were faithful to God in keeping all of His laws.

The new song that only the 144,000 were able to sing implies that there was something different about the experience of this group among all the others who are saved. Translation (going to heaven without dying) alone is not a unique characteristic to them because we know that at least Enoch, and Elijah were translated. Although called firstfruits, they were clearly not the first humans to set foot in heaven. They were not the first to be resurrected to eternal life either, because at least Moses and those who rose at the time of Christ's death, were all taken to heaven. No lies and blameless should seem to be characteristics of all who are taken to heaven, but in situations such as the thief on the cross who asked Jesus for salvation just prior to his death, that would not be the case. I imagine there will be many more like him who gave their life to Jesus on their death bed who will also be in heaven. But at the same time there could be no one of whom it could be said that they lived their entire life without lying, and were completely blameless except for Jesus. Therefore, in order to have that be said of them, it would really require the forgiveness of God which is available to all and in fact required for anyone to be saved. So, finally I'm back to the possibility that I mentioned in the prior paragraph, that there could be a group of people who would live as Jesus did, without sinning, for a period of time on this earth. That would be from the time they are sealed, through some time of trouble, until Jesus comes back and we are all changed in the twinkling of an eye and put on immortality [[1 Corinthians 15:50-57](#)].

I wanted to look at the characteristic "not defiled with women." The verse follows that up with a clarifying statement that they kept themselves chaste. Chaste is translated from [παρθένος, parthenos](#)<sup>377</sup> and has the following outline for Biblical use:

1. A virgin
  - a. a marriageable maiden
  - b. a woman who has never had sexual intercourse with a man
  - c. one's marriageable daughter
2. A man who has abstained from all uncleanness and whoredom attendant on idolatry, and so has kept his chastity
  - a. one who has never had intercourse with women

Clearly from the sub definitions, the first one a virgin woman, is not applicable because this verse is talking about not being defiled with women. But the second essentially refers to a man who is also a virgin. But it is more than that because it also refers to never having participated in religious/temple sexual practices that were often associated with idolatry. Since this is symbolic, I think it is fair to say it doesn't only apply to men which would exclude women from being in the 144,000. There have been cases through Revelation so far which symbolizes a religion as a woman. So being a virgin, would imply never having strayed from faithfulness to God and keeping His commandments. But this brings up an interesting question. Does this necessarily imply one that is born into a family that is spiritually faithful to God, and then never strays from that faithfulness? I don't think this would be the case because then something their parents did could be held against someone. But the word chaste is used which implies that having once participated in idolatrous sexual practices one would not be considered chaste, even as one who has had sexual intercourse could never be

<sup>377</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3933&t=NKJV>

considered a virgin. I'm not sure what to say about this because I believe that the Bible implies that once a person's sin is forgiven, it is never held against them anymore [[Micah 7:19](#), [Psalm 51:7](#), [Romans 4:7](#)].

Finally, let's look at lies and being blameless. One of the Ten Commandments is not to bear false witness, which is a category of lying. But this verse doesn't say it that way, and shouldn't it be interpreted symbolically anyway. The New Testament use of the Greek word used it frequently in the negative in reference to God's truth. In other words, God's truth is not a lie. It was used once in reference to Satan being the father of lies. I think this verse is saying that the 144,000 always spoke the truth of God. Perhaps it could be said that they never gave a false witness of God to the world.

## Conclusion

I believe this is a scene on Mount Zion where the 144,000 are assembled before the Lamb and the throne of God. This is mostly a vision of the 144,000 and a few more details of who they are. I believe they are some or all of the people who are translated to heaven without dying at the second coming of Jesus. They experience something unique among all those taken to heaven. I suggested that it could be that they will live for a period of time without sin, from the time they are sealed, through the close of probation, to the second coming.

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What do you believe?

- What do you think it means to have God's name on the forehead?
- Do you think the 144,000 is a literal number?
- Why do you think there is a song that only these can sing?

## The first angel's message

### [Revelation 14:6-7](#)

[Revelation 14:6](#) Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people--<sup>7</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." [Revelation 14:6-7 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Angel flying in the midst of heaven*

The word angel is used nearly 199 times in the NKJV. I do not believe there to be any benefit from analyzing each one. Suffice it to say that Angels are messengers.

Flying or wings have been seen before in prophecy to represent speed, or events which happen quickly.

[Daniel 7:3](#) "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. <sup>4</sup> "The first [was] like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and [had] three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' <sup>6</sup> "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. [Daniel 7:3-6 NKJV](#)

Midst of heaven is translated from the word [μεσουράνημα, mesouranēma](#)<sup>378</sup> which is used with the following implication:

the highest point in the heavens, which the sun occupies at noon, where what is done can be seen and heard by all<sup>379</sup>

### *Everlasting gospel*

The word gospel is used many times in the Bible. It is translated from the Greek word [εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)<sup>380</sup>, referring to the good news of salvation through Jesus. When He was on earth, before He returned to heaven, He said that the gospel would be preached to all the world before He returned.

[Matthew 24:14](#) "And this [gospel](#) of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. [Matthew 24:14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:10](#) "And [the gospel](#) must first be preached to all the nations. <sup>11</sup> "But when they arrest [you] and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup> "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father [his] child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. <sup>13</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. [Mark 13:10-13 NKJV](#)

### *Every nation tribe tongue and people*

The recipients of the gospel as stated by Jesus, was said to be all nations. In this reference, however, the first angel is declaring the gospel, not just to every nation, but to every tribe, tongue and people.

In the Old Testament, in a story we recently likened to the earth beast for trying to force all people to worship the image of the beast, Nebuchadnezzar addressed the crowd in a similar fashion.

[Daniel 3:4](#) Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, <sup>5</sup> "[that] at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; <sup>6</sup> "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." <sup>7</sup> So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, [and] lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down [and] worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [Daniel 3:4-7 NKJV](#)

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that the book of Daniel contains 4 more instances of this type of declaration.

[Daniel 4:1](#) Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. [Daniel 4:1 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:19](#) "And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. [Daniel 5:19 NKJV](#)

<sup>378</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3321&t=NKJV>

<sup>379</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3321&t=NKJV>

<sup>380</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongsg=G2098&t=NKJV>

[Daniel 6:25](#) Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. [Daniel 6:25 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:14](#) Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom [the one] Which shall not be destroyed. [Daniel 7:14 NKJV](#)

I don't know if these kings had such big egos that they believed and meant these declarations literally, but in God's case it is literal.

### *Fear God and give Him glory*

"Fear God" was used 17 times in the NKJV. The use ranged from "does not fear God," meaning the person was not behaving in a humane way, to the way that Abraham, Joseph and Job feared God. "Glory to God" was used 4 times in the NKJV in different contexts.

[Luke 2:14](#) "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" [Luke 2:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:18](#) "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" [Luke 17:18 NKJV](#)

[John 9:24](#) So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." [John 9:24 NKJV](#)

[Romans 4:20](#) He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, [Romans 4:20 NKJV](#)

The first was a declaration by Angels accompanying the announcement of the birth of Jesus. The second was an acknowledgment by Jesus that the Samaritan had returned to thank Him for the healing. The third was when the scribes and Pharisees were trying to get the healed blind man to credit God with his healing rather than Jesus. The last was about Abraham, who glorified God by believing that he and Sarah could still have a son according to the promise.

### *The hour of His judgment has come*

The word hour is translated from the Greek word [ὥρα, hōra](#)<sup>381</sup>, which was used 108 times, primarily in the context of a specific time, or an appointed time, rather than a duration of time. Judgement is from the Greek word [κρίσις, krisis](#)<sup>382</sup>, which was used 48 times. Its various uses were:

1. a separating, sundering, separation
  - a. a trial, contest
2. selection
3. judgment
  - a. opinion or decision given concerning anything
    - i. esp. concerning justice and injustice, right or wrong
  - b. sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment
4. the college of judges (a tribunal of seven men in the several cities of Palestine; as distinguished from the Sanhedrin, which had its seat at Jerusalem)

<sup>381</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5610&t=NKJV>

<sup>382</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2920&t=NKJV>

## 5. right, justice

I believe the first three definitions could all apply. The following verses are the ones I thought most relevant:

[Matthew 12:36](#) "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day [of judgment](#). [Matthew 12:36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:41](#) "The men of Nineveh will rise up in [the judgment](#) with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here. <sup>42</sup> "The queen of the South will rise up in [the judgment](#) with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon [is] here. [Matthew 12:41-42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 10:14](#) "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at [the judgment](#) than for you. [Luke 10:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:31](#) "The queen of the South will rise up in [the judgment](#) with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon [is] here. <sup>32</sup> "The men of Nineveh will rise up in [the judgment](#) with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here. [Luke 11:31-32 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 2:4](#) For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast [them] down to hell and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved for [judgment](#); [2 Peter 2:4 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 2:9](#) [then] the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day [of judgment](#), [2 Peter 2:9 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 3:7](#) But the heavens and the earth [which] are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day [of judgment](#) and perdition of ungodly men. [2 Peter 3:7 NKJV](#)

[1 John 4:17](#) Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day [of judgment](#); because as He is, so are we in this world. [1 John 4:17 NKJV](#)

[Jude 1:6](#) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for [the judgment](#) of the great day; [Jude 1:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:10](#) "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your [judgment](#) has come.' [Revelation 18:10 NKJV](#)

### *Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water*

We worship God because he made all things. We should keep His Law, including the Sabbath day, because the Law giver is the one who made us, and all thing in the world.

[Revelation 4:10](#) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: <sup>11</sup> "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." [Revelation 4:10-11 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 20:8](#) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day [is] the Sabbath of the LORD your God. [In it] you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who [is] within your

gates. <sup>11</sup> For [in] six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that [is] in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. [Exodus 20:8-11 NKJV](#)

[Nehemiah 9:5](#) And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, [and] Pethahiah, said: "Stand up [and] bless the LORD your God Forever and ever! "Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise! <sup>6</sup> You alone [are] the LORD; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You. [Nehemiah 9:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:5](#) Happy [is he] who [has] the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope [is] in the LORD his God, <sup>6</sup> Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that [is] in them; Who keeps truth forever, [Psalm 146:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Acts 14:15](#) and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, [Acts 14:15 NKJV](#)

### Interpreting the symbols

I believe the angel represents a group of people, at a specific time, giving a message. The flight represents the speed at which the message is spread. The message I believe is literal, the gospel of the good news of salvation to all people, but also the hour of judgment. What event encapsulates the good news of salvation, and a judgment? The second coming of Jesus does, bringing salvation for some and judgment for others.

Maxwell points out that from very early times Christians have limited the final judgment to the second coming. But the Bible presents four phases of the final judgment, of which the judgment at the second coming is only one: <sup>383</sup>

1. *Judgment before the second coming*: The Son of man comes to the Ancient of Days ([Daniel 7:9-14, 26, 27](#)), cleanses the sanctuary ([Daniel 8:14](#)), and investigates the books ([Daniel 7:10](#)) to disclose who is qualified to be retained in the book of life. See [Daniel 12:1, 2](#).
2. *Judgment at the second coming*. The Son of man, seated in glory, separates the sheep from the goats. [Matthew 25:31-46](#).
3. *Judgment during the millennium*: During the 1000 years the saints sit on thrones, and judgment is committed to them as they examine the records of the unsaved and of the fallen angels. [Revelation 20:4](#); [1 Corinthians 6:2, 3](#).
4. *Judgment at the end of the millennium*: At the close of the 1000 years sentence is executed, and the unsaved and death itself are thrown into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:12-15](#).

Regarding the interest and spread of the gospel, Maxwell wrote:

Manuel de Lacunza (1731-1801) was one of the first in modern times to arouse interest in the second coming of Christ. A Spanish Jesuit assigned to serve in Chile, Lacunza returned to Spain when the Jesuit Order (the Society of Jesus) was banished from Chile in 1767. He died under mysterious circumstances in central Italy.

At some point in his difficult life, Lacunza's heart was warmed by the candle of Bible prophecy. He wrote an extensive manuscript in Spanish; but fearing that the Inquisition would burn it if its author became known, he substituted for his own name on the title page the Jewish name Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra. He also substituted

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<sup>383</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p352-353.



“Messiah” for “Christ,” as a Jewish Christian write might have done, titling the book, *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty*.

Cherished hand-written copies in Spanish, and translations in Italian and Latin, were soon circulating surreptitiously in southern Europe and South America, stimulating considerable interest in the second coming. Years after Lacunza’s death the Inquisition did condemn his book, and in 1824 Pope Leo XII personally prohibited the publication of it “in any language whatsoever.”

Edward Irving (1792-1834), who preached to high society in London and once addressed 12,000 people outdoors in Scotland, responded to the Catholic censorship by translating Lacunza’s book into English. A British ambassador carried two hundred copies to Chile, the land where Lacunza once had served. Lacunza club still exists in Chile, dedicated to his memory.

Lacunza as a Jesuit priest followed in the footsteps of Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), the Jesuit priest who reformulated futurism in direct opposition to Protestant historicism.<sup>384</sup>

Nevertheless, Lacunza made a positive contribution by stirring up interest in the judgment, the second advent, and premillennialism.<sup>385</sup>

A fuller contribution to the fulfillment of the first angel’s message was made by another European who, like Lacunza, was also a Catholic, at least for a while, and who unlike Lacunza, was a real Jew. Joseph Wolff (1795-1862) as a boy was attracted to Catholic Christianity by the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about Christ’s first advent. While studying in Rome to become a Catholic missionary, he was led by the second-advent prophecies to become a Protestant.

Wolff calculated that the 2300 days would end in 1847. Master of six languages and able to converse freely in eight others, this amazing Christian Jewish “missionary to the world” carried the judgment-hour message through many adventures to lands as far east as India. By invitation in 1837 he also preached at a worship service for the two houses of the United States Congress.<sup>386</sup>

Henry Drummond (1786-1860), a British banker, member of Parliament, and Fellow of the Royal Society, contributed much time and wealth to the second-advent awakening and served as host to five prophetic conferences (1826-1830) which met in his splendid mansion at Albury Park.<sup>387</sup>

William Cuninghame (1776-1849), a Scottish layman who attended Drummond’s prophetic conferences, wrote 21 books on the prophecies.<sup>388</sup> Other prominent participants in the Albury conferences included Joseph Wolff and Edward Irving, whom we have already met. Irving’s interest in second-advent prophecy was stimulated by Lacunza’s book, which he translated in 1826, the year of the first prophetic conference.

With two other second-advent preachers, James Frère and Lewis Way, Irving founded the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy, whose goal was to study “the speedy coming of our Lord.” During one of his Scottish

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<sup>384</sup> Maxwell. p417. [23. Froom, LeRoy Edwin. *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1946-1954) and R. W. Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1979), v2, p507-510.]

<sup>385</sup> Maxwell. p417. [24. Froom. v3, p303-324.]

<sup>386</sup> Maxwell. p417. [25. Froom. v3, p461-481.]

<sup>387</sup> Maxwell. p417. [26. Froom. v3, p434-439, 449-456.]

<sup>388</sup> Maxwell. p417. [27. Froom. v3, p364-376.]

tours he converted the three Bonar brothers to the advent hope. Horatius Bonar served twenty-five years as editor of *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*. His fine hymn, beginning "I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto Me and rest,'" is still widely loved.

But tragedy struck Irving's career. One Sunday in 1831 his sermon was interrupted by someone's talking in tongues. Later there were unusual experiments with faith healing. Many in the congregation were offended. Because Irving was a gentle pastor, he hoped the controversial manifestations were a latter-day out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. But he was voted out of his pulpit and tried for heresy. He died brokenhearted in his early 40s. But he was buried, after a very large funeral, in the prestigious Glasgow Cathedral.<sup>389</sup>

We'll have occasion to visit Irving's congregation again on pages 517, 518.

In Germany, Johann Richter emphasized the second advent in his six-volume *Family Bible Commentary*. Leonard Kelber taught it to his schoolchildren in Bavaria. Johann Lutz, Catholic pastor, transformed his village from both poverty and sin by preaching on the second coming.<sup>390</sup>

In Geneva, Switzerland, Francois S. R. L. Gausson (1790-1863), a close friend of Merle d'Aubigné, the famous church historian, became widely known for the work he did among the families. Driven from his pulpit in the state church because he talked so much about the second coming, he got a job teaching in the Evangelical Society's School of Theology. A special method of his was to teach the book Daniel to Sunday School children. When the children happily reported at home what they were learning, their parents came to hear Gausson too.<sup>391</sup>

*Children preach in Sweden.* Children took an even more active part in the first angel's message in Sweden, where only official clergy were allowed to preach, and they were not interested in the second coming. In one of the most remarkable developments in the fulfillment of the first angel's message, during 1842 and 1843 youth and even little children preached the judgment hour.

Ole Boqvist and Erik Walbom, teenagers, were imprisoned and cruelly beaten under a stream of ice-cold water. Children as young as six gave sermons to group sometimes as large as several thousand, urging people to repent because of the soon arrival of the judgment. Some of the children appeared to be in a vision or trancelike state while preaching. When not preaching they talked and acted like normal boys and girls.

A government physician, Dr. S. E. Sköldberg, submitted an official report based on numerous observations of the child preachers. The health department for a time forbade children to cross county lines in order to quarantine what it called the "preaching sickness"!

When children were asked to explain what they were doing, they quoted two Bible text in particular: Joel 2:28, 29, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit ... [and] your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," and Revelation 14:7, "**The hour of his judgment has come.**"<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Maxwell. p417. [28. Froom. v3, p514-526. For a recent book on Irving, not always fair to his views, see Arnold Dallimore, *Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement: The Life of Edward Irving* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983).]

<sup>390</sup> Maxwell. p417. [29. Froom. v3, p701-703, 299; M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-Day Adventists* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1925), p99-101.]

<sup>391</sup> Maxwell. p417. [30. Froom. v3, p687-700.]

<sup>392</sup> Maxwell. p417. [31. Froom. v3, p671-686.]

Many other persons could be named who in the 1800s carried the first angel's message: Edward Bickersmith, British attorney and foreign missionary; Alexander Keith, minister of the Scottish Free Church; George Muller, founder of the famous Bristol Orphanage; H Heintzpeter, keeper of the Royal Museum at The Hague; Daniel Wilson, Anglican bishop in India; Thomas Playford in Australia; and on and on. It is reported that in the 1840s as many as 700 Anglican ministers in Great Britain, besides numerous ministers of other denominations, preached **"the hour of his judgment has come."**<sup>393</sup> Thomas B. Macaulay, the famous historian and member of Parliament, recorded in 1844 that the number who believed in an imminent return of Christ included men "distinguished by rank, wealth, and ability.... Noblemen," he added, "and members of parliament have written in defense of it."<sup>394</sup>

Impressive as the early fulfillment of the first angel's message was in Europe and other areas around the world, it commanded even greater attention in North America, as we shall see in the following section.<sup>395</sup>

In the northeastern United States, there was a movement back in the early 1800's, which I have mentioned multiple times before [[Angel and the little book](#)], where William Miller and others preached the soon coming of Jesus. The timing was based on the 2,300-year prophecy from Daniel which they determined to end in 1844. Some eventually determined they were correct about the coming judgment, but they were wrong about which one.

To William Miller and his co-laborers it was given to preach the warning in America. This country became the center of the great Advent movement. It was here that the prophecy of the first angel's message had its most direct fulfillment. The writings of Miller and his associates were carried to distant lands. Wherever missionaries had penetrated in all the world, were sent the glad tidings of Christ's speedy return. Far and wide spread the message of the everlasting gospel, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is come."

The testimony of the prophecies which seemed to point to the coming of Christ in the spring of 1844 took deep hold of the minds of the people. As the message went from State to State, there was everywhere awakened widespread interest. Many were convicted that the arguments from the prophetic periods were correct, and, sacrificing their pride of opinion, they joyfully received the truth. Some ministers laid aside their sectarian views and feelings, left their salaries and their churches, and united in proclaiming the coming of Jesus. There were comparatively few ministers, however, who would accept this message; therefore it was largely committed to humble laymen. Farmers left their fields, mechanics their tools, traders their merchandise, professional men their positions; and yet the number of workers was small in comparison with the work to be accomplished. The condition of an ungodly church and a world lying in wickedness burdened the souls of the true watchmen, and they willingly endured toil, privation, and suffering, that they might call men to repentance unto salvation. Though opposed by Satan, the work went steadily forward, and the Advent truth was accepted by many thousands.

Everywhere the searching testimony was heard, warning sinners, both worldlings and church-members, to flee from the wrath to come. Like John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, the preachers laid the ax at the root of the tree, and urged all to bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

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<sup>393</sup> Maxwell. p417. [32. Mourant Brock, *Glorification* (American Millennial Association reprint, 1845), in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, v3, p705, 706]

<sup>394</sup> Maxwell. p417. [33. Thomas B. Macaulay, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (Philadelphia: Cary and Hart, 1844), v5, p324, in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, v3, p268]

<sup>395</sup> Maxwell. p353-356.

All classes flocked to the Adventist meetings. Rich and poor, high and low, were, from various causes, anxious to hear for themselves the doctrine of the second advent. The Lord held the spirit of opposition in check while his servants explained the reasons of their faith. Sometimes the instrument was feeble: but the Spirit of God gave power to his truth. The presence of holy angels was felt in these assemblies, and many were daily added to the believers. As the evidences of Christ's soon coming were repeated, vast crowds listened in breathless silence to the solemn words. Heaven and earth seemed to approach each other. The power of God was felt upon old and young and middle-aged. Men sought their homes with praises upon their lips, and the glad sound rang out upon the still night air. None who attended those meetings can ever forget those scenes of deepest interest. [White, Great Controversy, p368-369](#)<sup>396</sup>

## Conclusion

I believe the first angel's message was fulfilled by the spread of the gospel and of the coming judgment leading up to October 22, 1844, and ended with the light on the fourth commandment, a memorial of Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of waters.

[Exodus 20:8](#) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day [is] the Sabbath of the LORD your God. [In it] you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who [is] within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For [in] six days **the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that [is] in them**, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. [Exodus 20:8-11 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- What do you think about the idea of the first angels' message being about something a specific event, as opposed to the general spread of the gospel that has taken place down through Christian history?
- Do you believe that "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" must be fulfilled literally?
- Do you think this message ties in with the seal of God and the 144,000?

## The second angel's message

### [Revelation 14:8](#)

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Angel*

I believe angel(s) are real beings and are mentioned many times in the Bible, in fact 292 times in the NKJV. The Bible portrays them as powerful beings that carry messages from God or carry out actions at God's request. I believe there is a specific term, "angel of the Lord," which often referred to the pre-incarnate Son of God [[The sixth trumpet](#) – [Four angels](#)].

<sup>396</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p368-369.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAyAAJ&pg=PA368>,  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=368>

### *Babylon is fallen*

The name Babylon appears 287 times in the NKJV, all but 12 of which are in the Old Testament. It might be an understatement to say that Babylon played a major role in the history of the Jewish nation. It was Babylon that destroyed the first Jewish temple and took away their independence for the first time since start of the Jewish monarchy. The story of the literal fall of Babylon is recorded in Daniel 5, but its fall was predicted by Isaiah and Jeremiah before it happened.

[Isaiah 21:9](#) And look, here comes a chariot of men [with] a pair of horsemen!" Then he answered and said, "**Babylon** is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground." [Isaiah 21:9 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:8](#) **Babylon** has suddenly fallen and been destroyed. Wail for her! Take balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. [Jeremiah 51:8 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:44](#) I will punish Bel in **Babylon**, And I will bring out of his mouth what he has swallowed; And the nations shall not stream to him anymore. Yes, the wall of **Babylon** shall fall. [Jeremiah 51:44 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:49](#) As **Babylon** [has caused] the slain of Israel to fall, So at **Babylon** the slain of all the earth shall fall. [Jeremiah 51:49 NKJV](#)

There are six references to Babylon as a symbol in Revelation, beginning with the current one that we are examining.

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "**Babylon** is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:19](#) Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great **Babylon** was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. [Revelation 16:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:5](#) And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, **BABYLON** THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. [Revelation 17:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:2](#) And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "**Babylon** the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!" [Revelation 18:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:10](#) "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city **Babylon**, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' [Revelation 18:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:21](#) Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw [it] into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city **Babylon** shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. [Revelation 18:21 NKJV](#)

### *Made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*

First, we can look back to the fall of literal Babylon in Daniel 5.

[Daniel 5:1](#) Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. <sup>2</sup> While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which [had been] in Jerusalem, that the king and his

lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup> Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which [had been] in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup> They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. [Daniel 5:1-4 NKJV](#)

There was a lot of literal wine, and most likely passion and immorality going on at that feast. There was also in a sense blasphemy of God not only by drinking out of His goblets but praising false gods as well. It was in the midst of this that Babylon fell.

Later in Revelation, we have a similar picture being draw of a symbolic Babylon falling.

[Revelation 18:1](#) After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! <sup>3</sup> "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." [Revelation 18:1-3 NKJV](#)

Is this fall depicted in Revelation 18 the same as the fall announced by the second angel? At first glance, it seems to be a more detailed scene foretelling the same event. I think I will defer trying to answer this question to when I study Revelation 18.

### Interpreting the symbols

A second angel announces the fall of Babylon. This must be a religious entity because the female pronoun is used. It is also said to be immoral and to have forced its immorality on others. This is clearly a symbol of a false religion. This is the first of six mentions of the name Babylon in Revelation. I don't think it is possible for us to get a full understanding of this name without looking ahead and trying to understand the other five.

First, I want to go all the way back to the tower of Babel, which is a name that is definitely similar, and may have a connection. Immediately after the flood, God gave a promise to the survivors that He would not destroy the world again with a flood. The tower of Babel was an attempt by those shortly after the flood, who didn't believe God's promise, to save themselves in case of another flood. God was not pleased and dispersed them [[Genesis 11:1-9](#)].

Next, I would like to skip forward to the Old Testament Babylonian Empire and its most famous king, Nebuchadnezzar. He was known for a couple things that may be relevant. In his pride and arrogance, He built an image that was 60 cubits tall and 6 cubits wide and attempted to force "the whole world" to bow down and worship his image [[Daniel 3](#)]. In the very next chapter of Daniel, we read the following words of Nebuchadnezzar, demonstrating his pride and arrogance, in spite of the prior demonstrations of God's power through Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

[Daniel 4:29](#) At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. <sup>30</sup> The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" [Daniel 4:29-30 NKJV](#)

A parallel could be draw between these two stories by the king of Babylon, and people who built the tower of Babel, that being salvation by their own works. An attempt to build an impregnable tower or city to save themselves, in spite of their knowledge of what God said. In the case of Babel that He wouldn't destroy the world with a flood

again. And in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, that Babylon would not last forever, and would be succeeded by another empire.

Let me point out one more interesting parallel that will come into play when examining the symbol Babylon in Revelation. It was Babylon who destroyed the first Jewish Temple and dispersed or took Jews into captivity, ending their existence as an independent nation. And who was the second power to destroy the Jewish Temple and disperse the Jews through persecution? Of course, it was Rome.

Babel fell by God's intervention. Babylon, who persecuted God's people, fell as He predicted in spite of their attempts to prevent it. The Roman Empire, who conquered and persecuted God's people, fell as God predicted. In fact, Rome was even more deeply involved. They conquered the Jews, the Old Testament people of God. They also persecuted Jesus Himself. And then they persecuted His followers, in the early Christian Church, which were the New Testament people of God. Following this trend, and looking at the prophecies, let's see if we can identify the next persecutor of God's people.

- There is the little horn in Daniel's vision [[Daniel 7:8](#)], that rose to power out of the ten horns that followed Rome
- There is a little horn again in [Daniel 8:9-14](#). The first phase of which represented the Roman Empire, but it continued after the fall of the empire
- There is the great red dragon that persecuted the woman (God's people) [[Revelation 12:3-4](#)]
- There is the serpent and the dragon again in [Revelation 12:13-17](#)
- Then there is the beast from the sea, who said blasphemous things and got his power from the dragon [[Revelation 13:1-4](#)]
- In [Revelation 17:3-6](#), we have Babylon the great, mother of harlots, sitting on the beast from the sea, and the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints

So, it seems that after the fall of the Roman Empire, there is a religious and political power that that will speak blasphemous things and will persecute the pure woman (God's people). And there is Babylon the great, mother of harlots, who is drunk with the blood of the saints. If Babel is the first Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon is the second, then perhaps Rome could be the third, and the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages the fourth. But I have repeatedly shown that this fourth Babylon, also known as the little horn, fell after a period of time which ended in 1798 [for other mention of this time period along with references, see [Daniel – The Little Horn](#), [The Tribulation](#), [The third church](#), [Dark sun](#), [The male child](#), [Forty two months](#), [The beast from the sea](#)]. But is there a fifth Babylon, after 1798? The timeline I selected for the first angel's message was after 1798, when Babylon, the mother would definitely be fallen. But the beast from the sea mentioned in my list above, received a fatal wound and then came back to life [[Revelation 13:1-4](#)]. Also last in my list above, remember that [Revelation 17](#) says that Babylon the great was the mother of harlots. Who would daughter harlots be? Multiple religious organizations, who tried to copy their mother in uniting with civil power to persecute God's people. Could that be what the second angel is announcing the fall of? By definition of its own name, the Catholic Church is universal and was mostly united under one leader and one set of doctrines. But after the reformation, the Christian Church was greatly fragmented into many denominations. But who else could the harlots, that Babylon was the mother of be [[Revelation 17:3-6](#)]? I believe the harlots are the protestant Christian churches that unite with the civil power of the United States (beast from the earth) to behave as their mother Babylon. Other governments may get involved but the US is the most powerful. This unity of Protestant Church and state is the image that the beast from the earth made and compelled all to worship [[Revelation 13:11-18](#)]. So the question is, which Babylon is fallen in the message of this second angel, and when?

## Conclusion

I believe the second angel's message is directly tied to the first. In other words, those who rejected the first suffered the pronouncement of the second. Since Babylon is referred to as she, then it is referring to a church or religious entity. Since the Roman Catholic Church had fallen in 1798, then this message would presumably be about the next Babylon, the harlot daughters? Or perhaps the daughters had not become harlots yet if they were not united with civil powers to become the image of the beast. In any case, many who had accepted the first angel's message found themselves treated as heretics and thrown out of their respective churches. The Babylon that is fallen does not apply to the secular world that rejected the message but to the churches, more specifically the Christian churches.

Many were persecuted by their unbelieving brethren. In order to retain their position in the church, some consented to be silent in regard to their hope; but others felt that loyalty to God forbade them thus to hide the truths which he had committed to their trust. Not a few were cut off from the fellowship of the church for no other reason than expressing their belief in the coming of Christ. Very precious to those who bore this trial of their faith were the words of the prophet, "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified. But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." [Isaiah 66:5.]

Angels of God were watching with the deepest interest the result of the warning. When there was a general rejection of the message by the churches, angels turned away in sadness. Yet there were many who had not yet been tested in regard to the Advent truth. Many were misled by husbands, wives, parents, or children, and were made to believe it a sin even to listen to such heresies as were taught by the Adventists. Angels were bidden to keep faithful watch over these souls; for another light was yet to shine upon them from the throne of God.

[White, Great Controversy, p372-373](#)<sup>397</sup>

As the attitude of most ministers and theologians hardened against the first angel's message in the summer and autumn of 1843, Miller's associates began to notice in a new way the second angel's message of Revelation 14:8, "**Another angel, a second, followed**" the first one, "**saying 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion.'**"

Protestants since Luther's day had correctly seen Babylon as a symbol of the Roman church, a Christian body whose leaders at worst rejected elements of Bible truth and persecuted Christians who chose to believe them. By the second half of 1843 many Protestant churches in North America were ridiculing and rejecting the significant Bible truth Miller and his associates were preaching. Not content merely to disagree disagreeably, they also read out of membership many thousands of their loyal church fold who chose to believe it. Maxwell, *God Cares*, p367<sup>398</sup>

*Application of the Fall of Babylon.*--To come now more particularly to the application of the prophecy concerning the fall of Babylon, let us see how the religious world stood with reference to the possibility of such a change when the time came for the proclamation of such a change when the time came for the proclamation of this second message in connection with the first about the year 1844. Paganism was only apostasy and corruption in the beginning, and is so still. No spiritual fall is possible there. Roman Catholicism had been in a fallen condition for many centuries. But the Protestant churches had begun the great work of reformation from papal corruption

<sup>397</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p372-373.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA372>,

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=372>

<sup>398</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p367.



and had done noble work. They were, in a word, in such a position that with them a spiritual fall was possible. The conclusion is therefore inevitable that the message announcing the fall had reference almost wholly to the Protestant churches.

The question may then be asked why this announcement was not made sooner, if so large a part of Babylon had been so long fallen. The answer is at hand: Babylon as a whole could not be said to be fallen so long as one division of it remained unfallen. It could not be announced, therefore, until a change for the worse came over the Protestant world, and the truth through which alone the path of progress lay, had been compromised. When this took place, and a spiritual fall was experienced in this last branch, then the announcement concerning Babylon as a whole could be made, as it could not have been made before--"Babylon is fallen."

It may be proper to inquire further how the reason assigned for the fall of Babylon--that she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication--would apply to the Protestant churches at the time in question. The answer is, It would apply most pertinently. The fault with Babylon lies in her confusion of the truth and her consequent false doctrines. Because she industriously propagates these, clinging to them when light and truth which would correct them is offered, she is in a fallen state.

With the Protestant churches, the time had come for an advance to higher religious ground. They could accept the proffered light and truth, and reach the higher attainment, or they could reject it, and lose their spirituality and favor with God, or, in other words, experience a spiritual fall. Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p651-653<sup>399</sup>

What do you believe?

- Do you think this application of the second angel's message can only be accepted by a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church?
- How do you think the following applies, 'she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality'?
- Do you think the fall predicted in this message happened and is done, or do you think it is ongoing?

## The third angel's message

### [Revelation 14:9-12](#)

[Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives [his] mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." <sup>12</sup> Here is the patience of the saints; here [are] those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. [Revelation 14:9-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>399</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation*. Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 2005. p651-653

<http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA651>; Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p737-732

<http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA737>

## Examining the symbols

### Angel

See [The second angel's message](#).

### Loud voice

I was sure I had examined this symbol before but when I searched for it in my document, I found many verses with "loud voice," but no specific examination of those two words together. As it turns out there were a number of cases where I should have examined these two words, but at least I'll catch them now. I did one other examination, "[voices in heaven](#)," for the Seventh trumpet where most of the verses I found also corresponded to a loud voice.

The expression "loud voice(s)" was used 59 times in the NKJV and 20 times in Revelation. "Loud voice" was used 19 times in the Old Testament where people were mostly trying to make themselves heard or communicating over a large distance or to a large number of people. In the New Testament, Jesus was said to speak with a loud voice 6 times, 5 of which were His dying words repeated in three gospels, the last when He raised Lazarus to life.

[Matthew 27:46](#) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a **loud voice**, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" [Matthew 27:46 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:50](#) And Jesus cried out again with a **loud voice**, and yielded up His spirit. [Matthew 27:50 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:34](#) And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a **loud voice**, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" [Mark 15:34 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:37](#) And Jesus cried out with a **loud voice**, and breathed His last. [Mark 15:37 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:46](#) And when Jesus had cried out with a **loud voice**, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last. [Luke 23:46 NKJV](#)

[John 11:43](#) Now when He had said these things, He cried with a **loud voice**, "Lazarus, come forth!" [John 11:43 NKJV](#)

There were 4 times in the New Testament when evil spirits were said to cry out with a loud voice when they were about to be cast out. Most likely wanting to cause a disturbance.

Of the 20 times in Revelation, half were an angel or eagle, speaking with a loud voice either from heaven or from midair. Several other times the source of the loud voice from heaven was not identified, but most likely it was an angel as well. The only instance where it was clear that it was God speaking with a loud voice in Revelation was in the opening of the book.

[Revelation 1:9](#) I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send [it] to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." <sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven lampstands [One] like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. [Revelation 1:9-13 NKJV](#)

### *Worship the beast and his image*

It's fairly clear this message has a lot to do with the vision of the beast from the earth in [Revelation 13](#).

[Revelation 13:11](#) Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to **worship the first beast**, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. <sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. <sup>15</sup> He was granted [power] to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not **worship the image of the beast** to be killed. <sup>16</sup> He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup> and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number [is] 666. [Revelation 13:11-18 NKJV](#)

An analysis was done when I covered [Revelation 13:11-18](#). There I pointed out the story of Nebuchadnezzar's image that he attempted to force everyone to worship [see [Image to the beast](#)]. The beast and the image of the beast in this case are symbolic, and worship of them implies giving your devotion to them instead of God.

### *Mark on forehead or hand*

This was also covered when I wrote about the [beast from the earth](#). It is interesting that there are some pretty clear parallels between the third angel's message and the beast from the earth.

### *Drink of the wine of the wrath of God*

The word wine is used 236 times in the NKJV. It has both positive and negative applications depending on the type of wine. Wine could imply the fresh unfermented grape juice, as well as the fermented, which could make one drunk. Noah and Lot both did some regrettable things when they were under the influence of fermented wine [[Genesis 9:21](#), [Genesis 9:32-35](#)]. In Proverbs, Solomon also mentions some of the hazards of drinking wine [[Proverbs 20:1](#), [Proverbs 23:20-21](#), [Proverbs 23:31-32](#)].

There was only one place that I found outside of Revelation that came close to using the three words wine(press), wrath, and God in a single verse.

[Jeremiah 25:15](#) For thus says the LORD **God** of Israel to me: "Take this **wine** cup of **fury** from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. [Jeremiah 25:15 NKJV](#)

Here are the other ones in Revelation as well:

[Revelation 14:19](#) So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw [it] into the great **winepress** of the **wrath** of **God**. [Revelation 14:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:19](#) Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before **God**, to give her the cup of the **wine** of the fierceness of His **wrath**. [Revelation 16:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:15](#) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the **winepress** of the fierceness and **wrath** of Almighty **God**.  
[Revelation 19:15 NKJV](#)

“of the wrath” was used 9 times in the NKJV, here are the other 7.

[Job 21:20](#) Let his eyes see his destruction, And let him drink **of the wrath** of the Almighty. [Job 21:20 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 50:13](#) Because **of the wrath** of the LORD She shall not be inhabited, But she shall be wholly desolate. Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified And hiss at all her plagues. [Jeremiah 50:13 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 7:19](#) 'They will throw their silver into the streets, And their gold will be like refuse; Their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them In the day **of the wrath** of the LORD; They will not satisfy their souls, Nor fill their stomachs, Because it became their stumbling block of iniquity. [Ezekiel 7:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:19](#) So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw [it] into the great winepress **of the wrath** of God. [Revelation 14:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 15:7](#) Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full **of the wrath** of God who lives forever and ever. [Revelation 15:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:1](#) Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls **of the wrath** of God on the earth." [Revelation 16:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:3](#) "For all the nations have drunk of the wine **of the wrath** of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." [Revelation 18:3 NKJV](#)

### *Full strength in the cup of His indignation*

I believe this phrase continues the theme of a beverage representing the wrath of God. I found the following two from Isaiah.

[Isaiah 51:17](#) Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD The cup of His fury; You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, [And] drained [it] out. [Isaiah 51:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 51:22](#) Thus says your Lord, The LORD and your God, [Who] pleads the cause of His people: "See, I have taken out of your hand The cup of trembling, The dregs of the **cup of My fury**; You shall no longer drink it. [Isaiah 51:22 NKJV](#)

The following do not say cup of anger, but they do imply some punishment or destruction.

[Psalm 11:6](#) Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind [Shall be] the portion of their **cup**. [Psalm 11:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 75:8](#) For in the hand of the LORD [there is] a **cup**, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth Drain [and] drink down. [Psalm 75:8 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 23:32](#) "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'You shall drink of your sister's **cup**, The deep and wide one; You shall be laughed to scorn And held in derision; It contains much. <sup>33</sup> You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, The cup of horror and desolation, The **cup** of your sister Samaria. [Ezekiel 23:32-33 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 2:16](#) You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also--drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The **cup** of the LORD's right hand [will be] turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory. [Habakkuk 2:16 NKJV](#)

Jesus referred to His impending sacrifice on the cross, or death as a penalty for sin as drinking from a cup. Also, in the case of James and John, He said they would also drink His cup which I interpret to mean, suffer the things He did, which were persecution and possibly execution.

[Matthew 20:23](#) So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My **cup**, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but [it is for those] for whom it is prepared by My Father." [Matthew 20:23 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:39](#) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this **cup** pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You [will]." [Matthew 26:39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:39](#) They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the **cup** that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized;" [Mark 10:39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:36](#) And He said, "Abba, Father, all things [are] possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You [will]." [Mark 14:36 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:42](#) saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this **cup** away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." [Luke 22:42 NKJV](#)

[John 18:11](#) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the **cup** which My Father has given Me?" [John 18:11 NKJV](#)

Finally, one more from Revelation.

[Revelation 18:6](#) "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the **cup** which she has mixed, mix double for her. [Revelation 18:6 NKJV](#)

### *Tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the angels and the Lamb*

Fire and brimstone were mentioned together with the cup above.

[Psalm 11:6](#) Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind [Shall be] the portion of their cup. [Psalm 11:6 NKJV](#)

Punishment or judgment from God are said to be in the form of fire and brimstone. In the past Sodom and Gomorrah suffered that fate, but the destruction of the Devil and the wicked at the end will also suffer the same fate.

[Genesis 19:24](#) Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. [Genesis 19:24 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 29:23](#) 'The whole land [is] brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' [Deuteronomy 29:23 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 30:33](#) For Tophet [was] established of old, Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made [it] deep and large; Its pyre [is] fire with much wood; The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, Kindles it. [Isaiah 30:33 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 38:22](#) "And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who [are] with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. [Ezekiel 38:22 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:29](#) "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. [Luke 17:29 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:18](#) By these three [plagues] a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. [Revelation 9:18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. [Revelation 19:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:10](#) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Revelation 20:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:8](#) "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:8 NKJV](#)

The last part of the phase is that the punishment will be executed in the presence of the angels and the Lamb. That tells me that God will face those he is punishing. They are not sent to some Hell or Hades run by some demon far away from God.

### *Smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever*

Smoke was used 45 times in the NKJV. I analyzed the word for the fifth trumpet [see [The fifth trumpet – Smoke](#)]. Of course, we all know that smoke is often a byproduct of the consumption of something by fire. Theoretically smoke always rises forever and ever, even after the fire has gone out and the thing is completely consumed. First, I narrowed it down by looking for smoke and torment, and this was the only one. Next, I searched for smoke and forever, and I got two besides this one that seemed relevant.

[Isaiah 34:8](#) For [it is] the day of the LORD's vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion. <sup>9</sup> Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch. <sup>10</sup> It shall not be quenched night or day; Its **smoke** shall ascend **forever**. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever. [Isaiah 34:8-10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:3](#) Again they said, "Alleluia! Her **smoke** rises up **forever** and ever!" [Revelation 19:3 NKJV](#)

The verses from Isaiah about the day of vengeance, could possibly be referring to the same occasion.

### *No rest day or night for*

Those who worship the beast and his image

I already analyzed this phrase just a little way back in this chapter [[Worship the beast and his image](#)].

And whoever receives the mark of his name

The mark of the beast has also been analyzed [see [The beast from the earth – Mark on the hand or forehead, Name or number of the beast](#)]. The second just quotes these verses from Revelation 14:11, so I will quote the verses from Revelation 13.

[Revelation 13:16](#) He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,<sup>17</sup> and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.<sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number [is] 666. [Revelation 13:16-18 NKJV](#)

### *Patience of the saints*

Patience was used 25 times in the NKJV, 10 of them by Paul, and 6 in Revelation. Jesus said:

[Luke 8:15](#) "But the ones [that] fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep [it] and bear fruit with **patience**. [Luke 8:15 NKJV](#)

Not surprisingly, considering the persecution they suffered, Paul often used the word as a desirable characteristic of Christians. Almost the same words were used in Revelation 13.

[Revelation 13:10](#) He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the **patience** and the faith of the saints. [Revelation 13:10 NKJV](#)

### *Keep the commandments of God*

The phrase "keep the commandments of God," was found one other time.

[Revelation 12:17](#) And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who **keep the commandments of God** and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 12:17 NKJV](#)

"Keep the commandments," was used 10 times in the NKJV. The other 8 will follow (not including Revelation 14, and 12:17).

[Deuteronomy 4:2](#) "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may **keep the commandments** of the LORD your God which I command you. [Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 6:17](#) "You shall diligently **keep the commandments** of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. [Deuteronomy 6:17 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 8:6](#) "Therefore you shall **keep the commandments** of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. [Deuteronomy 8:6 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 10:13](#) "[and] to **keep the commandments** of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? [Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 28:9](#) "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you **keep the commandments** of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. [Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 17:19](#) Also Judah did not **keep the commandments** of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. [2 Kings 17:19 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 119:115](#) Depart from me, you evildoers, For I will **keep the commandments** of my God! [Psalm 119:115 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:17](#) So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. But if you want to enter into life, **keep the commandments.**" [Matthew 19:17 NKJV](#)

Searching for obey and commandments, I found the following:

[Leviticus 26:14](#) 'But if you do not **obey** Me, and do not observe all these **commandments**,<sup>15</sup> and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My **commandments**, [but] break My covenant,<sup>16</sup> I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.<sup>17</sup> I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.<sup>18</sup> 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.<sup>19</sup> I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.<sup>20</sup> And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. [Leviticus 26:14-20 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 27:10](#) "Therefore you shall **obey** the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His **commandments** and His statutes which I command you today." [Deuteronomy 27:10 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 28:1](#) "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently **obey** the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His **commandments** which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. [Deuteronomy 28:1 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 28:15](#) "But it shall come to pass, if you do not **obey** the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His **commandments** and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: [Deuteronomy 28:15 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 28:45](#) "Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not **obey** the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His **commandments** and His statutes which He commanded you. [Deuteronomy 28:45 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 30:8](#) "And you will again **obey** the voice of the LORD and do all His **commandments** which I command you today.<sup>9</sup> "The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers,<sup>10</sup> "if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to **keep** His **commandments** and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, [and] if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. [Deuteronomy 30:8-10 NKJV](#)

[Judges 3:4](#) And they were [left, that He might] test Israel by them, to know whether they would **obey** the **commandments** of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. [Judges 3:4 NKJV](#)

### *Faith of Jesus*

"Faith of Jesus" was only used this once, but "faith in Jesus," 4 other times in the NKJV.

[Romans 3:21](#) But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,<sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through **faith in Jesus** Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,<sup>25</sup> whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were



previously committed,<sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has **faith in Jesus**. [Romans 3:21-26 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 2:16](#) "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by **faith in Jesus** Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. [Galatians 2:16 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 3:22](#) But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by **faith in Jesus** Christ might be given to those who believe. [Galatians 3:22 NKJV](#)

### Interpreting the symbols

Logically, it would seem the third angel's message would come after the second. This message seems to be a warning, as opposed to the first and second which sounded like declarations. I also thought this warning especially applied to the actions of the [beast from the earth](#). It seemed very much like two sides of the same story, where in the vision of the beast from the earth, it described what would happen to those who didn't worship the image of the beast. But in the third angel's message, it described what would happen to those who did worship the beast and his image.

The angel is symbolic of a messenger and the loud voice, the giving of the message to many. The worship of the beast and his image was described when going over the [beast from the earth](#) [[Revelation 13:11-18](#)]. I like the analogy of the story from [Daniel 3](#), where Nebuchadnezzar tried to compel the whole world to bow down to his image, threatening them with death if they refused. Those who worshipped Nebuchadnezzar's image would be able to continue their livelihood under that system of government. In the vision of the beast from the earth, it described the penalty of those who refuse to worship the image of the beast, which is not being allowed to buy or sell, and ultimately death. In a system such as we have in the United States, and in many other parts of the modern world, there is a great dependence on buying and selling to be able to obtain food. Denial to participate in that economic system would essentially be a death sentence. Compliance would effectively result in a symbolic mark that would allow them to continue their lives under that system of government and economy.

As I have mentioned before [[Beast from the earth](#)], I do not believe the mark is a physical or visible mark like a tattoo on a person's forehead or hand. As I have also heard said, I believe the mark on the hand indicates those who do not believe the beast should be worshipped but comply to save their lives. The mark on the forehead, those who believe the beast should be worshipped.

The third angel's message describes what will ultimately happen to those who comply and worship the beast and his image. They will ultimately suffer the punishment of God which is quite colorfully symbolized as drinking the wine of the wrath of God, full strength from the cup of His anger. God has anger about what sin has done to His creation. In the Old Testament, we read about the wine of the wrath of God, where the Israelites or other wicked nations were punished for their wickedness. This punishment often resulted in death, but it wasn't worldwide except in the case of the flood. Furthermore, the limited outpouring of the wrath of God throughout the history of the world did not result in the destruction of sin. In this message is described the "full strength" outpouring of God's anger against sin which I believe will result in its total destruction. This outpouring of the wrath of God against sin is described symbolically as fire and brimstone, as was literally what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah for their extreme wickedness [[Genesis 19](#)].

I had an interesting thought which I heard from someone else but cannot recall who, so I unfortunately can't give credit where credit is due. Going back to the story of the fiery furnace in [Daniel 3](#), those who refused to worship

were thrown in the fire but because they pleased God, they were not consumed. I would suggest, that when God pours out His anger, full strength, against sin, all will be subjected to the fire and brimstone which will destroy sin, but only those who cling to their sin, will be destroyed with it. Those in whom no sin is found, will be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, walking around, unharmed, in the fire with God. Another way to look at it might be that God is a consuming fire to sin and it has only been able to continue and exist for this limited time because God shields His full glory from us. Once we are fully exposed to the glory of God, it would always be a consuming fire, but without sin in our lives, we would not be consumed.

[Exodus 24:17](#) The sight of the glory of the LORD [was] like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. [Exodus 24:17 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 12:29](#) For our God [is] a consuming fire. [Hebrews 12:29 NKJV](#)

As for the torment, and smoke rising forever and ever, these are symbols of the finality of the destruction of sin. I do not read them literally, when I interpret the rest of the scene symbolically. "No rest day or night," for those who do comply and worship the beast and his image, I interpret to mean that, in spite of escaping the persecution of the beast and his image, it will not be smooth sailing for them. At that point in the history of the world, I believe sin to be reaching boiling point, and that cannot be good for anyone.

Finally, this message describes those who do not comply, and who do not receive the mark, as saints, who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus. Of course, faith in Jesus is required for salvation [[John 14:6](#)], but keeping the commandments is also mentioned. In other words, those who say that it doesn't matter what you do as long as you accept Jesus as your Savior, would not seem to fit this description. I believe that keeping all of the Ten Commandments including the fourth, which is to keep the Seventh Day Sabbath holy, is what is inferred here.

## Conclusion

I believe this message is delivered as a warning of what will happen to those who comply in worshipping the beast in order to preserve their livelihood on this earth. By not obeying God, they will not be separated from their sin and will ultimately be consumed with it when the consuming fire from God is unleashed.

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe this event is still in the future?
- Why do you think God is portrayed as being angry and tormenting those who worship the beast and his image?
- How do you picture the symbolism of the smoke of their torment rising forever and ever?

## The return of Jesus

### [Revelation 14:13-14](#)

[Revelation 14:13](#) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

<sup>14</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat [One] like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. [Revelation 14:13-14 NKJV](#)

## Examining the symbols

### *Voice from heaven*

Voice or voices from heaven have been analyzed already [[The seventh trumpet](#) – [Voices in heaven](#), [The Lamb and the 144,000](#) – [Voice from heaven like many waters and thunder](#), [Third angel's message](#) – [Loud voice](#)].

### *Blessed to die in the Lord from now on*

It doesn't seem like death would be a blessing, but for those who die in the Lord, it can be.

[Revelation 20:6](#) **Blessed** and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 57:1](#) The righteous perishes, And no man takes [it] to heart; Merciful men [are] taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil. <sup>2</sup> He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, [Each one] walking [in] his uprightness. [Isaiah 57:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Philippians 1:21](#) For to me, to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain. <sup>22</sup> But if [I] live on in the flesh, this [will mean] fruit from [my] labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, [which is] far better. [Philippians 1:21-23 NKJV](#)

### *They may rest from their labors*

For those who have a hard life and die in the Lord, death could easily be considered a rest compared to their life.

[Revelation 6:11](#) Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should **rest** a little while longer, until both [the number of] their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they [were], was completed. [Revelation 6:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:16](#) "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; [Revelation 7:16 NKJV](#)

[Job 3:17](#) There the wicked cease [from] troubling, And there the weary are at **rest**. <sup>18</sup> [There] the prisoners rest together; They do not hear the voice of the oppressor. <sup>19</sup> The small and great are there, And the servant [is] free from his master. [Job 3:17-19 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 57:2](#) He shall enter into peace; They shall **rest** in their beds, [Each one] walking [in] his uprightness. [Isaiah 57:2 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 4:10](#) For he who has entered His **rest** has himself also ceased from his works as God [did] from His. <sup>11</sup> Let us therefore be diligent to enter that **rest**, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. [Hebrews 4:10-11 NKJV](#)

### *Their works follow with them*

Works was used 250 times in the NKJV, but there is a synonym that is used in some other translations. Deeds was used 79 times in the NKJV. There were many mentions of good, mighty and bad works or deeds by people. There were also many mentions of good and mighty works or deeds by God.

There is an idea even among many of different faiths, that good deeds are rewarded, either in this life or the next, but interestingly, works were not used as much in this context.

[Isaiah 59:18](#) According to [their] **deeds**, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries, Recompense to His enemies; The coastlands He will fully repay. [Isaiah 59:18 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 25:14](#) '(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their **deeds** and according to the **works** of their own hands.)' " [Jeremiah 25:14 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 9:10](#) "And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, [but] I will recompense their **deeds** on their own head." [Ezekiel 9:10 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 11:21](#) "But [as for those] whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their **deeds** on their own heads," says the Lord GOD. [Ezekiel 11:21 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 24:14](#) I, the LORD, have spoken [it]; It shall come to pass, and I will do [it]; I will not hold back, Nor will I spare, Nor will I relent; According to your ways And according to your **deeds** They will judge you," Says the Lord GOD.' " [Ezekiel 24:14 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 4:9](#) And it shall be: like people, like priest. So I will punish them for their ways, And reward them for their **deeds**. [Hosea 4:9 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:27](#) "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his **works**. [Matthew 16:27 NKJV](#)

[Romans 2:5](#) But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who "will render to each one according to his **deeds**": <sup>7</sup> eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup> but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness-- indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup> tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; <sup>10</sup> but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For there is no partiality with God. [Romans 2:5-11 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 4:14](#) Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his **works**. [2 Timothy 4:14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:23](#) "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your **works**. [Revelation 2:23 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:6](#) "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her **works**; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. [Revelation 18:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their **works**, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his **works**. [Revelation 20:12-13 NKJV](#)

I'm not saying that good deeds earn our way into heaven, but our deeds whether good or evil, show what is in our heart.

### *White cloud*

Cloud(s) are mentioned 164 times in the NKJV. There were many cases in the Old Testament, where God guided and sheltered the Israelites with His presence in a cloud. There were also numerous cases associated with Mount Sinai and the sanctuary temple, where God shrouded His presence in a cloud. But we are looking for something different here. In the second coming He is generally said to be coming on/in/with a cloud or clouds.

[Luke 21:27](#) "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a **cloud** with power and great glory. [Luke 21:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:16](#) So He who sat on the **cloud** thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. [Revelation 14:16 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 104:3](#) He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the **clouds** His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind, [Psalm 104:3 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:13](#) "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, [One] like the Son of Man, Coming with the **clouds** of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. [Daniel 7:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:30](#) "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the **clouds** of heaven with power and great glory. [Matthew 24:30 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:64](#) Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the **clouds** of heaven." [Matthew 26:64 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:26](#) "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the **clouds** with great power and glory. [Mark 13:26 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:62](#) Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the **clouds** of heaven." [Mark 14:62 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the **clouds** to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:17 NKJV](#)

### *Son of man*

"Son of man" was used 194 times in the NKJV. 93 of the 107 times in the Old Testament were in Ezekiel where that seemed to be God's favorite name for the prophet as he was addressed in vision. It was used more than 80 times in the four gospels, probably every time, by Jesus referring to Himself. I think it was His favorite name for Himself.

### *Golden crown*

Golden was used 38 times in the NKJV, almost exclusively describing things made of gold. Most of the sanctuary and Jewish Temple items were gold or gold plated. Most kings would have golden crowns or scepters. Some idols or images were made of gold or were gold plated.

I examined the word crown(s) for [[The fifth trumpet](#)].

### *Sharp sickle*

Sickle was used 14 times in the NKJV, 6 in Revelation 14, which are the verses we're looking at right now. "Sharp sickle" was used 4 times in the NKJV, all of them in the latter half of this chapter, [Revelation 14](#). It was generally used in reference to a tool that was used to cut down the stalks of grain when harvesting. In the Old Testament, more often literal harvesting, and in Revelation, symbolic of the end of the world.

## Interpreting the symbols

Now in [verse 13](#), before the return of Jesus, there is a blessing pronounced on those who “die in the Lord.” Is this a special blessing that only these receive, that the earlier dead in Christ do not receive? And what is the meaning of “from now on,” that the blessed status begins? In the absence of any other reason, the “from now on” would have to mean from the time the [fourth] angel is speaking, which just precedes the return of Jesus on the clouds. If you recall, when studying the 144,000, we learned that there was something special about that group, that there would be a song that only they could sing [see [The Lamb and the 144,000](#), [Sealing of the 144,000](#)]. Perhaps, this group of blessed, begins from the same time, but they are laid to rest before the return of Jesus, whereas the 144,000 remain alive till His return.

The first half of chapter 14 covered the three angel’s messages. I interpreted them symbolically. The last half of this chapter contains what appears to be descriptions of things that will take place at the second and third (at the end of the millennium) comings of Jesus. The word sickle was used 6 times in the latter half of the chapter. The second half is divided from the first half of the chapter by these verses describing Jesus, the Son of Man, coming back to earth. The question is whether this is depicting the second or third coming of Jesus?

I would begin by saying that coming on the cloud, to me has always seemed like a second coming description. In the verses I quoted above when studying the cloud, Jesus Himself said that He would return “in/on clouds” [[Mark 13:26](#), [Matthew 24:30](#)] following the great tribulation. This seems like the second coming to me. But He also said to the High Priest Caiaphas, and the council at His trial, that they would see Him return at the right hand of power, coming on/with the clouds of heaven [[Matthew 26:64](#), [Mark 14:62](#)]. Now one question that could be asked for those who believe the second coming is for the resurrection of the righteous, is why would those illegally trying to kill Jesus be witnesses to a return for the righteous? I would say that I don’t see anything in Jesus’ statement that prevents it from being the third coming that He is describing. I say this without any references, but some have said that those in the court that Jesus was speaking to, would get a special resurrection at the second coming so they could witness Him coming in power and glory at the right hand of God.

But this description in [Revelation 14:14](#) also depicts Jesus holding a sickle. This is interesting because the later verses of this chapter picture the reaping of the earth, and the clusters of grapes being thrown in the great wine press of the wrath of God [[Revelation 14:19](#)]. This seems like a picture of the third coming and the resurrection of the wicked and the destruction of sin. Is it possible that in one of the earlier verses, [Revelation 14:15](#), where the angel is told to reap because the harvest is ripe, but there is no mention of the wine press of the wrath of God in this verse. Could this be a description of the second coming, where the ripeness represents the conditions necessary for Jesus to come and take the righteous to heaven?

## Conclusion

I think this angel may be a factor of the vision rather than a symbol of something literal. From that time on, those who die in the Lord will receive a special blessing. Why this group is said to be blessed, or that they are any more blessed than others who die in the Lord, is not explained. It is possible that the time indicated by “from now on,” could be the same as the sealing time that designates the specialness of the 144,000. In that sense, there could be a special blessing, if they shared the seal of God in that time of earth’s history.

Then the return of one like the Son of Man on the clouds, must be a description of the second coming. The sickle in His hand symbolizes the reaping of the harvest as described by His parable of the seed.

[Mark 4:26](#) And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,<sup>27</sup> "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how."<sup>28</sup> "For the earth

yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. <sup>29</sup> "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." [Mark 4:26-29 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- Do you think those who die in the Lord as announced by the angel receive a different blessing from other's who died in the Lord before them?
- Do you think there is any question that "one like a son of man" is anyone other than Jesus?
- Do you think this coming on the cloud depicts the second or third coming of the Son of Man?

## The reaping

### [Revelation 14:15-20](#)

[Revelation 14:15](#) And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." <sup>16</sup> So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. <sup>17</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." <sup>19</sup> So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw [it] into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. [Revelation 14:15-20 NKJV](#)

### Examining the symbols

#### *Angel came out of the temple*

Surprisingly the phrase "out of the temple," was used 10 times in the NKJV. 5 of the 11 outside of Revelation, referred to one of the Jewish Temples. Of the other 5, two are in the verses being analyzed right now [[verses 15, 17](#)]. One in the Old Testament, is about the temple of Baal, and the other 2 are:

[Revelation 15:6](#) And **out of the temple** came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. [Revelation 15:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:17](#) Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came **out of the temple** of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" [Revelation 16:17 NKJV](#)

#### *Crying with a loud voice*

Loud voice was examined with the third angel's message [[Loud voice](#)].

#### *Him who sat on the cloud*

This was essentially covered in [White cloud](#) just a couple verses back.

#### *Thrust in your sickle and reap*

The sickle was examined for the previous verse [[14](#), see [sharp sickle](#)].

*The time has come, the harvest of the earth is ripe*

"Time has come" was used 4 other times in the NKJV.

[Psalm 102:13](#) You will arise [and] have mercy on Zion; For the time to favor her, Yes, the set **time, has come.** [Psalm 102:13 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 7:7](#) Doom has come to you, you who dwell in the land; The **time has come,** A day of trouble [is] near, And not of rejoicing in the mountains. [Ezekiel 7:7 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 7:12](#) The **time has come,** The day draws near. 'Let not the buyer rejoice, Nor the seller mourn, For wrath [is] on their whole multitude. [Ezekiel 7:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 4:17](#) For the **time [has come]** for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if [it begins] with us first, what will [be] the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? [1 Peter 4:17 NKJV](#)

Harvest was used 68 times in the NKJV. Virtually all of them through the book of Isaiah were all regarding literal harvests. The following are some symbolic references from the Old Testament.

[Jeremiah 8:20](#) "The harvest is past, The summer is ended, And we are not saved!" [Jeremiah 8:20 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 50:16](#) Cut off the sower from Babylon, And him who handles the sickle at harvest time. For fear of the oppressing sword Everyone shall turn to his own people, And everyone shall flee to his own land. [Jeremiah 50:16 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:33](#) For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "The daughter of Babylon [is] like a threshing floor [When it is] time to thresh her; Yet a little while And the time of her harvest will come." [Jeremiah 51:33 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 6:11](#) Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you, When I return the captives of My people. [Hosea 6:11 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:13](#) Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow--For their wickedness [is] great." [Joel 3:13 NKJV](#)

These from the parables of Jesus are all symbolic.

[Matthew 9:37](#) Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly [is] plentiful, but the laborers [are] few." <sup>38</sup> "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." [Matthew 9:37-38 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:30](#) "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "[Matthew 13:30 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:39](#) "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. [Matthew 13:39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:29](#) "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." [Mark 4:29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 10:2](#) Then He said to them, "The harvest truly [is] great, but the laborers [are] few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. [Luke 10:2 NKJV](#)



[John 4:35](#) "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! [John 4:35 NKJV](#)

### *Angel with power over fire came out of the temple*

Fire was used 544 times in the NKJV. The first use of the word was in the description of how of Sodom was destroyed. In this case, fire was used to destroy sinners.

[Genesis 19:24](#) Then the LORD rained brimstone and **fire** on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. [Genesis 19:24 NKJV](#)

In fact, this one incident was used throughout the Bible as a remembrance of the destruction of extreme evil.

Fire was integral to the sanctuary and temple services given by God to the Jews. I think in a way it is not unrelated to the first case, where fire is used to destroy sin. In this case however, it destroys the substitute in place of the sinner, symbolizing Jesus dying for the sins of the world. God appeared to Moses in the form of fire in the burning bush.

[Exodus 3:2](#) And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of **fire** from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush [was] not consumed. [Exodus 3:2 NKJV](#)

The Lord led the Israelites through the wilderness as a pillar of fire.

[Exodus 13:21](#) And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of **fire** to give them light, so as to go by day and night. <sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night [from] before the people. [Exodus 13:21-22 NKJV](#)

And He appeared to the Israelites on Mount Sinai as or shrouded in fire and smoke.

[Exodus 19:18](#) Now Mount Sinai [was] completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in **fire**. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. [Exodus 19:18 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 24:17](#) The sight of the glory of the LORD [was] like a consuming **fire** on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. [Exodus 24:17 NKJV](#)

The concept of fire at the end of the world exists in both the Old and New Testaments.

[Zephaniah 1:18](#) Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the **fire** of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land. [Zephaniah 1:18 NKJV](#)

[Zephaniah 3:8](#) "Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination [is] to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms, To pour on them My indignation, All My fierce anger; All the earth shall be devoured With the **fire** of My jealousy. [Zephaniah 3:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of **fire** burning with brimstone. [Revelation 19:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:10](#) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of **fire** and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Revelation 20:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:8](#) "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with **fire** and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:8 NKJV](#)

Two other random verses that mention fire or flame, angel, and altar:

[Judges 13:20](#) it happened as the **flame** went up toward heaven from the **altar**--the **Angel** of the LORD ascended in the **flame** of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw [this], they fell on their faces to the ground. [Judges 13:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 8:5](#) Then the **angel** took the censer, filled it with **fire** from the **altar**, and threw [it] to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. [Revelation 8:5 NKJV](#)

### *Grapes are ripe, sickle swung, grapes harvested*

I think of a sickle as a large curved blade on the end of a stick that can be swung to cut near ground level. I think of it primarily as a tool for harvesting grain crops where the whole plant is cut down at the base and then later the head is separated from the rest of the plant. But the definition of the word in the Bible is broader, including a curved knife that is used for harvesting grapes from the vine. Obviously in a grape harvest, clusters of grapes are cut off the vines, and the vines are not cut off at the ground.

It almost seems like the following verses from Joel were on John's mind when he wrote what he saw.

[Joel 3:13](#) **Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.** Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow--For their wickedness [is] great." <sup>14</sup> Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD [is] near in the valley of decision. [Joel 3:13-14 NKJV](#)

The sickle was examined for the previous verse [[14](#), see [sharp sickle](#)].

### *Thrown in the winepress of the wrath of God*

"Winepress" was used 18 times in the NKJV. The ones of any possible relevance aside from the 3 uses in these verses in Revelation 14 are:

[Judges 6:11](#) Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which [was] in Ophrah, which [belonged] to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the **winepress**, in order to hide [it] from the Midianites. [Judges 6:11 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 63:2](#) Why [is] Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the **winepress**? [Isaiah 63:2 NKJV](#)

[Lamentations 1:15](#) "The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty [men] in my midst; He has called an assembly against me To crush my young men; The Lord trampled [as] in a **winepress** The virgin daughter of Judah. [Lamentations 1:15 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:13](#) Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the **winepress** is full, The vats overflow--For their wickedness [is] great." [Joel 3:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:33](#) "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a **winepress** in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. [Matthew 21:33 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:15](#) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the **winepress** of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.  
[Revelation 19:15 NKJV](#)

The wrath of God was analyzed in the [seventh trumpet](#), and also in the [third angel's message](#).

### *Outside the city*

"Outside the city" was used 11 times in the NKJV, 10 in the Old Testament. Cities were generally a place of community and protection and those fortunate enough to have walls would close their gates at night. In the first verse, this is kind of the opposite, because Lot was taken outside the city of Sodom to save his life.

[Genesis 19:16](#) And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him **outside the city**. [Genesis 19:16 NKJV](#)

In the following case the well was outside the city.

[Genesis 24:11](#) And he made his camels kneel down **outside the city** by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw [water]. [Genesis 24:11 NKJV](#)

Then next one is the first of a series of verses speaking of an unclean place outside the city. I would say it sounds like a dump.

[Leviticus 14:40](#) "then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which [is] the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place **outside the city**. [Leviticus 14:40 NKJV](#)

The next one is about cities of refuge, where a person who killed someone, could flee for his life. If he was within the city boundaries, the avenger of blood could not kill him. Once inside the city, there would be an investigation to see if it was an accident or murder. Even if he was not found guilty of premeditated murder, he would still have to stay in the city in order to be safe from the avenger of blood.

[Numbers 35:5](#) "And you shall measure **outside the city** on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits. The city [shall be] in the middle. This shall belong to them as common-land for the cities. [Numbers 35:5 NKJV](#)

In the next one, Naboth, though falsely accused, was taken outside the city to be executed.

[1 Kings 21:13](#) And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!" Then they took him **outside the city** and stoned him with stones, so that he died. [1 Kings 21:13 NKJV](#)

### *Blood up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of 1,600 furlongs*

This is a very strange one. The word bridles was used only this once in the NKJV The singular was used 8 times, but none seems enlightening in any way. It seems we are talking of a height or depth in this case. The bridle is in the horses' mouth, so it would probably be at about shoulder height, depending on how the horse is holding its head. According to Wikipedia, a typical horse could be around 6 feet tall at the withers, or shoulders.<sup>400</sup>

<sup>400</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse#Size\\_and\\_measurement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse#Size_and_measurement)

The next measurement is 1,600 furlongs. The original Greek text says 1,600 [στάδιον, stadion](#),<sup>401</sup> which is supposed to be about 600 feet. That makes a total of 960,000 feet or approximately 180 (5280 foot) miles. The text doesn't tell us whether on a straight line, radius, diameter, or a path like a river.

### Interpreting the symbols

The word "another," to me implies a sequence or order of events. I believe that what is described here following the picture of Jesus coming on the clouds, are some details of two different comings. The first with a reaping or harvest of "good grain" as in one of the parables Jesus told.

[Mark 4:26](#) And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,<sup>27</sup> "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.<sup>28</sup> "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.<sup>29</sup> "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." [Mark 4:26-29 NKJV](#)

The second, a reaping or harvest of grapes to be thrown in the winepress of the wrath of God as written by Joel, and also later in Revelation.

[Joel 3:13](#) Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the **winepress** is full, The vats overflow--For their wickedness [is] great."<sup>14</sup> Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD [is] near in the valley of decision. [Joel 3:13-14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:15](#) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the **winepress** of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [Revelation 19:15 NKJV](#)

I found it interesting that in Israel, the grape harvest and the wheat harvest were not at the same time. I believe that Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress, because he was hiding from their oppressors, who wouldn't think to search in the wine press because it was not the season for harvesting grapes.

[Judges 6:11](#) Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which [was] in Ophrah, which [belonged] to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the **winepress**, in order to hide [it] from the Midianites. [Judges 6:11 NKJV](#)

I also found a calendar that showed that the wheat harvest precedes the grape harvest.<sup>402</sup>

I'm not sure what to make of the angel coming out of the temple, but in many places throughout the Bible, fire (which the angel had power over) is known to be an instrument of God for cleansing and the ultimate destruction of sin.

Finally, I don't know what to say about the blood for 180 miles at 6 feet deep. I suppose if all the blood of the wicked dead through earth's history were accounted for it would probably be more than a river 6 feet deep and 180 miles long.

<sup>401</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4712&t=NKJV>

<sup>402</sup> <http://www.crivoice.org/calendar.html>

### Conclusion

I believe that this portion of the vision depicts two comings of Jesus on the clouds. The first being for the (wheat) harvest of those who have accepted Jesus and will be saved and taken to heaven. The second being the (grape) harvest, at the return to earth after the end of the 1000 years when the wicked are judged and die.

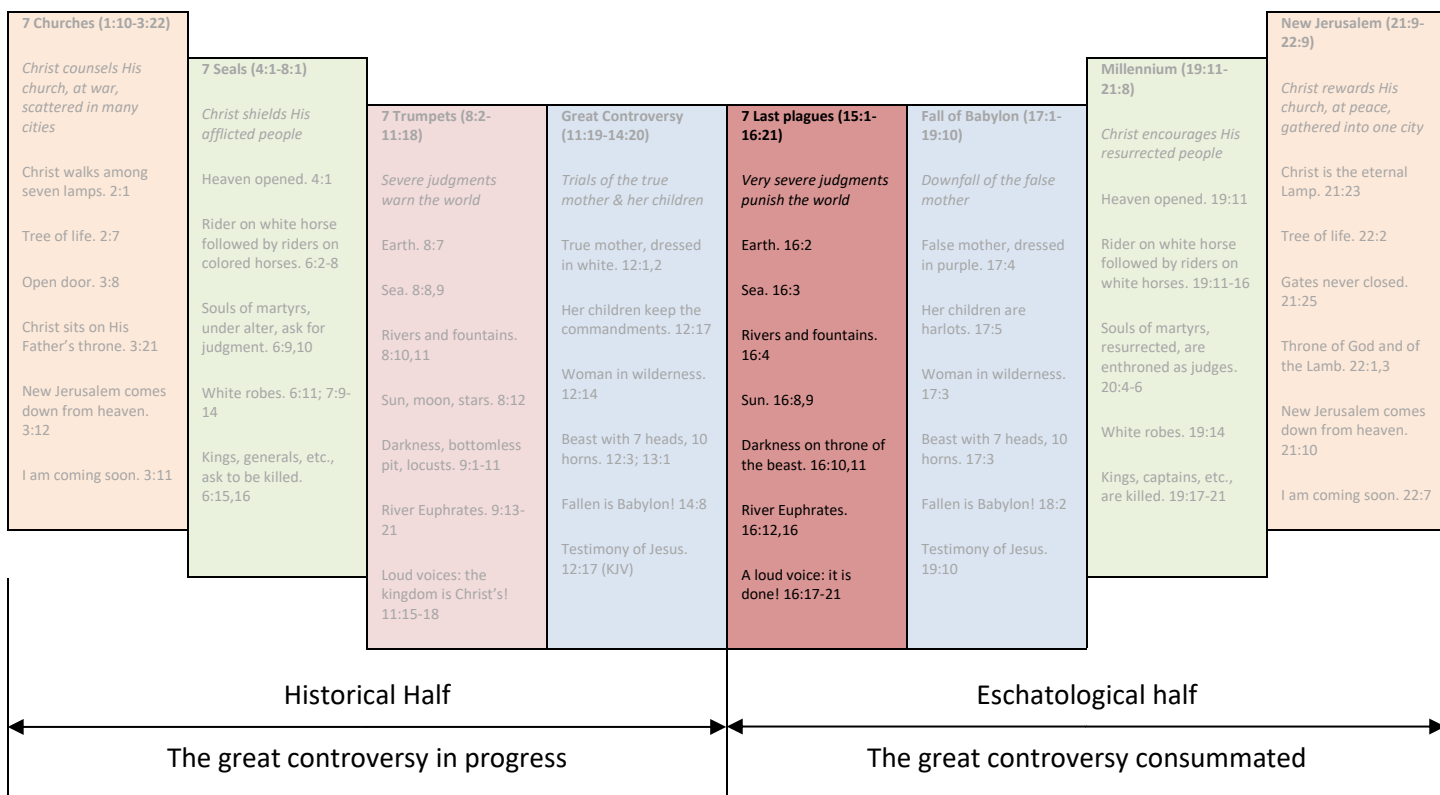
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What do you believe?

- Do you see two distinct harvests in these verses?
- Why do you think God is portrayed so full of wrath?
- Why do you think these scenes are so bloody?

# Revelation 15:1 – 16:21 – The seven plagues

This is probably a good time to recall the picture of an outline of the entire book of Revelation. According to the following, these verses would be the start of the second half of the book and the fifth of eight sections.



The assertion presented in this outline is that with these verses, the second half of the book takes a turn toward a more literal description of what will happen in the last days.<sup>403</sup>

## Preface – A scene in heaven

### [Revelation 15:1 – 16:1](#)

[Revelation 15:1](#) Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

<sup>2</sup> And I saw [something] like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark [and] over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. <sup>3</sup> They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

<sup>403</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p60-61.

"Great and marvelous [are] Your works,  
 Lord God Almighty!  
 Just and true [are] Your ways,  
 O King of the saints!

<sup>4</sup> Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For [You] alone [are] holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

<sup>5</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

<sup>6</sup> And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. <sup>7</sup> Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. <sup>8</sup> The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed. [Revelation 15:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:1](#) Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." [Revelation 16:1 NKJV](#)

This scene, just like the introduction of three other sevens, the churches, seals, and trumpets, is a scene in heaven around the throne or temple of God.

### Examining the symbols

Many of these symbols have already been examined.

#### *Seven angels*

The word seven is used 461 times in the NKJV, 54 of which are in Revelation. I discussed some of the symbolism for the word seven when studying the [first trumpet](#).

I believe angels are real beings and are mentioned many times in the Bible, in fact 292 times in the NKJV. The Bible portrays them as powerful beings that carry messages from God or carry out actions at God's request. I believe there is a specific term, "angel of the Lord," which refers to the pre-incarnate Son of God [[The sixth trumpet](#) – [Four angels](#)]. But generally in the Bible, angels carry messages for God, or carry out commands from Him. I believe that in visions, that utilize symbols, angels can represent other things, generally according to their nature.

#### *Seven last plagues*

The number seven was already mentioned for the number of angels, who had the seven plagues.

Plague(s) was used 97 times in the NKJV. Probably the first thing that comes to many minds are the ten plagues that brought about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. But probably most will not recall that God brought plagues on Pharaoh 400 years earlier to protect Abram and Sarai.

[Genesis 12:17](#) But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great **plagues** because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

[Genesis 12:17 NKJV](#)

In the KJV, the word נִגְזָה, *neḡā*<sup>404</sup> was translated to plague 65 times. In the New Testament, the word πληγή, *plēgē*<sup>405</sup> was translated to plague 12 times. Based on the fact that there were 10 plagues on Egypt, we have the notion that a

<sup>404</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5061&t=NKJV>

<sup>405</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G4127&t=NKJV>

plague can mean different things. But one thing seems evident, in the Bible, plagues are generally brought on by God.

Some examples of different sorts of plagues, and examples of how sometimes God shielded His people from them:

[Exodus 7:17](#) 'Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I [am] the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which [are] in the river with the rod that [is] in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. <sup>18</sup> "And the fish that [are] in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river." ' ' ' [Exodus 7:17-18 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 8:2](#) "But if you refuse to let [them] go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. <sup>3</sup> "So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. [Exodus 8:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 8:16](#) So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.' " [Exodus 8:16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 8:21](#) "Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms [of flies] on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms [of flies], and also the ground on which they [stand]. <sup>22</sup> "And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms [of flies] shall be there, in order that you may know that I [am] the LORD in the midst of the land. <sup>23</sup> "I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be." ' ' ' [Exodus 8:21-23 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 9:2](#) "For if you refuse to let [them] go, and still hold them, <sup>3</sup> "behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep--a very severe pestilence. [Exodus 9:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 9:8](#) So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. <sup>9</sup> "And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." [Exodus 9:8-9 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 9:18](#) "Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. [Exodus 9:18 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 9:26](#) Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel [were], there was no hail. [Exodus 9:26 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 10:13](#) So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all [that] night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. <sup>14</sup> And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. [They were] very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. <sup>15</sup> For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. [Exodus 10:13-15 NKJV](#)



[Exodus 10:22](#) So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. [Exodus 10:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 12:29](#) And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who [was] in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. [Exodus 12:29 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 12:23](#) "For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike [you]. [Exodus 12:23 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 28:58](#) "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, <sup>59</sup> "then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues--great and prolonged plagues--and serious and prolonged sicknesses. <sup>60</sup> "Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. [Deuteronomy 28:58-60 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 14:12](#) And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. <sup>13</sup> It shall come to pass in that day [That] a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; <sup>14</sup> Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together: Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. <sup>15</sup> Such also shall be the plague On the horse [and] the mule, On the camel and the donkey, And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So [shall] this plague [be]. [Zechariah 14:12-15 NKJV](#)

Many times, the word plague was used in the Old Testament without detail as to what it entailed, but they were generally implied to be brought on by God for one reason or another.

Now coming closer to home, let's look at the use of the word plague(s) in Revelation, aside from these particular verses we are studying and the following description of the seven plagues through [Revelation 16:21](#). The first is from the [sixth trumpet](#).

[Revelation 9:18](#) By these three [plagues] a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. [Revelation 9:18 NKJV](#)

The next one is from a scene later in Revelation that describes the fall of Babylon.

[Revelation 18:4](#) And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. <sup>5</sup> "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. <sup>7</sup> "In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit [as] queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' <sup>8</sup> "Therefore her **plagues** will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her. [Revelation 18:4-8 NKJV](#)

Finally, in one of the last few verses in Revelation:

[Revelation 22:18](#) For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the **plagues** that are written in this book; [Revelation 22:18 NKJV](#)

### *Wrath of God complete*

Just recently I looked at the [wine press of the wrath](#) of God in [the reaping](#). I also looked at the [wine of the wrath of God](#) in the [third angel's message](#). Then farther back I examined the [wrath of God](#) with the [seventh trumpet](#).

### *Sea of glass mingled with fire*

"Sea of glass" was used in one other place in the Bible, where the throne of God and its surroundings were described:

[Revelation 4:6](#) Before the throne [there was] a **sea of glass**, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, [were] four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. [Revelation 4:6 NKJV](#)

Considering that Revelation 15 and Revelation 4 are both describing scenes in heaven, I think it is safe to say that John is describing the same thing.

God is very often described in fiery terms, and since God is there, so is the fire.

### *Those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark [and] over the number of his name*

Victory is used 14 times in the NKJV. In the Old Testament it is mostly used in terms of battle and is usually attributed to God. In Corinthians, Paul wrote of victory in association with our salvation.

[1 Corinthians 15:54](#) So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup> "O Death, where [is] your sting? O Hades, where [is] your victory?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin [is] the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks [be] to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 15:54-57 NKJV](#)

The beast and his image and his number or name were closely examined for [Revelation 13:11-18](#) about [the beast from the earth](#).

### *Had harps and sang the song of Moses and the Lamb*

The word harp was used 34 times and harps 19 times in the NKJV. Only 4 from the New Testament, and 3 of those from Revelation. In the Old Testament, it was mentioned several times in connection with David playing, multiple times during his time as king for praising God, and 17 times in Psalms. Several other times it was mentioned in connection with praise and worship to God.

There were two songs of Moses mentioned in the Old Testament. The first was a song of praise to God after the Israelites passed through the Red Sea.

[Exodus 15:1](#) Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD,  
For He has triumphed gloriously!  
The horse and its rider  
He has thrown into the sea! [Exodus 15:1 NKJV](#)

The other was a song God gave to Moses just before he died, to help the Israelites remember God and what He did for them.

[Deuteronomy 31:22](#) Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.

[Deuteronomy 31:22 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 31:30](#) Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended: [Deuteronomy 31:30 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 32:44](#) So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. [Deuteronomy 32:44 NKJV](#)

The following verse from Revelation is also from the introductory scene to a different series of seven, the seals [[Worthy is the Lamb](#)].

[Revelation 5:9](#) And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, [Revelation 5:9 NKJV](#)

The next is quite possibly related, because there was a special group that received the seal of God [see [Sealing of the 144,000, The Lamb and the 144,000](#)].

[Revelation 7:3](#) saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." <sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred [and] forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [were] sealed: [Revelation 7:3-4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:3](#) They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred [and] forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. [Revelation 14:3 NKJV](#)

If this is the same group, then perhaps those at that specific time in history who did not receive the mark of the beast, received the seal of God.

### *Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened, angels came out*

There is a very similarly sounding verse in the [seventh trumpet](#).

[Revelation 11:19](#) Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. [Revelation 11:19 NKJV](#)

The Jewish Temple was generally a very private and restricted area. The idea of the temple being open brought to mind another scene, which took place when Jesus died on the cross and exclaimed it is finished.

[Matthew 27:51](#) Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, [Matthew 27:51 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:38](#) Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. [Mark 15:38 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:45](#) Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. [Luke 23:45 NKJV](#)

“Came out” is a phrase that was used surprisingly many times, 118 times in the NKJV, 6 times in Revelation. The other five are all listed below:

[Revelation 14:15](#) And another angel **came out of the temple**, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." <sup>16</sup> So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. <sup>17</sup> Then another angel **came out of the temple** which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel **came out** from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." <sup>19</sup> So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw [it] into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood **came out** of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. [Revelation 14:15-20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:17](#) Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice **came out** of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" [Revelation 16:17 NKJV](#)

### *Clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands*

The word clothed was found 76 times in the NKJV. I picked out some of the interesting ones.

[Genesis 41:42](#) Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he **clothed** him in garments of **fine linen** and put a gold chain around his neck. [Genesis 41:42 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 8:7](#) And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, **clothed** him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied [the ephod] on him. [Leviticus 8:7 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 15:27](#) David was **clothed** with a robe of **fine linen**, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master [with] the singers. David also wore a **linen** ephod. [1 Chronicles 15:27 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 5:12](#) and the Levites [who were] the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, **clothed in white linen**, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets-- [2 Chronicles 5:12 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 61:10](#) I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has **clothed** me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks [himself] with ornaments, And as a bride adorns [herself] with her jewels. [Isaiah 61:10 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 9:2](#) And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them [was] **clothed with linen** and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar. <sup>3</sup> Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man **clothed with linen**, who [had] the writer's inkhorn at his side; [Ezekiel 9:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 9:11](#) Just then, the man **clothed with linen**, who [had] the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me." [Ezekiel 9:11 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 10:2](#) Then He spoke to the man **clothed with linen**, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter [them] over the city." And he went in as I watched. [Ezekiel 10:2 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 10:6](#) Then it happened, when He commanded the man **clothed in linen**, saying, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," that he went in and stood beside the wheels. <sup>7</sup> And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that [was] among the cherubim, and took [some of it] and put [it] into the hands of the [man] **clothed with linen**, who took [it] and went out. [Ezekiel 10:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:13](#) and in the midst of the seven lampstands [One] like the Son of Man, **clothed** with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a **golden band**. [Revelation 1:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 3:5](#) "He who overcomes shall be **clothed in white garments**, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. [Revelation 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:4](#) Around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, **clothed in white robes**; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. [Revelation 4:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:9](#) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **clothed with white robes**, with palm branches in their hands, [Revelation 7:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:16](#) "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was **clothed in fine linen**, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! [Revelation 18:16 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:14](#) And the armies in heaven, **clothed in fine linen**, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. [Revelation 19:14 NKJV](#)

The word band was translated from ζώνη, zōnē<sup>406</sup>, and was used 8 times in the KJV. It was translated as belt except in the two uses in Revelation where it was translated band.

### *Four living creatures*

The four living creatures were examined when we were first introduced to them in the description of the [throne room of God](#) in [Revelation 4:6](#). In that examination, I included the comparison to the four creatures Ezekiel described in his vision of the throne of God.

### *Golden bowls full of the wrath of God*

I found "golden bowls" 2 other times in the NKJV.

[1 Chronicles 28:17](#) also pure gold for the forks, the basins, the pitchers of pure gold, and the **golden bowls**--[he gave gold] by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls, [silver] by weight for every bowl; [1 Chronicles 28:17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 5:8](#) Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and **golden bowls** full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [Revelation 5:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>406</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G2223&t=NKJV>

I didn't see where the purpose of the golden bowls in the Jewish Temple was described, but if Revelation 5:8 is any indication, it is something positive. In this case, the seven golden bowls are full of the wrath of God. I already mentioned the subject of the wrath of God above in [Wrath of God complete](#).

### *Temple filled with smoke from the glory of God*

I only found one other verse that talked about the temple filling with smoke.

[Isaiah 6:1](#) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His [robe] filled the **temple**. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy [is] the LORD of hosts; The whole earth [is] full of His glory!" <sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was **filled with smoke**. <sup>5</sup> So I said: "Woe [is] me, for I am undone! Because I [am] a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." [Isaiah 6:1-5 NKJV](#)

But I did find several cases where the sanctuary was filled with the glory of God shrouded in a cloud, which is similar to smoke.

[Exodus 40:34](#) Then the **cloud covered the tabernacle** of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup> And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the **glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle**. [Exodus 40:34-35 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 16:42](#) Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the **tabernacle** of meeting; and suddenly the **cloud covered it**, and the **glory of the LORD appeared**. [Numbers 16:42 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 8:11](#) so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the **cloud**; for the **glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD**. [1 Kings 8:11 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 5:14](#) so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the **cloud**; for the **glory of the LORD filled the house of God**. [2 Chronicles 5:14 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 10:4](#) Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, [and paused] over the threshold of the **temple**; and the house was **filled with the cloud**, and the court was **full of the brightness of the LORD's glory**. [Ezekiel 10:4 NKJV](#)

### *No one was able to enter until the seven plagues were completed*

I think some of the verses above apply in this case. There were several cases where it specifically said that Moses or the priests could not enter the sanctuary or temple because of the glory of the Lord.

### **Interpreting the symbols**

It is pretty clear that this is a scene in heaven, and that there are similar elements to the scenes that precede the introduction of other sevens. What are some of the unique features of this one?

- This is the first where a large group of saved people are present, and they are singing praises to God
- There is something like a sea of glass in [Revelation 4:6](#), but this scene adds mingled with fire ([v2](#))
- [Revelation 1:13](#) preceding the seven churches had Jesus in a golden sash, but this one appears to picture seven angels, in priestly garb (white linen) wearing golden sashes ([v6](#))

- One of the four creatures which John saw in ([Revelation 4:6-9](#)) gave the seven angels each a golden bowl in this one
- The glory of God filled the temple, but in this one it was to the extent that no one could enter

With saved people in the picture, does this mean that everything in this section involving the seven bowls of the wrath of God follow the second coming? It is not really reasonable to say, until looking at what happens when the seven bowls of the wrath of God are poured out. So then, what can be said about the symbols in these verses?

I do not believe the angels in this case represent people or groups of people. They may represent literal angels carrying out God's punishment on the wicked, or they may be visual elements of the vision simply representing actions God will take. The majority of references to plagues in the Bible were supernaturally inflicted, as opposed to naturally occurring events in nature. Having said that, there were probably times where the actions of a group of people, naturally resulted in consequences that may have been called a plague.

I talked about the wrath of God, poured out in full strength, in the [third angel's message](#). I think there is a connection, because the wrath of God can be finished after it is poured out in full strength. In other words, once the wrath of God finally destroys sin, it is finished.

I believe the same sea of glass was mentioned in the scene in [Revelation 4:6](#), describing the throne room of God. In the final chapter of Revelation, is mentioned a river of life, clear as crystal.

[Revelation 22:1](#) And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. [Revelation 22:1 NKJV](#)

Both a sea of glass and a river of life are pictured around the throne of God. Most rivers naturally flow into seas, so perhaps the river flows from the throne of God and feeds the sea of glass. On the other hand, it could be possible that the overflow of the sea of glass feeds the river.

The words glass, clear and crystal, give the idea of something you can see clearly through, which would seem to indicate it is not flowing rapidly. But the unique feature described here in [v2](#) is that the sea of glass is mixed with fire. I have discussed before, how fire is used by God to destroy sin. We all know that water is used to quench fire. So perhaps, the fire is pictured to symbolize the destruction of sin, but the water is there to extinguish the fire?

I believe the group of people pictured standing on the sea of glass are the ones who did not yield to the threats of the beast and his image, and consequently did not receive his mark. In the end, I believe there will be only two groups of people, those who receive the mark of the beast, or those who receive the seal of God. I believe this group is distinct from others who are saved and are the 144,000. These are not better than others, but in the end-time experienced something different from all the others.

Is there some significance, to angels being attired in priestly garb? Is there any other place in the Bible where angels are seen this way? Maybe they represent the High Priest in his role of banishing the scapegoat? After the Jewish High Priest finished the service in the Most Holy place, he left it, not to enter again until the next Day of Atonement.

## Conclusion

The seven plagues to be described in the coming verses, are the last, and in them the wrath of God is finished. I believe the wrath of God spoken here, is the fulfillment of what is warned in the third angel's message. That means that every person would have received either the mark of the beast, or the seal of God before these plagues begin. That would seem to imply that these events take place between the close of probation, when every person has

made their final choice, and the temple in heaven is closed. There can be no forgiveness of sin after that point, according to the model presented in the Day of Atonement service.

This seems to fit in with the switch from a historical interpretation, to one that is if not literal, still future and end-time, in this second half of Revelation. Hence, I believe the coming verses will go on to predict events that will take place on earth, between the close of probation and the second coming. The wrath of God has been exercised through history in limited measure, but if this is the fulfillment of the third angel's message, it will be poured out without mixture, full strength, throughout the whole earth. Roy Anderson applied the following verse to mean that the seven plagues would be accomplished in one day.<sup>407</sup>

[Revelation 18:8](#) "Therefore her plagues will come **in one day**--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her. [Revelation 18:8 NKJV](#)

Of course, it hardly seems possible that the coming scenes would be accomplished in one literal day, which leads to the likelihood that this is a prophetic day meaning a literal year.

I'm not sure why this victorious group is pictured in heaven already, since it would seem these events precede the second coming of Jesus. Perhaps, the beginning of the scene gives a glimpse into what is in store for this group at the end of the seven plagues.

What do you believe?

- What do you think about the shift away from a historical interpretation beginning with this chapter in Revelation?
- If after the close of probation, do the plagues accomplish anything?
- Do you think it's possible that these plagues as well as many in the Bible attributed to God are the result of natural causes?

## The first bowl

### [Revelation 16:2](#)

[Revelation 16:2](#) So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. [Revelation 16:2 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

I shifted the terminology from symbols to elements because the things and events described in these verses may be literal.

#### *Foul and loathsome sores*

Foul is translated from [κακός, kakos](#)<sup>408</sup>, apparently a primary word; worthless (intrinsically, such; whereas G4190 properly refers to effects), i.e. (subjectively) depraved, or (objectively) injurious:—bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked.<sup>409</sup> It was most often translated to evil in the KJV. The following are some examples.

<sup>407</sup> Anderson, Roy Allan. *Unfolding the Revelation*. Boise, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1974, p164.

<sup>408</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2556&t=NKJV>

<sup>409</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2556&t=NKJV>



[Matthew 21:41](#) They said to Him, "He will destroy those [wicked men](#) miserably, and lease [his] vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." [Matthew 21:41 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:48](#) "But if that [evil](#) servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' [Matthew 24:48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:23](#) Then the governor said, "Why, what [evil](#) has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" [Matthew 27:23 NKJV](#)

[Acts 9:13](#) Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much [harm](#) he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. [Acts 9:13 NKJV](#)

[Acts 16:28](#) But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no [harm](#), for we are all here." [Acts 16:28 NKJV](#)

[Acts 23:9](#) Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no [evil](#) in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God." [Acts 23:9 NKJV](#)

[Acts 28:5](#) But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no [harm](#). [Acts 28:5 NKJV](#)

The word loathsome is used 3 other times in the NKJV.

[Numbers 11:20](#) 'but [for] a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes **loathsome** to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?" ' " [Numbers 11:20 NKJV](#)

This one from Numbers is from a Hebrew word used only once in the Bible. [זָרָא, zārā](#)<sup>410</sup>, which means nauseating. In other words, the people ate the meat until they were sick of it.

[Job 6:7](#) My soul refuses to touch them; They [are] as **loathsome** food to me. [Job 6:7 NKJV](#)

The next one from is translated from yet a different word, [דָּוַי, dāvay](#)<sup>411</sup>, which has to do with illness and languishing.

[Proverbs 13:5](#) A righteous [man] hates lying, But a wicked [man] is **loathsome** and comes to shame. [Proverbs 13:5 NKJV](#)

The last one from proverbs is from the word [בִּזְיָא, bā'aš](#)<sup>412</sup>, which in this case I think means to be offensive morally.

The word sore was used 30 other times in the NKJV. All but this from Leviticus, where it outlined the ceremonial laws concerning leprosy.

The plural, sores was found 6 times in the NKJV. The first two, not surprisingly were from one of the plagues on Egypt, the sixth one. The NLT uses the word boils.

[Exodus 9:9](#) "And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in **sores** on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." <sup>10</sup> Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered [them] toward heaven. And [they] caused boils that break out in **sores** on man and beast. [Exodus 9:9-10 NKJV](#)

<sup>410</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H2214&t=NKJV>

<sup>411</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1741&t=NKJV>

<sup>412</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H887&t=NKJV>

Two were from the New Testament but were not translated from the same word.

[Luke 16:20](#) "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of **sores**, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his **sores**. [Luke 16:20-21 NKJV](#)

Interestingly, these two from the story of the rich man and Lazarus are from two different Greek words. The second, [ἕλκος, helkos](#)<sup>413</sup>, being the same as that used in the next reference.

[Revelation 16:11](#) They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their **sores**, and did not repent of their deeds. [Revelation 16:11 NKJV](#)

This one in verse 11 is from the 5<sup>th</sup> bowl, but it is the same Greek word translated as sore in [verse 2](#). The original word is used only these three times with the meanings: 1) wound, especially a wound producing a discharge pus, 2) a sore, an ulcer.<sup>414</sup>

### *Mark of the beast*

This has been examined quite a bit already. See [beast from the earth](#), [third angel's message](#).

### *Worshiped his image*

This was also discussed in [beast from the earth](#), [third angel's message](#).

### **Conclusion**

I have already pivoted from interpreting the scenes from the first half of the book as symbolic of major sweeping historical events, to more specific end time events. The question could still be asked whether these plagues as described are to be interpreted symbolically or literally.

I think there are a couple really good examples to look at in the Old Testament for similarity. The sixth plague on Egypt, and the boils that Job experienced, both of which were mentioned in the examination of the words. Both were apparently supernatural in origin. One was brought by God on the oppressors of His people, the second was brought by Satan on a true follower of God. It was made pretty clear that in the case of this plague, it will only impact those who worship the beast and his image. That exempts the true followers of God, those who have His seal on their foreheads.

My conclusion is that if you interpret the plagues on Egypt as literal which I do, then this plague should also be considered literal. People who do not have the seal of God will be afflicted with some kind of open festering sores, for which no cure will be known. Although in vision, they appear to be caused by the wrath of God, I do not rule out the possibility that this simply means that God knows what will happen and is showing it to John. If manmade, it would not be the first time that human beings have caused some kind of deadly sickness either by accident or on purpose (chemical weapons). If this is the case, then those who have the seal of God could receive supernatural protection from God.

While I do lean toward a more literal interpretation of the plagues, I cannot eliminate the possibility that they are symbolic. But especially since they are said to be applied to those who worship the beast and his image, I think it is fair to say that they are relatively short and at the time of the end.

<sup>413</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G1668&t=NKJV>

<sup>414</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G1668&t=NKJV>

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the plagues are literal or symbolic?
- Do you think they are supernaturally caused by God?
- Do you think they could be man-made, or caused by something we do to the environment?

## The second bowl

### [Revelation 16:3](#)

[Revelation 16:3](#) Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead [man]; and every living creature in the sea died. [Revelation 16:3 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

It is difficult to not notice the striking similarity with the second trumpet. This of course was pointed out in the outline diagram.

[Revelation 8:8](#) Then the second angel sounded: And [something] like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. <sup>9</sup> And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. [Revelation 8:8-9 NKJV](#)

### *The sea*

Not surprisingly I examined the word sea for the [second trumpet](#), so I will simply refer to [that section](#). I will just point out that sea could generally be thought of as a large body of most likely salt water, probably the most prominent in the Bible being the Mediterranean.

### *Blood*

For the [second trumpet](#), I presented a number of bible verses that Thiele had collected about [blood](#).<sup>415</sup>

Probably the most likely and logical parallel from the Old Testament is the first plague on Egypt.

[Exodus 7:19](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in [buckets of] wood and [pitchers of] stone.' " <sup>20</sup> And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that [were] in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that [were] in the river were turned to blood. <sup>21</sup> The fish that [were] in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. [Exodus 7:19-21 NKJV](#)

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<sup>415</sup> Thiele. p165. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=11](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=11) <https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=11>

## Conclusion

With the first bowl, I mentioned the plague of boils that Egypt suffered. In this case, there is a striking similarity to the first Egyptian plague, the water of the Nile River turning to blood, and all creatures in the river dying. The difference being that this is the sea being turned to blood, and not the rivers, which will actually come in the third plague.

Again, I believe that like the plague on Egypt, this one could be literal. I would add however that, looking ahead, it is clear that this doesn't impact all water on earth, because there are still rivers left to turn to blood in the next plague. I don't think this has to necessarily mean that every drop of salt water in the world is turned to blood either, but if God wishes to do so, He is clearly capable. Finally, I don't see any way this could be naturally occurring, unless the blood is actually symbolic of some kind of pollution that humanity inflicts on themselves.

What do you believe?

- Do you think this plague literally means human blood with red and white blood cells?
- How do you think God's people will be protected from the effects of this plague?
- Given the striking similarity to the second trumpet, do you have any problem with interpreting them differently?

## The third bowl

### [Revelation 16:4-7](#)

[Revelation 16:4](#) Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous [are] Your judgments." [Revelation 16:4-7 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

I find it impossible not to notice and mention the similarity to the third trumpet with the difference being that it affected only a third of the fresh water supply, whereas this plague does not have the same limitation.

[Revelation 8:10](#) Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. [Revelation 8:10-11 NKJV](#)

### *Rivers and springs of water*

For the third trumpet, I mentioned the fact that rivers and springs were sources of drinking water as opposed to the sea which is not. The word river(s) is used 233, and spring(s) 61 times in the NKJV. They were only used together in the same verse once outside of the third trumpet and the third plague in the NKJV.

[Isaiah 41:18](#) I will open **rivers** in desolate heights, And fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land **springs** of water. [Isaiah 41:18 NKJV](#)

### *Blood*

The word blood was used 424 times in the NKJV. Blood is a symbol of life and the shedding of, death. Of course, the most relevant reference from the Old Testament is regarding the plague on Egypt.

[Exodus 7:19](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become **blood**. And there shall be **blood** throughout all the land of Egypt, both in [buckets of] wood and [pitchers of] stone.' " <sup>20</sup> And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that [were] in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that [were] in the river were turned to **blood**. <sup>21</sup> The fish that [were] in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was **blood** throughout all the land of Egypt. [Exodus 7:19-21 NKJV](#)

## Conclusion

Continuing the end-time interpretation theme, this one will take away drinking water. The description of this plague doesn't say how long it would last, but certainly people cannot survive long without water, not to mention all life on this planet. Once again, like the last, I am uncertain whether to interpret this as literal human blood, with live red and white cells, or as a symbol of some kind of pollution. In either case, I interpret this plague as making the fresh water sources undrinkable.

What do you believe?

- Though I don't believe God's people would die as a result of this plague, do you think they will suffer from it?
- Do you think the blood is literal or symbolic?
- Do you believe this plague is caused by God?

## The fourth bowl

### [Revelation 16:8-9](#)

[Revelation 16:8](#) Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. <sup>9</sup> And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. [Revelation 16:8-9 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *Sun*

The sun is the common element with the corresponding fourth trumpet. For that trumpet, the sun, moon, and stars were darkened. In this plague, the sun is involved but it seems to be the opposite of being darkened. It is described as being stronger, hotter, or more intense, to the point of scorching with fire. There was also a plague on Egypt involving the sun, but like the trumpet, the effect was also darkness or lack of sun.

[Exodus 10:21](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness [which] may even be felt." <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. [Exodus 10:21-22 NKJV](#)

So, what is the significance to the opposite effect of the sun? Recall that the first three plagues had parallels. Clearly too little sun is just as deadly in the end as too much.

### Fire

I examined fire for [the reaping](#), and saw that God is a consuming fire to sin and sinners. At times he appeared as or in fire, such as the burning bush, and with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. It seems fire will be an element in the final destruction of sin. But this plague is not the final consuming fire, because there are more plagues following it. In this plague, I think the fire is a side effect of the scorching heat of the sun, even as hot dry summers increase the odds of wildfires.

### Heat

Needless to say, the sun generates heat, which is needed to support life, but too much of it is not a good thing. In fact, it is an amazing thing to think that from 93 million miles away, the sun can still produce so much heat. There is a delicate balance between the distance from the sun and our atmosphere that regulates the temperature on earth. Clearly something will change to produce this extreme heat.

### Conclusion

I know this is not the end of the world cleansing by fire, because that will come from God. This heat and fire come from the sun, and it is not fatal to all because there are more plagues to follow. But I wonder, why is the effect of the sun somewhat opposite from the plague on Egypt, and also the fourth trumpet?

What do you believe?

- How do you think the heat can be so intense that it will scorch people with fire but not kill them?
- Do you think this plague is literal or symbolic?
- Why do you think people will acknowledge God has this power but instead of repenting, will blaspheme His name?

## The fifth bowl

### [Revelation 16:10-11](#)

[Revelation 16:10](#) Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. <sup>11</sup> They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. [Revelation 16:10-11 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

The common element with the fifth trumpet is darkness, but beyond that there are many more differences.

[Revelation 9:2](#) And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. [Revelation 9:2 NKJV](#)

The fifth trumpet is very detailed, while this one is pretty vague. This plague mostly repeats stuff from the first such as the target being the beast and his kingdom, and the sores which apparently are still painful.

### Throne

The word throne was used 175 times in the NKJV. There is one other place in the Bible that mentions the beast and his throne.

[Revelation 13:2](#) Now the **beast** which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his **throne**, and great authority. [Revelation 13:2 NKJV](#)

This was from the vision of the beast from the sea. Throughout the Bible, thrones were almost exclusively associated with a king and a kingdom. Most mentions coming from the kings and kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The book of Psalms mentions God's throne in heaven a number of times. The book that uses the word the most is Revelation, 42 times, the great majority of which are referring to the throne of God. There is also a throne at the right hand of God's throne where Jesus sits.

### *Kingdom*

The word kingdom was used 333 times in the NKJV. Naturally, it is associated with a group of people and the land where they live, presided over by one person at the top, a king. It probably can be said that a king cannot exist without a kingdom and vice versa. Of course, this word is tied very closely with throne, because where there is a king and a kingdom, there is a throne.

In the book of Daniel, there are visions of beasts that represent kingdoms.

[Daniel 7:23](#) "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all [other] kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. [Daniel 7:23 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 8:21](#) "And the male goat [is] the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that [is] between its eyes [is] the first king. [Daniel 8:21 NKJV](#)

An interesting distinction from this fifth bowl is the beast in possession of a kingdom, rather than representing a kingdom. There are a number of cases in the Old Testament where God declares that He will punish kingdoms that have oppressed His people. I will list a few besides the plagues on Egypt which have already been mentioned multiple times. There was the incident where the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem, and blasphemed the name of God, and when Hezekiah prayed to God for help, the Assyrian army was destroyed.

[Isaiah 36:2](#) Then the king of Assyria sent [the] Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. ... <sup>4</sup> Then [the] Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? ... <sup>13</sup> Then [the] Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! <sup>14</sup> "Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; <sup>15</sup> 'nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' ... <sup>19</sup> 'Where [are] the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where [are] the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? <sup>20</sup> 'Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' " [Isaiah 36:2, 4, 13-15, 19-20 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 37:33](#) "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it. <sup>34</sup> By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD. <sup>35</sup> 'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.' " <sup>36</sup> Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when [people] arose early in the morning, there were the corpses--all dead. <sup>37</sup> So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned [home], and remained at Nineveh. [Isaiah 37:33-36 NKJV](#)

Then later there was the kingdom of Babylon that attacked Jerusalem.

[Isaiah 13:19](#) And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. [Isaiah 13:19 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 25:12](#) 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. [Jeremiah 25:12 NKJV](#)

### *Darkened*

The darkness in this plague makes me think of the ninth plague on Egypt, though in this case it doesn't say the sun will be darkened.

[Exodus 10:21](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness [which] may even be felt." <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. [Exodus 10:21-23 NKJV](#)

The word darkened was actually used 15 times in the NKJV. Interestingly the first case was in the plagues on Egypt when a cloud of locusts arrived that was so thick it blocked the light from the sun.

[Exodus 10:15](#) For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was **darkened**; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. [Exodus 10:15 NKJV](#)

The next one in Isaiah is about woes on the wicked which seems like it would be applicable in this case.

[Isaiah 5:30](#) In that day they will roar against them Like the roaring of the sea. And if [one] looks to the land, Behold, darkness [and] sorrow; And the light is **darkened** by the clouds. [Isaiah 5:30 NKJV](#)

Paul used the word three times in a symbolic sense that may be applicable here.

[Romans 21](#) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify [Him] as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were **darkened**. [Romans 1:21 NKJV](#)

[Romans 11:10](#) Let their eyes be **darkened**, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always." [Romans 11:10 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:18](#) having their understanding **darkened**, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; [Ephesians 4:18 NKJV](#)

### *Gnawed their tongues*

This was a strange expression that I didn't find anywhere else in the Bible. I think it is useful to note that they gnawed their tongues because they were in pain from the sores of the first plague. Gnawing has to do with chewing and the tongue in the original Greek, was literally a reference to the tongue. I guess looking at the expression in context, perhaps gnawing their tongues would cause some pain which might distract from the pain of their sores.

### **Conclusion**

My first comment here is really not even about the fifth bowl, or plague. I found this plague's mention of the pain of the sores to give more weight to a literal interpretation of the first plague, and perhaps even all of them in general.



But the question I have is, without mention of the sun, moon, or stars, what is darkened? Is it one of those that is darkened, but they are just not mentioned? This makes me think of the first day of creation when God created light, before the sun, moon, and stars. In that case, I concluded that the light and dark were two halves of a day, marking the passing of time. In that case, He established the unit of time known as a day, which was obviously tied to the rotation of the earth. The opposite of the first day of creation by my reasoning would be to stop the rotation of the earth.

Considering the wording carefully, I think it is most likely that this was like the plague of darkness on Egypt, where the Egyptians were in darkness, but the Israelites were not.

[Exodus 10:22](#) So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. [Exodus 10:22-23 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Do you think this plague involves the darkening of the sun?
- How is it that everyone suffering from the plagues, would acknowledge God to the point of blaspheming Him, but still not repent?
- Do you have any thoughts about why the after effects of the sores was mentioned, but none of the other plagues?

## The sixth bowl

### [Revelation 16:12-16](#)

[Revelation 16:12](#) Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. <sup>13</sup> And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [coming] out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup> For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, [which] go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. <sup>15</sup> "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed [is] he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." <sup>16</sup> And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. [Revelation 16:12-16 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

The first thing is to once again notice the common element with the corresponding trumpet.

[Revelation 9:14](#) saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ... <sup>16</sup> Now the number of the army of the horsemen [was] two hundred million; I heard the number of them. [Revelation 9:14,16 NKJV](#)

### *Euphrates dried up*

I have examined the Euphrates River before for the [sixth trumpet](#). It was probably most often thought of as a border of the land God gave to Israel. Crossing rivers with large groups of people, such as an army is always a logistical nightmare. There are two prominent cases of waters being dried up by God to facilitate crossing by the Israelites.

[Exodus 14:21](#) Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go [back] by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry [land], and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup> So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry [ground], and the waters [were] a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. [Exodus 14:21-22 NKJV](#)

[Joshua 3:15](#) and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), <sup>16</sup> that the waters which came down from upstream stood [still, and] rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that [is] beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, [and] were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup> Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on **dry ground**, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. [Joshua 3:15-17 NKJV](#)

### *Kings from the east*

What was east of the Euphrates River from the perspective of Israel? If you look at it on the map, it splits Iraq diagonally flowing from northwest to southeast. So, half of Iraq (Babylon), all of Iran (Persia), India, China, and Russia are all major counties east of the Euphrates from Israel. In fact, India and China alone are about 36% of the world's population.

So, what does the Bible say about the east?

[Genesis 3:24](#) So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the **east** of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. [Genesis 3:24 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 4:16](#) Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the **east** of Eden. [Genesis 4:16 NKJV](#)

Abraham's other sons moved and lived east of Isaac.

[Genesis 25:6](#) But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the **east**. [Genesis 25:6 NKJV](#)

When he fled from Esau and home, Jacob fled east.

[Genesis 29:1](#) So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the **people of the East**. [Genesis 29:1 NKJV](#)

East wind was mentioned 20 times, often with hot, dry, or otherwise destructive connotations. In Pharaoh's dream, a scorching east wind brought seven years of famine. And later a plague of locusts flew in like an army on an east wind.

[Genesis 41:27](#) "And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them [are] seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the **east wind** are seven years of famine. [Genesis 41:27 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 10:13](#) So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all [that] night. When it was morning, the **east wind** brought the locusts. [Exodus 10:13 NKJV](#)

In the time of Gideon, the Amalekites and the people of the east, used to attack the Israelites.

[Judges 7:12](#) Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the **people of the East**, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. [Judges 7:12 NKJV](#)

### *Unclean spirit coming out of the mouth*

“Unclean spirit(s)” was used 22 times in the NKJV, only one of which is from the Old Testament.

[Zechariah 13:2](#) "It shall be in that day," says the LORD of hosts, "[that] I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the **unclean spirit** to depart from the land. [Zechariah 13:2 NKJV](#)

The following verse from Matthew is representative of all the other verses except the one from Revelation being examined here.

[Matthew 10:1](#) And when He had called His twelve disciples to [Him], He gave them power [over] **unclean spirits**, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. [Matthew 10:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:43](#) "When an **unclean spirit** goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. [Matthew 12:43 NKJV](#)

I think it is pretty safe to say that the other 16 from the Gospels are in reference to the same thing which is evil spirits, or evil angels, in the context of possessing people.

### *Dragon*

I examined the word dragon when studying [Revelation 12:3-4](#).

[Revelation 12:3](#) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup> His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the **dragon** stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. [Revelation 12:3-4 NKJV](#)

For that word study, see [The red dragon, Satan](#). While the dragon can represent Satan, I believe that the dragon in the verses just presented, was pagan Rome.

### *Beast*

It's hard to believe that I have gotten this far in Revelation and not examined the singular word beast. I probably should have back when I studied [the beast from the sea](#), and [the beast from the earth](#). I did study the [name or number of the beast](#).

The word beast is actually used 126 times in the NKJV, 37 of which are in Revelation. The following use, the first in the Bible, is a very typical literal application of the word. Both man and beast were created on the same day, and they were often referred to together. “Man and beast” occurred 28 times and “man or beast” 4.

[Genesis 1:30](#) "Also, to every **beast** of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for food"; and it was so. [Genesis 1:30 NKJV](#)

In Exodus, most of the plagues were specifically said to affect both man and beast.

[Exodus 9:10](#) Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered [them] toward heaven. And [they] caused boils that break out in sores on man and **beast**. [Exodus 9:10 NKJV](#)

A Psalm declares beasts to be senseless and ignorant.

[Psalm 73:22](#) I [was] so foolish and ignorant; I was [like] a **beast** before You. [Psalm 73:22 NKJV](#)

Finally, in Daniel we have some seemingly more relevant verses to examine.

[Daniel 7:5](#) "And suddenly another **beast**, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and [had] three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' <sup>6</sup> "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The **beast** also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. <sup>7</sup> "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth **beast**, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It [was] different from all the **beasts** that [were] before it, and it had ten horns. [Daniel 7:5-7 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:11](#) "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the **beast** was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. [Daniel 7:11 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:19](#) "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth **beast**, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, [with] its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, [which] devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; [Daniel 7:19 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 7:23](#) "Thus he said: 'The fourth **beast** shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all [other] kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. [Daniel 7:23 NKJV](#)

The first in Revelation is from the vision of the two witnesses. A beast, undoubtedly a symbol of something, coming out of the bottomless pit. I didn't examine or comment on it when I covered those verses.

[Revelation 11:7](#) When they finish their testimony, the **beast** that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. [Revelation 11:7 NKJV](#)

Then in chapter 13, we have the first major reference to a beast which has strikingly similar characteristics to the beasts in Daniel's visions.

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a **beast** rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the **beast** which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the **beast**. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the **beast**; and they worshiped the **beast**, saying, "Who [is] like the **beast**? Who is able to make war with him?" <sup>5</sup> And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. [Revelation 13:1-4 NKJV](#)

The first beast in Revelation 13, can be called the beast from the sea, because it is followed by a beast from the earth. The beasts from Daniel's vision all came out of the sea, further tying their identities to this first beast.

[Revelation 13:11](#) Then I saw another **beast** coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> And he exercises all the authority of the first **beast** in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first **beast**, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. <sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the **beast**, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the **beast** who was wounded by the sword and lived. <sup>15</sup> He was granted [power] to give breath to the image of the **beast**, that the image of the **beast** should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the **beast** to be killed. <sup>16</sup> He causes all, both small and great, rich and

poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,<sup>17</sup> and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the **beast**, or the number of his name.<sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the **beast**, for it is the number of a man: His number [is] 666. [Revelation 13:11-18 NKJV](#)

I believe the beast from the sea and the beast in this triad are the same.

### *False prophet*

The false prophet is mentioned two other times later in Revelation, with little doubt in my mind that it is the same false prophet we read about in the following triad.

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the **false prophet** who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. [Revelation 19:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:10](#) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the **false prophet** [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Revelation 20:10 NKJV](#)

The only other use of the phrase “false prophet” in the NKJV is in Acts, where Paul describes a Jew, who was a magician, probably through black arts, or Satanic power.

[Acts 13:6](#) Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a **false prophet**, a Jew whose name [was] Bar-Jesus, [Acts 13:6 NKJV](#)

Jesus warned of “false prophets,” as did his disciples, Peter and John. In these cases, it seems more like individual actors, rather than the representation of a nation, country, or political power.

[Matthew 7:15](#) "Beware of **false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. [Matthew 7:15 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:11](#) "Then many **false prophets** will rise up and deceive many. ... <sup>24</sup> "For false christs and **false prophets** will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [Matthew 24:11, 24 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:22](#) "For false christs and **false prophets** will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [Mark 13:22 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:26](#) Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the **false prophets**. [Luke 6:26 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 2:1](#) But there were also **false prophets** among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, [and] bring on themselves swift destruction. [2 Peter 2:1 NKJV](#)

[1 John 4:1](#) Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many **false prophets** have gone out into the world. [1 John 4:1 NKJV](#)

***Demons performing signs***

First, there should be an understanding of what is meant by demons. The word demon(s) was used 81 times in the NKJV. I believe that demons refer to Satan (used 55 times in NKJV) and the other fallen angels who were kicked out of heaven. Satan is also called the devil, and Beelzebub (7 times in the NKJV).

[Revelation 12:9](#) So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the **Devil** and **Satan**, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and **his angels** were cast out with him. [Revelation 12:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:2](#) He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is [the] **Devil** and **Satan**, and bound him for a thousand years; [Revelation 20:2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:24](#) Now when the Pharisees heard [it] they said, "This [fellow] does not cast out **demons** except by **Beelzebub**, the **ruler of the demons**." [Matthew 12:24 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:22](#) And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has **Beelzebub**," and, "By the **ruler of the demons** He casts out **demons**." [Mark 3:22 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:18](#) "If **Satan** also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out **demons** by **Beelzebub**. [Luke 11:18 NKJV](#)

Satan, and his other fallen angels, being what they are, can do things that would seem supernatural to human beings. Obviously, they have long life, which I will not call immortal because God will destroy them eventually. First of all, like good angels, they are invisible to us most of the time, but when visible, they can disguise themselves as something good. That means they can take different forms, like shape shifters in science fiction.

[2 Corinthians 11:14](#) And no wonder! For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**. [2 Corinthians 11:14 NKJV](#)

They have super strength.

[Mark 5:2](#) And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>3</sup> who had [his] dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, <sup>4</sup> because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. [Mark 5:2-4 NKJV](#)

They can do things that would seem miraculous or supernatural. You can read the full context, but I will just include a few verses from the story of Job. The verses attribute the acts to God, but it is clear from the context, that it was caused by Satan.

[Job 1:16](#) While he [was] still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" [Job 1:16 NKJV](#)

[Job 2:7](#) So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. [Job 2:7 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:6](#) Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain **sorcerer**, a false prophet, a Jew whose name [was] Bar-Jesus, [Acts 13:6 NKJV](#)

[Acts 16:16](#) Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by **fortune-telling**. [Acts 16:16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 7:22](#) Then the **magicians** of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. [Exodus 7:22 NKJV](#)

## Conclusion

Probably many people who don't even read the Bible have heard of the word Armageddon, the spelling used in the KJV. In fact, the word is found in secular encyclopedias and dictionaries. Such brief definitions imply some interpretation, which I may or may not agree with.

Armageddon, (probably Hebrew: "Hill of Megiddo"), in the New Testament, place where the kings of the earth under demonic leadership will wage war on the forces of God at the end of history. Armageddon is mentioned in the Bible only once, in the Revelation to John, or the Apocalypse of St. John (16:16).<sup>416</sup>

1 a: the site or time of a final and conclusive battle between the forces of good and evil  
b: the battle taking place at Armageddon

2: a usually vast decisive conflict or confrontation<sup>417</sup>

Armageddon, or Har-Megedon, is actually the last word of this passage, but in some respect, it seems that the interpretation of the whole passage kind of hinges on this word. I suppose the first logical question is whether this is a literal location or symbolic. Yes, I am willing to consider symbolic interpretations, considering some of the other elements associated with this plague.

First, the word is translated from the Greek [Ἀρμαγεδών, harmagedōn](#)<sup>418</sup> which is of Hebrew origin, [הַר, har](#)<sup>419</sup> [מְגִדּוֹן, m'gīdōn](#)<sup>420</sup>. Har is mostly translated to mountain or mount, and megiddon (translated to Megiddo), which occurs 12 times in the NKJV. One word that I saw pretty consistently associated with Megiddo is Taanach, which has the following biblical usage<sup>421</sup>:

I. Taanach or Tanach = "sandy"

A. an ancient Canaanite city conquered by Joshua and allotted to the half tribe of Manasseh although in the territory of Issachar; given to the Kohathite Levites; located on the west of the Jordan and near the waters of Megiddo

Since there are just 12, let's look at them all. The first 4 from Joshua tell us that there was a place known as Megiddo that was near Taanach, both of whose kings were defeated in battle by the Israelites, but the tribe of Manasseh, in whose territory it fell, did not take possession of the cities. There were waters near or associated with Megiddo. I

<sup>416</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Armageddon>

<sup>417</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Armageddon>

<sup>418</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G717&t=NKJV>

<sup>419</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H2022&t=NKJV>

<sup>420</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H4023&t=NKJV>

<sup>421</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H8590&t=NKJV>

believe these references to all point to the same location, but there was no mention of a mountain or hill of Megiddo.

[Joshua 12:21](#) the king of **Taanach**, one; the king of **Megiddo**, one; [Joshua 12:21 NKJV](#)

[Joshua 17:11](#) And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of **Taanach** and its towns, and the inhabitants of **Megiddo** and its towns--three hilly regions. [Joshua 17:11 NKJV](#)

[Judges 1:27](#) However, Manasseh did not drive out [the inhabitants of] Beth Shean and its villages, or **Taanach** and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of **Megiddo** and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. [Judges 1:27 NKJV](#)

[Judges 5:19](#) "The kings came [and] fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In **Taanach**, by the waters of **Megiddo**; They took no spoils of silver. [Judges 5:19 NKJV](#)

The next two verses from 1 Kings, are about the rotations of the people from each tribe who served King Solomon. Whether they were descendants of the original inhabitants, who had not been completely driven out in the time of the Judges, or Israelites from the tribe of Manasseh is not clear.

[1 Kings 4:12](#) Baana the son of Ahilud, [in] **Taanach**, **Megiddo**, and all Beth Shean, which [is] beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah, as far as the other side of Jokneam; [1 Kings 4:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 9:15](#) And this [is] the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, **Megiddo**, and Gezer. [1 Kings 9:15 NKJV](#)

Ahaziah, king of Judah had associated himself with the wicked family of Ahab and Jezebel, and was killed along with them.

[2 Kings 9:27](#) But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw [this], he fled by the road to Beth Haggan. So Jehu pursued him, and said, "Shoot him also in the chariot." [And they shot him] at the Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to **Megiddo**, and died there. [2 Kings 9:27 NKJV](#)

The next two are about the death of good king Josiah at Megiddo or on the plain of Megiddo.

[2 Kings 23:29](#) In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And [Pharaoh Necho] killed him at **Megiddo** when he confronted him. <sup>30</sup> Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from **Megiddo**, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place. [2 Kings 23:29-30 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 35:22](#) Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of **Megiddo**. [2 Chronicles 35:22 NKJV](#)



This verse from 1 Chronicles comes from some Israelite genealogy and geography. Again, we see the connection with Manasseh.

[1 Chronicles 7:29](#) and by the borders of the children of Manasseh [were] Beth Shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, **Megiddo** and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel. [1 Chronicles 7:29 NKJV](#)

The verse from Zachariah seems to be a prophesy of the death of the good king Josiah on the plain of Megiddo.

[Zechariah 12:11](#) "In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of **Megiddo**. [Zechariah 12:11 NKJV](#)

Let's look at a map of ancient Israel with tribe borders to the right. You can see that the tribe of Manasseh was split into two because half of them wanted to stay on the east side of the Jordan. In the area of the tribe of Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan, you can see Megiddo and Taanach in the north. The next map is really about Nebuchadnezzar, but you can see the route taken by Necho including his battle with Josiah on his way to Carhemish where he was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar.



I would say that in the Old Testament, there seems to be a pretty consistent location associated with Megiddo.

I also found a pretty interesting and fairly comprehensive article on [Megiddo on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website](#). It described

Megiddo as an important city in biblical times, and of strategic importance because it was on the international highway from Egypt to Damascus and Mesopotamia. Archeological expeditions have found evidence that corroborates Megiddo first as a royal Canaanite city, then as an Egyptian stronghold and administrative center, then a "chariot city" of the kings of Israel, and later as a controlling city of Assyrian and Persian provinces.<sup>422</sup>

Having done the biblical, geographical and historical research, it doesn't seem that the location currently has enough significance to be the focal point of a global battle. For this reason, it is difficult to not fall back into some symbolism here. This is also the case with the Euphrates, because with supernatural power and modern technology, it is

<sup>422</sup> <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/israelexperience/history/pages/megiddo - the solomonic chariot city.aspx>

difficult to see how the drying up of the river would make way for an army from the east. Not to mention that the Tigris essentially parallels, the Euphrates and nothing is said of that river. In addition, some have applied the words of Joel to this time and suggest that rivers could mostly have been dried up already from the possible drought and heat of the previous plague.<sup>423</sup>

[Joel 1:20](#) The beasts of the field also cry out to You, For the water brooks are dried up, And fire has devoured the open pastures. [Joel 1:20 NKJV](#)

Maxwell wrote nearly ten pages about Armageddon and the Euphrates River in connection with this sixth plague.<sup>424</sup> I will be mentioning some of his ideas in the next few paragraphs. First, he suggested that there is some difficulty with the word Armageddon or Har-Megiddo. There is no direct reference in the Old Testament to a Mount Megiddo, as it seems John intends. As I discussed above, there is a small but important town called Megiddo referenced in the Old Testament, but it is neither practical nor possible to assemble the quantities of troops that kings from the east of that location could assemble. As I mentioned previously, just India and China, which are east of that location contain more than a third of the world's population.

Noticing the quotation from Joel immediately above, I believe it is pretty well accepted that much of the writings of the prophet Joel find parallels in the book of Revelation, and application to end time events. Look at the similarities in the language and pictures drawn from the following passage from Joel.

[Joel 3:9](#) Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. <sup>10</sup> Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, 'I [am] strong.' " <sup>11</sup> Assemble and come, all you nations, And gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. <sup>12</sup> "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. <sup>13</sup> Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow--For their wickedness [is] great." <sup>14</sup> Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD [is] near in the valley of decision. <sup>15</sup> The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. <sup>16</sup> The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel. [Joel 3:9-16 NKJV](#)

The valley of Jehoshaphat is a pretty easy reference to a great defense of God's people in response to an attack by multiple kings against the kingdom of Judah.

[2 Chronicles 20:1](#) It happened after this [that] the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and [others] with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup> Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which [is] En Gedi). <sup>3</sup> And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to ask [help] from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. [2 Chronicles 20:1-4 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 20:14](#) Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. <sup>15</sup> And he said, "Listen, all

<sup>423</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p775 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA775>

<sup>424</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p434-443.

you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle [is] not yours, but God's. <sup>16</sup> 'Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup> 'You will not [need] to fight in this [battle]. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD [is] with you." [2 Chronicles 20:14-17 NKJV](#)

In this case, the people of God, the armies of Israel were not even to engage in the battle because God said He would fight for them. As it turns out He turned their enemies against each other. This reminds me of another occasion recorded in the book of Judges.

[Judges 6:33](#) Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the **Valley of Jezreel**. [Judges 6:33 NKJV](#)

[Judges 7:12](#) Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. [Judges 7:12 NKJV](#)

[Judges 7:22](#) When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. [Judges 7:22 NKJV](#)

According to [1 Kings 4:12](#), Megiddo is near Jezreel. And on the map, I showed above, Megiddo is on the west side of the Jezreel plain.

Let us not forget the occasion where God's people were freed from captivity that literally involved some drying up of the Euphrates River.<sup>425</sup> This deliverance was even prophesied before he was born and more than 100 years before it took place.

[Isaiah 44:28](#) Who says of Cyrus, '[He is] My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." ' [Isaiah 44:28 NKJV](#)

In this case also, the people of God did not need to fight at all. According to Maxwell, even as the Euphrates River brought life and commerce to ancient Babylon, the drying up of it could be interpreted to mean the withdrawal of popular support from end-time false religious systems known as Babylon. He then concluded that the battle of Armageddon will be a worldwide conflict pitting rebellious man and evil spirits against the Creator and His loyal followers.<sup>426</sup>

Now let's look at the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. The first two were clearly introduced in the last section that I titled the [Great controversy - Revelation 11:19-14:20](#). The [red dragon](#), in [Revelation 12:3-4](#) represented the devil and the pagan Roman Empire that persecuted Christ and His followers. The [beast from the sea](#) in [Revelation 13:1-4](#), came up out of the water as the dragon watched. Then the dragon, the Roman Empire, gave its power to the beast from the sea. This symbolized the transition from the pagan form of the Roman Empire to the religious form, also known as the Roman Catholic Church. So, the first two characters of the Devil's trinity have been identified but what about the third. Well, the next creature that followed the beast from the sea is the [beast from](#)

<sup>425</sup> Abbott, Jacob. *Cyrus the Great*. New York and London, Harper Brothers Publishers, 1901, p205-206.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=gOU9AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>426</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p443.

[the earth](#) in [Revelation 13:11-18](#). This beast made an image or an idol of the beast from the sea, and then forced people to worship it. Setting up an idol and in essence telling people it is a god, and that they must worship it could easily be seen as the actions of a false prophet. The beast from the earth began with people fleeing to sparsely populated regions of the earth to escape the persecution of the beast from the sea. Those who were persecuted were primarily those who protested the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. They formed a gentle lamb-like nation that grew into a great power that eventually spoke like the dragon. So, I believe this is saying that at the time of the end, pagan or non-Christian powers, the beast or Roman Catholic power, and the United States or Protestant Christianity will unite.

The next element to discuss are the frogs that come out of the mouths of the three. They are said to be demons, performing signs, probably miracles intended to convince people to believe and follow. To assemble for the war of the great day of God. Interestingly it doesn't explicitly state who they intend to fight, but the obvious assumption would be God and His true followers. The Bible teaches that demons can do things that humans would consider supernatural, or miraculous. But consider something else. The first lie Satan told to the human race was that they would not die, even if they disobeyed God.

[Genesis 3:4](#) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [Genesis 3:4 NKJV](#)

I have written extensively about this topic in [what happens after death](#), and the Bible says in clear and unambiguous terms that there is no consciousness in death.

[Psalm 6:5](#) For in death [there is] no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? [Psalm 6:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 115:17](#) The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence. [Psalm 115:17 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:3](#) This [is] an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing [happens] to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness [is] in their hearts while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead. <sup>4</sup> But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. <sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun. [Ecclesiastes 9:3-6 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:10](#) Whatever your hand finds to do, do [it] with your might; for [there is] no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. [Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:36](#) "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; [Acts 13:36 NKJV](#)

But consider the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on what happens when someone dies. The body goes in the grave, but the conscious spirit is immediately judged, and sent to heaven, purgatory or hell. Ultimately all end in heaven or hell both of which are taught to be eternal. At the second coming, and the resurrection, bodies are reunited with spirits, but the resurrected person will continue to exist in heaven or hell for all eternity.<sup>427</sup> This teaching is not Biblical, but it is not one of the doctrines that most Protestant denominations reformed, hence most Christians believe that the spirits of their loved ones are conscious, and in some cases communicate with them.

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<sup>427</sup> [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p123a12.htm](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p123a12.htm)

Now consider the possibility for being deceived, especially if someone believes their loved one is in heaven with God. A fallen angel can impersonate a loved one and tell the living relatives anything, which they would likely believe if the loved one was thought to be in heaven. On the other hand, in a great crisis, how many would follow if fallen angels impersonated great military leaders from history, possessing supernatural powers, or if they appeared as invincible giants?

Communication with the spirits of the dead is a teaching of Spiritualism. Since so many Christians are completely open to the idea of the spirits of the dead being alive, as I would guess that many "pagan" or non-Christians are, then they would all be ready to follow the demons, masquerading as people they think they know with the power to perform miraculous signs.

### Summary

I believe that the dragon, the beast and the false prophet are the non-Christian (paganism), Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism. I think they will come together, not to a physical location on earth, but in agreement on a single purpose. I believe that supernatural signs by evil angels will unite them and convince everyone but those with the seal of God to follow. I think that purpose will be to eliminate the threat that in their mind is the reason for the plagues, those who refuse to comply with the popular belief about what God wants. But I believe God will ultimately defeat their plan by turning them against each other and causing them to fight against each other even as He did in cases in the Old Testament to save His people.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the Euphrates should be interpreted literally?
- Do you have any different ideas about the identities of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet?
- Do you think Armageddon or Har-Magedon is a single geographical location for a great final battle?

## The seventh bowl

### [Revelation 16:17-21](#)

[Revelation 16:17](#) Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" <sup>18</sup> And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. <sup>19</sup> Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. <sup>20</sup> Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. <sup>21</sup> And great hail from heaven fell upon men, [each hailstone] about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great. [Revelation 16:17-21 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Loud voice out of the temple from the throne*

Loud voice was examined with the third angel's message [[Loud voice](#)].

### *It is done*

The phrase "it is done" was used 3 times in the NKJV, the first simply being a statement of the completion of an assigned task.

[Luke 14:22](#) "And the servant said, 'Master, **it is done** as you commanded, and still there is room.' [Luke 14:22 NKJV](#)

It is used one other time later in Revelation.

[Revelation 21:6](#) And He said to me, "**It is done!** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. [Revelation 21:6 NKJV](#)

But there is another phrase which I believe has similar meaning. "It is finished," was used by Jesus just before He died.

[John 19:30](#) So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. [John 19:30 NKJV](#)

Interestingly there was also an earthquake when Jesus said those words.

[Matthew 27:50](#) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. <sup>51</sup> Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, [Matthew 27:50-51 NKJV](#)

### *Thunderings and lightning*

Lightning and thunderings were used a few times in the NKJV. The first two clearly accompanied God's presence on Mount Sinai.

[Exodus 19:16](#) Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were **thunderings** and **lightnings**, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who [were] in the camp trembled. [Exodus 19:16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 20:18](#) Now all the people witnessed the **thunderings**, the **lightning** flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw [it], they trembled and stood afar off. [Exodus 20:18 NKJV](#)

The next was in the preface to the seven seals when John described the throne room of God in heaven.

[Revelation 4:5](#) And from the throne proceeded **lightnings**, **thunderings**, and voices. Seven lamps of fire [were] burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. [Revelation 4:5 NKJV](#)

The next was in the preface to the seven trumpets, again at the throne of God.

[Revelation 8:5](#) Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw [it] to the earth. And there were noises, **thunderings**, **lightnings**, and an earthquake. [Revelation 8:5 NKJV](#)

Then in the seventh trumpet, as John got another glimpse into the temple of God in heaven, he saw lightning and thunder again.

[Revelation 11:19](#) Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were **lightnings**, noises, **thunderings**, an earthquake, and great hail. [Revelation 11:19 NKJV](#)

Lightning without thunder was used in 24 verses, but considering adjacent verses, less than 20.

[2 Samuel 22:14](#) "The LORD **thundered** from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice. <sup>15</sup> He sent out arrows and scattered them; **Lightning** bolts, and He vanquished them. [2 Samuel 22:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Job 36:29](#) Indeed, can [anyone] understand the spreading of clouds, The **thunder** from His canopy? <sup>30</sup> Look, He scatters His light upon it, And covers the depths of the sea. <sup>31</sup> For by these He judges the peoples; He gives food in abundance. <sup>32</sup> He covers [His] hands with **lightning**, And commands it to strike. [Job 36:29-32 NKJV](#)

[Job 37:3](#) He sends it forth under the whole heaven, His **lightning** to the ends of the earth. <sup>4</sup> After it a voice roars; He **thunders** with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard. <sup>5</sup> God **thunders** marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend. [Job 37:3-5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 18:13](#) The LORD **thundered** from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire. <sup>14</sup> He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, **Lightnings** in abundance, and He vanquished them. [Psalm 18:13-14 NKJV](#)

The next verse I think is very relevant because it involved one of the plagues on Egypt.

[Exodus 9:23](#) And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent **thunder** and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. [Exodus 9:23 NKJV](#)

I like the relevance of the next one because of the element of confusing the enemies of God's people in the last plague.

[1 Samuel 7:10](#) Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD **thundered** with a loud **thunder** upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. [1 Samuel 7:10 NKJV](#)

The next mentions thunder and an earthquake.

[Isaiah 29:6](#) You will be punished by the LORD of hosts With **thunder** and **earthquake** and great noise, [With] storm and tempest And the flame of devouring fire. [Isaiah 29:6 NKJV](#)

### *Great earthquake*

I examined the word earthquake for the [sixth seal](#).

I don't know how we can find any more correlation than with this verse from the introduction to the previous section, the [great controversy](#). Presumably, it is a scene from the throne room of God in heaven.

[Revelation 11:19](#) Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were **lightnings**, noises, **thunderings**, an **earthquake**, and great **hail**. [Revelation 11:19 NKJV](#)

### *Worse than any in the history of man*

It kind of makes sense that signs or elements associated with the final plague on sinful earth would be considered the worst in the history of man. But is this literal or symbolic?

### *The great city split in three parts*

This appears to be part of the fallout of the greatest earthquake in the history of man. But what city is being referred to here? I think the answer is in the very next sentence. Babylon is receiving the cup of the wine of the wrath of God.

This is actually the second time we hear of Babylon in Revelation, the first and undoubtedly related, being in the [second angel's message](#).

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

I didn't find any match of significance when looking for three parts, so I looked for thirds. The seven trumpets were filled with thirds, but not really about the three parts.

Smith points out that the three parts are the Devils' trinity mentioned in the sixth plague, whom I identified as non-Christian, Roman Catholic, and apostate Protestantism.<sup>428</sup> This splitting apart could be interpreted to mean that they are no longer united which would cause them to fight amongst each other, as I suggested in my [summary of the sixth plague](#).

Babylon received the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath

This made me think of the second (which I mentioned above) and third angel's messages.

[Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives [his] mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." <sup>12</sup> Here is the patience of the saints; here [are] those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. [Revelation 14:9-12 NKJV](#)

In the second angel's message, we are told that Babylon is fallen, then in the third that those who worship the beast will drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Are Babylon and the beast from the sea the same entity?

Islands and mountains disappeared

The word Island was used 10 times in the NKJV, all in the New Testament, and three times in Revelation. By far the most closely paralleled is from the sixth seal:

[Revelation 6:14](#) Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. [Revelation 6:14 NKJV](#)

The remaining 8 were all simply mentions of literal islands around the Mediterranean.

The plural was used 2 times in the NKJV, all in the Old Testament, from Esther and Isaiah and both seem pretty literal.

As might be expected, mountain(s) was used hundreds of times. A couple verses that mentioned moving mountains were:

[Zechariah 14:4](#) And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, [Making] a very large valley; Half of the **mountain** shall **move** toward the north And half of it toward the south. [Zechariah 14:4 NKJV](#)

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<sup>428</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. P783 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA783>



[Matthew 17:20](#) So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this **mountain**, '**Move** from here to there,' and it will **move**; and nothing will be impossible for you. [Matthew 17:20 NKJV](#)

The first is a description of what will happen when Christ returns at the end of the Millennium. The second is an example of a seemingly impossible task that Jesus said would be possibly with faith.

Islands and mountains are both really the same the same thing, they are simply peaks in the terrain. In reality, Islands are much bigger mountains than the tallest peaks on land, we just see the very tip of them.

The real question in my mind here is whether this should be taken literally.

### *Hailstones the weight of a talent fell*

Since the word hailstones was only used 8 times in the NKJV, I will list the other 7.

[Joshua 10:11](#) And it happened, as they fled before Israel [and] were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large **hailstones** from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. [There were] more who died from the **hailstones** than the children of Israel killed with the sword. [Joshua 10:11 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 18:12](#) From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with **hailstones** and coals of fire. <sup>13</sup> The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, **Hailstones** and coals of fire. [Psalm 18:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 30:30](#) The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard, And show the descent of His arm, With the indignation of [His] anger And the flame of a devouring fire, [With] scattering, tempest, and **hailstones**. [Isaiah 30:30 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 13:11](#) "say to those who plaster [it] with untempered [mortar], that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great **hailstones**, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear [it] down. [Ezekiel 13:11 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 13:13](#) Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great **hailstones** in fury to consume [it]. [Ezekiel 13:13 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 38:22](#) "And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who [are] with him, flooding rain, great **hailstones**, fire, and brimstone. [Ezekiel 38:22 NKJV](#)

Twice hailstones were specifically and literally said to fall on the attackers or oppressors of God's people. The first was the seventh plague on Egypt.

[Exodus 9:23](#) And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and **hail**, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained **hail** on the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup> So there was **hail**, and fire mingled with the **hail**, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. <sup>25</sup> And the **hail** struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that [was] in the field, both man and beast; and the **hail** struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. <sup>26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel [were], there was no **hail**. [Exodus 9:23-26 NKJV](#)

The same event was also mentioned in [Psalm 78:47-48](#) above. Then as the Israelites were taking possession of Canaan, when they went to the defense of the Gibeonites who they swore to protect, God sent hailstones on the attackers [[Joshua 10:11](#)]. Psalm 18 and Isaiah 30 above mention hailstones being used by God in defense of His

people, but I don't think it refers to a specific incident. Ezekiel 13 was about God's condemnation of false prophets, who prophesied peace and safety when it was not the case. God said He would destroy their whitewashed walls with flood and hailstones.

Last, Ezekiel 38 was a prophesy about a future invasion of Israel by Gog and Magog. Matthew Henry speculated that no such attack is recorded in sacred history, so perhaps it occurred during the gap between the Old and New Testaments.<sup>429</sup> I found many interesting similarities between this prophesy and the seventh plague currently being studied. In fact, Gog and Magog are mentioned later in Revelation.

[Revelation 20:8](#) and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number [is] as the sand of the sea. [Revelation 20:8 NKJV](#)

Let's look at some of the similarities to the seventh plague.

1. Great earthquake [\[verse 19\]](#)
2. Mountains thrown down [\[verse 20\]](#)
3. Hailstones [\[verse 22\]](#)

### *Men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail*

This is the third time in the seven last plagues that men were said to blaspheme God. The first two were in the fourth and fifth plagues, where it also pointed out that they did not repent. Blasphemed was used 23 times in the NKJV, the last three of which were in the seven plagues. The first one is interesting because it gives a little context to the word.

[Leviticus 24:10](#) Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father [was] an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite [woman's] son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. <sup>11</sup> And the Israelite woman's son **blasphemed** the name [of the LORD] and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name [was] Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) <sup>12</sup> Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>14</sup> "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard [him] lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. <sup>15</sup> "Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. <sup>16</sup> 'And whoever **blasphemes** the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he **blasphemes** the name [of the LORD], he shall be put to death. [Leviticus 24:10-16 NKJV](#)

What this tells me is that blaspheming God is swearing or cursing against God, or possibly involving the name of God.

Blasphemy was used a few times in relation to the words the Assyrians used as they besieged Jerusalem, but first let's get some context.

[2 Kings 18:17](#) Then the king of Assyria sent [the] Tartan, [the] Rabsaris, [and the] Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which [was] on the highway to the Fuller's Field. <sup>18</sup> And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who [was] over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. <sup>19</sup> Then [the] Rabshakeh said to them, "Say

<sup>429</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Eze/Eze\\_038.cfm?a=840022](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Eze/Eze_038.cfm?a=840022)

now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence [is] this in which you trust?  
<sup>20</sup> "You speak of [having] plans and power for war; but [they are] mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? <sup>21</sup> "Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So [is] Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. <sup>22</sup> "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' [is] it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" ' <sup>23</sup> "Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses--if you are able on your part to put riders on them! <sup>24</sup> "How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? <sup>25</sup> "Have I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

<sup>26</sup> Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, Shebna, and Joah said to [the] Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand [it]; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who [are] on the wall."

<sup>27</sup> But [the] Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

<sup>28</sup> Then [the] Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! <sup>29</sup> "Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; <sup>30</sup> 'nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' <sup>31</sup> "Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make [peace] with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; <sup>32</sup> 'until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." <sup>33</sup> 'Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? <sup>34</sup> 'Where [are] the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where [are] the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? <sup>35</sup> 'Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' " [2 Kings 18:17-35 NKJV](#)

So, what did the Assyrians say that was considered blasphemy? They falsely claimed they were attacking Jerusalem by God's will. They said God could not deliver Jerusalem from their hand, anymore than any of the other false gods of the land could. Lastly, in defiance, 'Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' [verse 35].

[2 Kings 19:6](#) And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have **blasphemed** Me. <sup>7</sup> "Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." ' " [2 Kings 19:6-7 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 19:20](#) Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.' <sup>21</sup> "This [is] the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken [her] head behind your back! <sup>22</sup> 'Whom have you reproached and **blasphemed**? Against whom have you raised [your] voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy [One] of Israel. <sup>23</sup> By your

messengers you have reproached the Lord, And said: "By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, To the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars [And] its choice cypress trees; I will enter the extremity of its borders, [To] its fruitful forest. [2 Kings 19:20-23 NKJV](#)

God Himself, through Isaiah the prophet called this falsely claiming to speak for God, and the challenges to His power and ability blasphemy. The same story is repeated in Isaiah [[37:6](#), [37:23](#)].

Jesus stating that He was the Son of God was considered blasphemy by those who opposed Him.

[Matthew 26:65](#) Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken **blasphemy**! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! [Matthew 26:65 NKJV](#)

Boasting that you are a follower of God, but breaking His law is blasphemy.

[Romans 2:23](#) You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? <sup>24</sup> For "the name of God is **blasphemed** among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written. [Romans 2:23-24 NKJV](#)

The beast from the sea is said to blaspheme God.

[Revelation 13:5](#) And he was given a mouth speaking great things and **blasphemies**, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in **blasphemy** against God, to **blaspheme** His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. [Revelation 13:5-6 NKJV](#)

If I could generally categorize types of blasphemy, it would be falsely speaking on behalf of God, questioning His existence and power, or claiming to be God.

## Conclusion

I'm having a pretty hard time separating what might be literal from the symbolic. The loud voice out of the temple from the throne saying, "it is done," is most likely God. When Jesus died and declared, "it is finished," there was an accompanying earthquake [[Matthew 27:50-51](#)]. The declaration in Revelation was followed by lightning and thunder, which I showed often accompanied God's presence.

Then the worst earthquake in the history of man followed. It seems reasonable that this would be a literal earthquake, even as a smaller one followed Jesus' declaration "it is finished." If the sores, the water turning to blood, and the excessive heat are literal, then I would say the earthquake should be literal. Islands and mountains moving or disappearing could definitely be literal for the worst earthquake in the history of man. But the city being split into three parts seems kind of symbolic, as does the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. I like the idea of interpreting the three-way split as the dragon, the beast and the false prophet having a falling out. They probably each made compromises to get together to coerce and persecute those who had the seal of God, but when they were unsuccessful, they split up, maybe even fought against each other. This would go along with my interpretation of the sixth bowl that one of the ways God protects His people from attack is to get their enemies to fight amongst each other.

If sores, water turning to blood, excessive heat, and earthquake are literal, I would really think the hailstones are literal as well. As for the weight, I think their impacts would be devastating. I wouldn't think anyone could survive an impact by a 100-pound chunk of ice hitting them.

Finally, we have people blaspheming God, probably cursing Him, because of the hailstones. Though it doesn't say it, as in the fourth and fifth plagues, I'm sure there is no repentance. I believe the time for repentance is past, and without the Holy Spirit's prompting, there is no inclination to turn away from sin.

The fact that this last plague doesn't end with the return of Jesus, is interesting. If literal, it tells me that there is still a period of time between these seven last plagues and the second coming of Jesus.

### Summary

This is a summary of the seventh bowl as well as of all seven. I lean pretty heavily toward interpreting the earthquake and hail as literal. I only struggle with a literal interpretation of the city being split into three parts. If I may mix literal and symbolic, the three-way split is the breakup of the dragon, beast and false prophet that got together in the sixth plague. I believe that those who intend to attack God's people will end up fighting among themselves.

But the question is, what is done? This plague doesn't end with the second coming of Jesus, but is that implied by the exclamation "it is done?"

I believe that all seven plagues will take place over a relatively short period of time. The following verse from a couple chapters ahead suggests that Babylon will receive her plagues in one day. Since it seems unlikely that all these events could happen in one literal day, then why not interpret it as a prophetic day, which would be a year.

[Revelation 18:8](#) "Therefore her plagues will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her. [Revelation 18:8 NKJV](#)

To me, one of the most important questions is whether these plagues occurred naturally or supernaturally? And if supernatural, were they caused by God or Satan. I really struggle with the idea of a God who will seemingly inflict punishment on a generation, for a history's worth of sins, especially if probation is closed and there is no possibility of repentance. Throughout the Bible and even in current times, God has been given credit for many things that may have been caused by Satan or were naturally occurring. After all, in the legal business, there is a term "act of god," which describes disasters that are considered out of human control or causing, such as earthquakes or tsunamis.<sup>430</sup> I would like to believe that sin and human technology reaches a place that they bring these plagues down on themselves, or that Satan if allowed by God as in the story of Job, causes them. Do angelic creatures have the ability to manipulate nature on this scale? Ultimately, who am I to question the motives and actions of God?

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What do you believe?

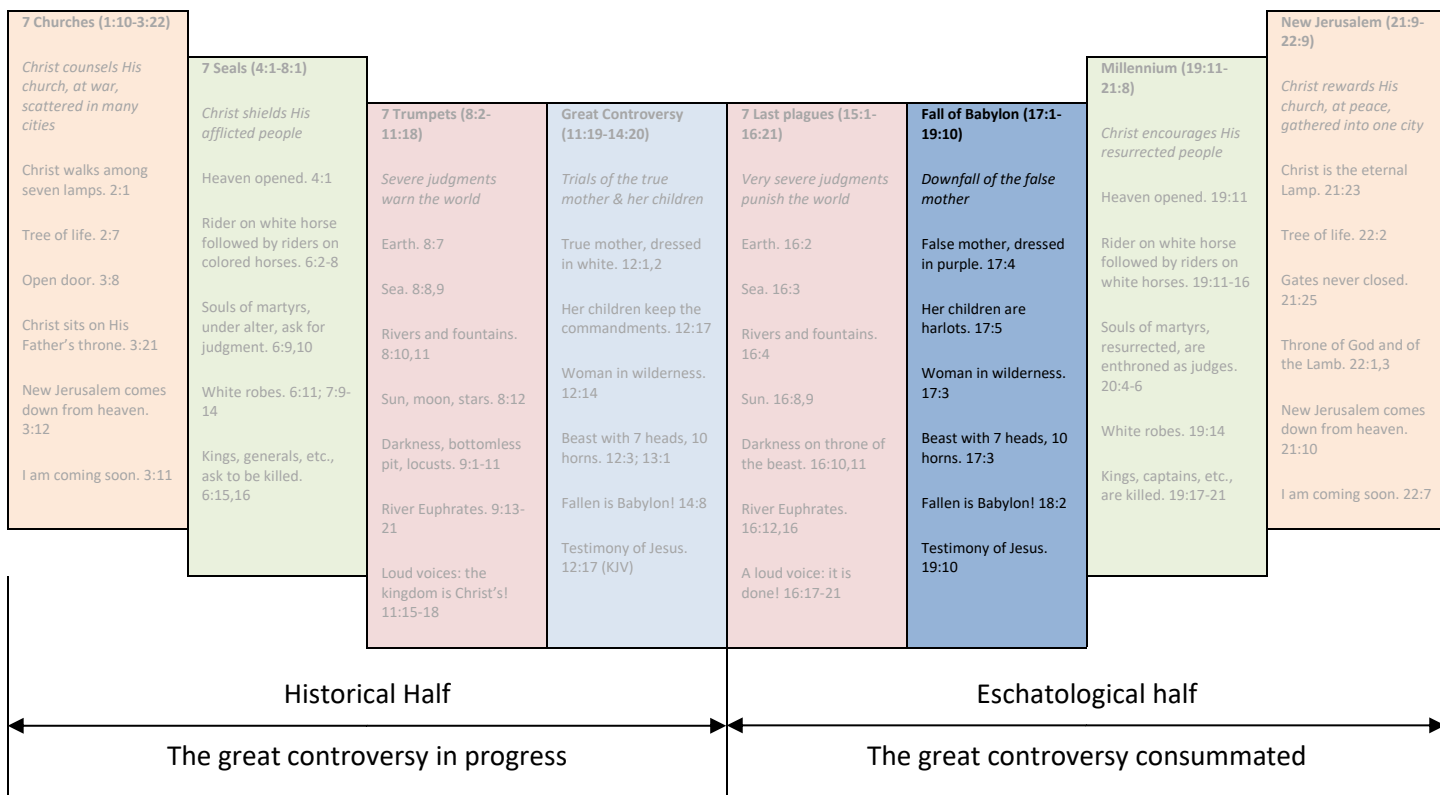
- Do you think the earthquake and hail are literal?
- What do you think the city being split in three parts means?
- Do you believe that God causes these plagues?

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<sup>430</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act\\_of\\_God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act_of_God)

# Revelation 17:1 – 19:10 The fall of Babylon

As you can see from the outline below, we are starting into the sixth of eight sections as organized below.



## Preface – Introduction to the great harlot

### [Revelation 17:1-7](#)

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

<sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. <sup>6</sup> I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

<sup>7</sup> But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. [Revelation 17:1-7 NKJV](#)

The introduction to this section is unlike most of the others in that it is not clearly a scene around the throne of God.

## Examining the elements

### *The great harlot*

One thing that I have always found strange and unfair is the stigma attached to harlots, but not their customers, without whom they would not exist. Along with this the way that men, in male dominated societies treat their sisters accused of infidelity or prostitution, though they themselves are often guilty.

The word harlot(s) or harlotry was used 136 times in the NKJV. The first was not even about harlotry but rape [[Genesis 34](#)]. This is definitely about symbolic harlotry and not literal.

[Exodus 34:15](#) "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the **harlot** with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and [one of them] invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, <sup>16</sup> "and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the **harlot** with their gods and make your sons play the **harlot** with their gods. [Exodus 34:15-16 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 17:7](#) "They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the **harlot**. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." ' [Leviticus 17:7 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 20:5](#) 'then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who **prostitute** themselves with him to commit **harlotry** with Molech. <sup>6</sup> 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to **prostitute** himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. [Leviticus 20:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 31:16](#) And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the **harlot** with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go [to be] among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. [Deuteronomy 31:16 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 21:11](#) Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit **harlotry**, and led Judah astray. ... <sup>13</sup> but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the **harlot** like the **harlotry** of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, [who were] better than yourself, [2 Chronicles 21:11, 13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 1:21](#) How the faithful city has become a **harlot**! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers. [Isaiah 1:21 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 23:17](#) And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit **fornication** with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. [Isaiah 23:17 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 2:20](#) "For of old I have broken your yoke [and] burst your bonds; And you said, 'I will not transgress,' When on every high hill and under every green tree You lay down, playing the **harlot**. [Jeremiah 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 3:1](#) "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the **harlot** with many lovers; Yet return to Me," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 3:1 NKJV](#)

The following is most of a full chapter giving a bit more context. Lest you think that symbolic **harlotry** is only about idolatry, notice what else is included in verse 49.

[Ezekiel 16:1](#) Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, <sup>3</sup> "and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity [are] from the land of Canaan; your father [was] an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. <sup>4</sup> "[As for] your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse [you]; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. <sup>5</sup> "No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.

[Ezekiel 16:6](#) "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' <sup>7</sup> "I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. [Your] breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you [were] naked and bare.

[Ezekiel 16:8](#) "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time [was] the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.

[Ezekiel 16:9](#) "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. <sup>10</sup> "I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. <sup>11</sup> "I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. <sup>12</sup> "And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. <sup>13</sup> "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing [was of] fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate [pastry of] fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. <sup>14</sup> "Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it [was] perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.

[Ezekiel 16:15](#) "But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who [would have] it. <sup>16</sup> "You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. [Such] things should not happen, nor be. <sup>17</sup> "You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. <sup>18</sup> "You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. <sup>19</sup> "Also My food which I gave you--the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey [which] I fed you--you set it before them as sweet incense; and [so] it was," says the Lord GOD.

[Ezekiel 16:20](#) "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. [Were] your [acts] of harlotry a small matter, <sup>21</sup> "that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through [the fire]? <sup>22</sup> "And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

[Ezekiel 16:23](#) "Then it was so, after all your wickedness--'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord GOD—<sup>24</sup> "[that] you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. <sup>25</sup> "You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. <sup>26</sup> "You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.



Ezekiel 16:27 "Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.

<sup>28</sup> "You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. <sup>29</sup> "Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

Ezekiel 16:30 "How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord GOD, "seeing you do all these [things], the deeds of a brazen harlot.

Ezekiel 16:31 "You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment. <sup>32</sup> "[You are] an adulterous wife, [who] takes strangers instead of her husband. <sup>33</sup> "Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. <sup>34</sup> "You are the opposite of [other] women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."

Ezekiel 16:35 'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD! <sup>36</sup> 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, <sup>37</sup> "surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, [and] all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. <sup>38</sup> "And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. <sup>39</sup> "I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

Ezekiel 16:40 "They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. <sup>41</sup> "They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. <sup>42</sup> "So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more. <sup>43</sup> "Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me with all these [things], surely I will also recompense your deeds on [your own] head," says the Lord GOD. "And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.

Ezekiel 16:44 "Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use [this] proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!' <sup>45</sup> "You [are] your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you [are] the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother [was] a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

Ezekiel 16:46 "Your elder sister [is] Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, [is] Sodom and her daughters. <sup>47</sup> "You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as [if that were] too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.

Ezekiel 16:48 "[As] I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. <sup>49</sup> "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. <sup>50</sup> "And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw [fit].

[Ezekiel 16:51](#) "Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done. <sup>52</sup> "You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

[Ezekiel 16:1-52 NKJV](#)

God chose marital fidelity, or infidelity to represent His relationship to His chosen people. It was generally not used to represent other idolatrous nations, and those who did evil because they didn't necessarily know better. Israel who was nurtured and protected by God and given the knowledge of His laws and how to live was accused of harlotry for rejecting God and His commands.

### *Kings of the earth*

First the Bible tells us that God is the king of the entire earth.

[Psalm 47:7](#) For God [is] the **King of all the earth**; Sing praises with understanding. [Psalm 47:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:5](#) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the **ruler over the kings of the earth**. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, [Revelation 1:5 NKJV](#)

"Kings of the earth" was used 24 times in the NKJV, 9 times in Revelation, and 6 times in the Psalms. Of the 9 times in Revelation, we have only covered 3 of them in [[Outline and introduction](#), [sixth seal](#), and [sixth bowl](#)]. I will list them all not including our current reference.

[1 Kings 4:34](#) And men of all nations, from all the **kings of the earth** who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. [1 Kings 4:34 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 10:23](#) So King Solomon surpassed all the **kings of the earth** in riches and wisdom. [1 Kings 10:23 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 9:22](#) So King Solomon surpassed all the **kings of the earth** in riches and wisdom. <sup>23</sup> And all the **kings of the earth** sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. [2 Chronicles 9:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 89:27](#) Also I will make him [My] firstborn, The highest of the **kings of the earth**. [Psalm 89:27 NKJV](#)

These first four and the one in Psalms were about the greatness of Solomon. This was part of God's plan for Israel, that if obedient to Him, they would prosper and be able to share a knowledge of the true God to all. Unfortunately, Solomon did not remain obedient and he became tyrannical.

In spite of David's position as a king of kings, these next 5 in Psalms are about God, the King over the kings of the earth. He was even quoted by the apostles as recorded in Acts.

[Psalm 2:2](#) The **kings of the earth** set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, [saying], [Psalm 2:2 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:26](#) The **kings of the earth** took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.' [Acts 4:26 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 76:12](#) He shall cut off the spirit of princes; [He is] awesome to the **kings of the earth**. [Psalm 76:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 102:15](#) So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, And all the **kings of the earth** Your glory. [Psalm 102:15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 138:4](#) All the **kings of the earth** shall praise You, O LORD, When they hear the words of Your mouth. [Psalm 138:4 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 148:11](#) **Kings of the earth** and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; [Psalm 148:11 NKJV](#)

This chapter of Ezekiel was all about the fall of the king of Tyre, who may actually also be a symbol of someone else.

[Ezekiel 27:33](#) 'When your wares went out by sea, You satisfied many people; You enriched the **kings of the earth** With your many luxury goods and your merchandise. [Ezekiel 27:33 NKJV](#)

The next verse is from a whole chapter in Isaiah that tells of God's judgment on earth. In fact, it sounds suspiciously similar to some of the things in Revelation, including the seven last plagues.

[Isaiah 24:21](#) It shall come to pass in that day [That] the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the **kings of the earth**. [Isaiah 24:21 NKJV](#)

Though the southern Kingdom of Judah was long past its glory days at this time, Jeremiah, I believe is referring to the siege of Jerusalem by Babylon. He utters as an expression; the kings of the earth would not believe what is happening to Jerusalem.

[Lamentations 4:12](#) The **kings of the earth**, And all inhabitants of the world, Would not have believed That the adversary and the enemy Could enter the gates of Jerusalem-- [Lamentations 4:12 NKJV](#)

Here in Matthew I believe Jesus is using the phrase to refer to governing or ruling entities including literal kings of course.

[Matthew 17:25](#) He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the **kings of the earth** take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" [Matthew 17:25 NKJV](#)

The verse in Revelation 6 is from the sixth seal which I interpreted to represent the last stage of the history of the world ending with the second coming. I believe this verse is depicting the kings of the earth and all other rich and powerful people who are not saved, wanting to hide from the great glory of God at the second coming.

[Revelation 6:15](#) And the **kings of the earth**, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, [Revelation 6:15 NKJV](#)

I believe these verses in chapters 16, 17, and 18 are all about Babylon, the great harlot, and her relationship with the kings of the earth. I believe they are all end time prophecies.

[Revelation 16:14](#) For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, [which] go out to the **kings of the earth** and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. [Revelation 16:14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:18](#) "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the **kings of the earth**."

[Revelation 17:18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:3](#) "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the **kings of the earth** have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." ...<sup>9</sup> "The **kings of the earth** who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, [Revelation 18:3, 9 NKJV](#)

These verses from chapter 19 and 21 will be studied in more depth when I come to them later on, but these verses appear to be after the millennium. Chapter 19:19 I believe is after the resurrection of the wicked and they are assembling to try to take the Holy City. The verse in chapter 21 is part of the description of the New Jerusalem in the new earth.

[Revelation 19:19](#) And I saw the beast, the **kings of the earth**, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. [Revelation 19:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:24](#) And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the **kings of the earth** bring their glory and honor into it. [Revelation 21:24 NKJV](#)

### *Wine of her fornication*

Fornication is used 14 times in the NKJV, only once in the Old Testament. The word in this verse is translated from the Greek [πορνεία](#), [porneia](#)<sup>431</sup>, which it appears is where the English word pornography comes from. The Greek word is used 26 times in the KJV, and is translated to unchastity, fornication, sexual and immorality. It is clearly a sexual reference but in the 19 times it was used outside of Revelation, they are all literal references. In Revelation, I believe they are all symbolic, so I think we have to go to the Old Testament. This was pretty much covered when I examined the word [harlot](#). I think the chapter in [Ezekiel 16](#) really says it all, turning away from God and from following His commandments is spiritual immorality.

### *Woman*

The word [woman](#) was examined when I studied chapter 12.

[Revelation 12:1](#) Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.<sup>2</sup> Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

[Revelation 12:1-2 NKJV](#)

The key being that a woman represents a religion or religious organization. A pure woman represents a religion or people that are faithful to God, and an impure or immoral woman represents an apostate or false religion.

### *Scarlet beast*

The word scarlet was used 49 times in the NKJV, 26 of which are in Exodus, all of them being the term "scarlet material" that was used in the Sanctuary. Scarlet was used in the ritual for cleansing a leper [[Leviticus 14](#)], and in some translations reads "scarlet string." A "scarlet thread" was used in the birth of Judah's twins [[Genesis 38:27-30](#)]. "Strand

<sup>431</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4202&t=NKJV>

of scarlet” was also used symbolically in [Song of Solomon 4:3](#). “Scarlet cord” was used in the story of Rahab and the spies [[Joshua 2:18, 21](#)]. Being dressed in scarlet was apparently a sign of being well cared for.

[2 Samuel 1:24](#) "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you in **scarlet**, with luxury; Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. [2 Samuel 1:24 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 31:21](#) She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household [is] clothed with **scarlet**. [Proverbs 31:21 NKJV](#)

Scarlet was used as a symbol of sin in contrast to the whiteness of snow.

[Isaiah 1:18](#) "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like **scarlet**, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. [Isaiah 1:18 NKJV](#)

Nahum described the army that would conquer Ninevah, which interestingly was Babylon.

[Nahum 2:3](#) The shields of his mighty men [are] made red, The valiant men [are] in **scarlet**. The chariots [come] with flaming torches In the day of his preparation, And the spears are brandished. [Nahum 2:3 NKJV](#)

Jesus was mockingly dressed in scarlet because He admitted to being the King of the Jews.

[Matthew 27:28](#) And they stripped Him and put a **scarlet** robe on Him. [Matthew 27:28 NKJV](#)

The latter references to the word scarlet in Revelation 18 seem to be reiterating the use in 17:4, which is wealth and luxury of the harlot, called Babylon in chapter 18.

[Revelation 18:12](#) "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and **scarlet**, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; [Revelation 18:12 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:16](#) "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and **scarlet**, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! [Revelation 18:16 NKJV](#)

### *Names of blasphemy*

I briefly discussed this term in the [beast from the sea](#), and also [men blaspheming God](#) in the [seventh plague](#).

### *Seven heads and ten horns*

I examined [seven heads](#) and [ten horns](#) when covering [the red dragon](#).

### *Woman arrayed in purple and scarlet*

I just covered scarlet in reference to the color of the beast on which the harlot sat. Here it is the harlot who is dressed in purple and scarlet. The word purple was used 53 times in the NKJV, 28 of them in the phrase “purple and scarlet.” The following are references to being dressed in purple. The first set below show that purple robes were used by the rich and powerful.

[Judges 8:26](#) Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred [shekels] of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and **purple** robes which [were] on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that [were] around their camels' necks. [Judges 8:26 NKJV](#)

[Esther 8:15](#) So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and **purple**; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. [Esther 8:15 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 10:9](#) Silver is beaten into plates; It is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman And of the hands of the metalsmith; Blue and **purple** [are] their clothing; They [are] all the work of skillful [men]. [Jeremiah 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:7](#) The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise [men] of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with **purple** and [have] a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." [Daniel 5:7 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:16](#) "And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with **purple** and [have] a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." [Daniel 5:16 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 5:29](#) Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with **purple** and [put] a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. [Daniel 5:29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:19](#) "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in **purple** and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. [Luke 16:19 NKJV](#)

The following is from a parable about the unfaithfulness of Israel to God. It conveys the same meaning about the purple, and possibly even has more application to the verse in Revelation being examined.

[Ezekiel 23:6](#) [Who were] clothed in **purple**, Captains and rulers, All of them desirable young men, Horsemen riding on horses. [Ezekiel 23:6 NKJV](#)

The next 4 were done in mockery but based on the same idea that purple robes were worn by kings and powerful people.

[Mark 15:17](#) And they clothed Him with **purple**; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His [head], ... <sup>20</sup> And when they had mocked Him, they took the **purple** off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. [Mark 15:17, 20 NKJV](#)

[John 19:2](#) And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put [it] on His head, and they put on Him a **purple** robe. ... <sup>5</sup> Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the **purple** robe. And [Pilate] said to them, "Behold the Man!" [John 19:2, 5 NKJV](#)

The last one was mentioned with scarlet, identifying the harlot as Babylon.

[Revelation 18:16](#) "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, **purple**, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! [Revelation 18:16 NKJV](#)

### *Adorned with precious stones and pearls*

After the examination of the scarlet and purple, no more needs to be said than to repeat the identity with Babylon in Revelation 18.

[Revelation 18:16](#) "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and **precious stones and pearls!** [Revelation 18:16 NKJV](#)

### *Golden cup full of abominations*

"Golden cup" was only used one other time in the NKJV.

[Jeremiah 51:7](#) Babylon [was] a **golden cup** in the LORD's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged. [Jeremiah 51:7 NKJV](#)

In fact, a little more context about the verse from Jeremiah would be interesting.

[Jeremiah 51:5](#) For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, By his God, the LORD of hosts, Though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." <sup>6</sup> Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this [is] the time of the LORD's vengeance; He shall recompense her. <sup>7</sup> Babylon [was] a **golden cup** in the LORD's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged. <sup>8</sup> Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed. Wail for her! Take balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. <sup>9</sup> We would have healed Babylon, But she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies. <sup>10</sup> The LORD has revealed our righteousness. Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. [Jeremiah 51:5-10 NKJV](#)

Jeremiah lived before and during the start of the Babylonian exile. It was he who prophesied that the Jews would be in Babylon for seventy years.

[Jeremiah 25:11](#) 'And this whole land shall be a desolation [and] an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. <sup>12</sup> 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. [Jeremiah 25:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 29:10](#) For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. [Jeremiah 29:10 NKJV](#)

I'm pretty sure that what Jeremiah wrote was a prophecy of the fall of literal Babylon, so what did the cup mean in that case. It is likely that the symbolism of the cup for the fall of literal Babylon could be the same for symbolic Babylon. I think the cup of intoxication was demonstrated by the last ruler of the kingdom.

[Daniel 5:1](#) Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. <sup>2</sup> While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which [had been] in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup> Then they brought the **gold vessels** that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which [had been] in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup> They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. [Daniel 5:1-4 NKJV](#)

I believe that Belshazzar, in drinking wine from the golden vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem was directly defying God, believing himself more powerful, as illustrated by his wealth and power over the nations subjugated by Babylon at the time. Of course, words and actions could have been influenced by intoxication as well.

### *On her forehead her name, a mystery*

I have previously studied and commented about marks on the forehead and hand. God seal is said to be placed on the forehead of His true followers [[the Lamb and the 144,000](#)]. The mark of the beast is said to be installed on the forehead or hand of his followers [[the beast from the earth](#), [the third angel's message](#), [the first bowl](#)]. It was also mentioned that a mark on the head symbolizes true belief and one on the hand compliance in spite of belief. I am not suggesting that this is a literal mark or tattoo.

The word mystery was used 22 times in the NKJV, and a related word "secret" was used 6 times in Daniel. The first 5 were concerning the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had but couldn't remember [[Daniel 2](#)]. The last was regarding the writing on the wall that had to be interpreted [[Daniel 4:9](#)].

Jesus called the kingdom of God a mystery.

[Mark 4:11](#) And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the **mystery** of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [Mark 4:11 NKJV](#)

It was translated from the word [μυστήριον, mystērion](#)<sup>432</sup>, which was translated to mystery every time. Strong's definition of the word is:

from a derivative of μύω μύō (to shut the mouth); a secret or "mystery" (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites):—mystery.<sup>433</sup>

It was used in the following ways in the Bible.<sup>434</sup>

1. hidden thing, secret, mystery
  - a. generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals
  - b. a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding
  - c. a hidden purpose or counsel
    - i. secret will
      1. of men
      2. of God: the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly
2. in rabbinic writings, it denotes the mystic or hidden sense
  - a. of an OT saying
  - b. of an image or form seen in a vision
  - c. of a dream

I think the usage by Jesus in Mark would fall under the definition 1.c.i.2 above.

<sup>432</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3466&t=NKJV>

<sup>433</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3466&t=NKJV>

<sup>434</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3466&t=NKJV>



Paul used the word 17 times scattered throughout his writings. The following appear to be referring to Jesus Christ, as a mystery.

[Ephesians 3:4](#) by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the **mystery** of Christ), [Ephesians 3:4 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 5:32](#) This is a great **mystery**, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. [Ephesians 5:32 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 1:27](#) To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [Colossians 1:27 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 2:2](#) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and [attaining] to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the **mystery** of God, both of the Father and of Christ, [Colossians 2:2 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 4:3](#) meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the **mystery** of Christ, for which I am also in chains, [Colossians 4:3 NKJV](#)

[1 Timothy 3:16](#) And without controversy great is the **mystery** of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. [1 Timothy 3:16 NKJV](#)

Clearly Jesus Christ the man who lived on this earth was not the mystery. I believe His relationship to God, the incarnation, His self-sacrificing love for sinners, and maybe even how we can be saved through His death, are the mysteries. Meaning we may not be capable of understanding the how or why of these things. I would classify these as definition 1.b.

The next few verses I think refer to the Old Testament scriptural references of the plan of salvation and the prophecies of the coming Messiah, as mysteries that were better understood in the light of the life and death of Jesus.

[Romans 16:25](#) Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery** kept secret since the world began [Romans 16:25 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 3:9](#) and to make all see what [is] the fellowship of the **mystery**, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; [Ephesians 3:9 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 1:26](#) the **mystery** which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. [Colossians 1:26 NKJV](#)

### Babylon the great

The idea of Babylon the great was used 5 other times in the NKJV. The first and only from the Old Testament is in the boast of Nebuchadnezzar that finally brought on him the judgment of God.

[Daniel 4:30](#) The king spoke, saying, "Is not this **great Babylon**, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" [Daniel 4:30 NKJV](#)

All the rest are from Revelation and I am quite certain that they are symbolic of the same entity.

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "**Babylon** is fallen, is fallen, that **great** city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:19](#) Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And **great Babylon** was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. [Revelation 16:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:2](#) And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "**Babylon the great** is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ... <sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw [it] into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the **great city Babylon** shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. [Revelation 18:2, 21 NKJV](#)

### Mother of harlots

Harlot was already examined above, but this is not about the mother but the daughters that are also said to be harlots. So, in general, the things concluded about harlots would also apply to the daughters, except that they are not the mother. That they are harlots implies that they are daughters and women, hence they would represent churches or religious organizations that came out of the mother.

### Abominations of the earth

The words abomination(s) were used 153 times in the NKJV, only 6 of which are from the New Testament, and 2 of those were from this passage. Let's look at the other 4.

[Matthew 24:15](#) "Therefore when you see the '**abomination** of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), [Matthew 24:15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:14](#) "So when you see the '**abomination** of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [Mark 13:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:15](#) And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an **abomination** in the sight of God. [Luke 16:15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:27](#) But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an **abomination** or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. [Revelation 21:27 NKJV](#)

The first two are from the same statement of Jesus and are actually quotations from Daniel. The verse from Luke was from a teaching about the kingdom of God. All the New Testament references were translated from the Greek word [βδέλυγμα](#), [bdelygma](#)<sup>435</sup>.

The outline of biblical use of the Greek word is:<sup>436</sup>

5. a foul thing, a detestable thing
  - A. of idols and things pertaining to idolatry

<sup>435</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G946&t=NKJV>

<sup>436</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G946&t=NKJV>

The two occurrences in Daniel are:

[Daniel 11:31](#) "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily [sacrifices], and place [there] the **abomination** of desolation. [Daniel 11:31 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 12:11](#) "And from the time [that] the daily [sacrifice] is taken away, and the **abomination** of desolation is set up, [there shall be] one thousand two hundred and ninety days. [Daniel 12:11 NKJV](#)

They are translated from [יִשְׁקֹוֹס, šiqqôṣ](#)<sup>437</sup>, which means detestable thing or idol, abominable thing, abomination, idol, detested thing.<sup>438</sup>

The practices of one religion could be considered abominations to another, but more importantly idolatry is considered an abomination to God.

[Exodus 8:26](#) And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the **abomination** of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? [Exodus 8:26 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 7:25](#) "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold [that is] on them, nor take [it] for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it [is] an **abomination** to the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 7:25 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 27:15](#) 'Cursed [is] the one who makes a carved or molded image, an **abomination** to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets [it] up in secret.' "And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!' [Deuteronomy 27:15 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 23:13](#) Then the king defiled the high places that [were] east of Jerusalem, which [were] on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the **abomination** of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the **abomination** of the Moabites, and for Milcom the **abomination** of the people of Ammon. [2 Kings 23:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 44:19](#) And no one considers in his heart, Nor [is there] knowledge nor understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire, Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals; I have roasted meat and eaten [it]; And shall I make the rest of it an **abomination**? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" [Isaiah 44:19 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 32:35](#) 'And they built the high places of Baal which [are] in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through [the fire] to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this **abomination**, to cause Judah to sin.' [Jeremiah 32:35 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 18:12](#) If he has oppressed the poor and needy, Robbed by violence, Not restored the pledge, Lifted his eyes to the idols, [Or] committed **abomination**; [Ezekiel 18:12 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 29:17](#) and you saw their **abominations** and their idols which [were] among them--wood and stone and silver and gold); [Deuteronomy 29:17 NKJV](#)

<sup>437</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H8251&t=NKJV>

<sup>438</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H8251&t=NKJV>

[1 Kings 14:24](#) And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the **abominations** of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. [1 Kings 14:24 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 23:24](#) Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the **abominations** that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. [2 Kings 23:24 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 5:11](#) 'Therefore, [as] I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your **abominations**, therefore I will also diminish [you]; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. [Ezekiel 5:11 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 14:6](#) "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your **abominations**. [Ezekiel 14:6 NKJV](#)

Homosexuality and cross dressing are considered abominations by God.

[Leviticus 18:22](#) 'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It [is] an **abomination**. [Leviticus 18:22 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 22:5](#) "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so [are] an **abomination** to the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 22:5 NKJV](#)

There are many things besides idolatry that are considered abominations to God.

[Deuteronomy 25:13](#) "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. <sup>14</sup> "You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. <sup>15</sup> "You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>16</sup> "For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, [are] an **abomination** to the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 25:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 3:27](#) Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do [so].  
<sup>28</sup> Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give [it]," When you have it with you.  
<sup>29</sup> Do not devise evil against your neighbor, For he dwells by you for safety's sake. <sup>30</sup> Do not strive with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm. <sup>31</sup> Do not envy the oppressor, And choose none of his ways; <sup>32</sup> For the perverse [person is] an **abomination** to the LORD, But His secret counsel [is] with the upright. [Proverbs 3:27-32 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 6:16](#) These six [things] the LORD hates, Yes, seven [are] an **abomination** to Him: <sup>17</sup> A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, <sup>18</sup> A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, <sup>19</sup> A false witness [who] speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. [Proverbs 6:16-19 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 11:1](#) Dishonest scales [are] an **abomination** to the LORD, But a just weight [is] His delight. [Proverbs 11:1 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 11:20](#) Those who are of a perverse heart [are] an **abomination** to the LORD, But [the] blameless in their ways [are] His delight. [Proverbs 11:20 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 12:22](#) Lying lips [are] an **abomination** to the LORD, But those who deal truthfully [are] His delight. [Proverbs 12:22 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:26](#) The thoughts of the wicked [are] an **abomination** to the LORD, But the words of the pure [are] pleasant. [Proverbs 15:26 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 16:5](#) Everyone proud in heart [is] an **abomination** to the LORD; [Though they join] forces, none will go unpunished. [Proverbs 16:5 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 17:15](#) He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike [are] an **abomination** to the LORD. [Proverbs 17:15 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 20:23](#) Diverse weights [are] an **abomination** to the LORD, And dishonest scales [are] not good. [Proverbs 20:23 NKJV](#)

The word abomination was definitely associated with idolatry, but it also describes a host of other things such as:

- Human sacrifice
- Sexual sins
- Acting unjustly
- Deviousness
- Perverse heart
- Lying lips
- Evil plans
- Pride
- False judgment
- Cheating

Most of this list fall under the latter 6 of the Ten Commandments.

### *Drunk with the blood of saints*

The word blood was used 424, and saint(s) 97 times in the NKJV. Together they were found 3 times including this one. The first was in a verse already studied ([third bowl](#) or plague), and the second in one to come.

[Revelation 16:6](#) For they have shed the **blood of saints** and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." [Revelation 16:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:24](#) "And in her was found the **blood of prophets and saints**, and of all who were slain on the earth." [Revelation 18:24 NKJV](#)

But there are more verses if I substitute some other synonyms for saints.

[Deuteronomy 32:42](#) I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh, With the **blood of the slain and the captives**, From the heads of the leaders of the enemy." ' 43 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, [with] His people; For He will avenge the **blood of His servants**, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land [and] His people." [Deuteronomy 32:42-43 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 4:11](#) "How much more, when wicked men have killed a **righteous** person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his **blood** at your hand and remove you from the earth?" [2 Samuel 4:11 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 2:32](#) "So the LORD will return his **blood** on his head, because he struck down two men more **righteous** and better than he, and killed them with the sword--Abner the son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and

Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah--though my father David did not know [it]. [1 Kings 2:32 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 21:19](#) "You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Have you murdered and also taken possession?" ' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked the **blood of Naboth**, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours." ' " [1 Kings 21:19 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 9:7](#) 'You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the **blood of My servants the prophets**, and the **blood of all the servants of the LORD**, at the hand of Jezebel. [2 Kings 9:7 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 9:26](#) 'Surely I saw yesterday the **blood of Naboth** and the **blood of his sons**,' says the LORD, 'and I will repay you in this plot,' says the LORD. Now therefore, take [and] throw him on the plot [of ground], according to the word of the LORD." [2 Kings 9:26 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 79:10](#) Why should the nations say, "Where [is] their God?" Let there be known among the nations in our sight The avenging of the **blood of Your servants** [which has been] shed. [Psalm 79:10 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 106:38](#) And shed innocent blood, The **blood of their sons and daughters**, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood. [Psalm 106:38 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 19:4](#) "Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the **blood of the innocents** [Jeremiah 19:4 NKJV](#)

[Lamentations 4:13](#) Because of the sins of her prophets [And] the iniquities of her priests, Who shed in her midst The **blood of the just**. [Lamentations 4:13 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 16:36](#) 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the **blood of your children** which you gave to them, [Ezekiel 16:36 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 23:45](#) "But righteous men will judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women who shed blood, because they [are] adulteresses, and **blood [is] on their hands**. [Ezekiel 23:45 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:30](#) "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the **blood of the prophets**.' [Matthew 23:30 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:35](#) "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the **blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah**, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. [Matthew 23:35 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:50](#) "that the **blood of all the prophets** which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, [Luke 11:50 NKJV](#)

[Acts 22:20](#) 'And when the **blood of Your martyr Stephen** was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' [Acts 22:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:6](#) For they have shed the **blood of saints and prophets**, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." [Revelation 16:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:24](#) "And in her was found the **blood of prophets and saints**, and of all who were slain on the earth."

[Revelation 18:24 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:2](#) "For true and righteous [are] His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the **blood of His servants** [shed] by her." [Revelation 19:2 NKJV](#)

Finally, I would add that there is a clear sense in the Bible of justice for murder being the death penalty. This is not the case for accidental manslaughter, for which provisions were made.

[Numbers 35:33](#) "So you shall not pollute the land where you [are]; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it." [Numbers 35:33 NKJV](#)

## Conclusion

It is pretty clear that the great harlot is also known as Babylon the great. The Bible is also very clear about the symbolic application of a harlot, which is the forsaking of the true God and His commandments. This harlotry was committed with the kings of the earth. Babylon the great harlot courted the civil power of the kings of the earth to achieve her ends, and eventually she controlled them. I suppose in reality, a favorite harlot would have a lot of power or control over the men who pay for her services. Since God symbolized His relationship with Israel as a marriage relationship, then forsaking Him and His commandments would naturally be considered marital infidelity. Doing it for some kind of gain would be considered prostitution or harlotry.

Between verse 2 and 3 is a change of scene but I believe the woman in the next scene is the harlot from the previous scene. I showed that the Bible uses a woman to symbolize a religion, or people devoted to the worship of a God. The purple, scarlet and jewelry, shows that the woman had great wealth and power. The cup full of abominations shows that she forsook the commands of God. Maybe she didn't forsake all the commandments, but she blasphemously changed some, and broke many of the humanitarian commands of God.

The scarlet beast, I believe is a combination of [the dragon](#) (pagan Rome) [[Revelation 12:3-4](#)] because of the seven heads and ten horns, and the [beast from the sea](#) (papal Rome) [[Revelation 13:1-4](#)] because of the blasphemous names. The color scarlet was often associated with the rich and powerful. I believe the beast from the sea actually incorporated the religious aspect because of the blasphemous names but adding the woman in this scene makes the religious component undeniable. The woman also allows the symbolism of motherhood and daughters, who follow in the footsteps of their mother.

Finally, on top of all the other sins attributed to the woman, the harlot, and Babylon the great, she is accused of shedding the blood of saints.

What religious power fits this description? I believe there is only one, the Roman Catholic Church of the middle ages. Undeniably rich and powerful, at times cruel and heartless, committing abominations, and murdering and torturing "heretics," many of whom were better and more faithful to God than herself.

Since these first few verses are only the introduction to the harlot, Babylon the great, her punishment is not discussed in these verses.

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What do you believe?

- Do you agree with the connections between the beast from the sea and the woman?
- Do you have a hard time seeing how what began with the Apostles as the Christian Church could eventually degrade into the terrible thing described in this passage?
- What do you think the daughter harlots represent?

## Angel begins explaining the mystery

### [Revelation 17:7-13](#)

[Revelation 17:7](#) But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

<sup>9</sup> "Here [is] the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

<sup>10</sup> "There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, [and] the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. <sup>11</sup> "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

<sup>12</sup> "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. <sup>13</sup> "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. [Revelation 17:7-13 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

I just examined mystery, woman, beast, seven heads and ten horns in the preface to this section ([introduction to the great harlot](#)). But I will revisit the seven heads and ten horns again.

### *Beast was, is not, will ascend out of the bottomless pit*

I've seen this before, but is this referring to the same sequence of receiving the deadly or fatal wound and then coming back?

[Revelation 13:3](#) And I saw one of his heads as if it had been **mortally wounded**, and his **deadly wound** was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. [Revelation 13:12 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:12](#) And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose **deadly wound** was healed. [Revelation 13:12 NKJV](#)

These two are both from the same scene and is referring to one of the ten horns on the beast and not the beast itself. But later in the same scene the beast itself was said to have been the one to receive the wound and come back to life.

[Revelation 13:14](#) And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. [Revelation 13:14 NKJV](#)



### *Seven heads*

The angel goes right ahead and tells John what the seven heads mean, but in my opinion, his explanation is still in need of interpretation. Seven heads are seven mountains, but also seven kings in sequence. I mentioned when writing about the [beast from the sea](#), that Rome was well known as a city on seven hills. The part in need of interpretation though is the seven kings, five of which are past, one is, and one is yet to come.

Let's look at the word head which occurs 361 times in the NKJV but many fewer times as a symbol or in prophecy.

[Daniel 2:38](#) "and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given [them] into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you [are] this **head** of gold. [Daniel 2:38 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 7:8](#) For the **head** of Syria [is] Damascus, And the **head** of Damascus [is] Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, [So that it will] not [be] a people. <sup>9</sup> The **head** of Ephraim [is] Samaria, And the **head** of Samaria [is] Remaliah's son. If you will not believe, Surely you shall not be established." ' ' [Isaiah 7:8-9 NKJV](#)

Well, that wasn't much, but let's step back and notice that in prophecy beasts have heads. This was pointed out before when I examined [seven heads](#) and [ten horns](#) of [the red dragon](#).

[Daniel 7:6](#) "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four **heads**, and dominion was given to it. [Daniel 7:6 NKJV](#)

The following two passages use a mountain to symbolize a kingdom or nation.

[Jeremiah 51:24](#) "And I will repay Babylon And all the inhabitants of Chaldea For all the evil they have done In Zion in your sight," says the LORD. <sup>25</sup> "Behold, I [am] against you, O destroying **mountain**, Who destroys all the earth," says the LORD. "And I will stretch out My hand against you, Roll you down from the rocks, And make you a burnt **mountain**. [Jeremiah 51:24-25 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 2:35](#) "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great **mountain** and filled the whole earth. ... [Daniel 2:44](#) "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. <sup>45</sup> "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." [Daniel 2:35, 44-45 NKJV](#)

Daniel saw a couple sequences of beasts that represented world kingdoms that would actually come to exist in his future. In the verse quoted above, the leopard was the third in a sequence and represented the kingdom of Greece. The two preceding beasts, a lion and a bear, each had one head symbolizing a unified kingdom. The leopard with 4 heads represented the fact that Greece would be split into 4 kingdoms upon the death of Alexander the Great. In Daniel's sequence of 4 beasts with a total of seven heads, theoretically all of them except for the last would be in the past at the time of this beast in Revelation. But in the angel's explanation of this scene, 5 kings have passed, and the 6<sup>th</sup> is the current one, with the 7<sup>th</sup> to come. John also pointed out that the 7<sup>th</sup>, the one to come would only be for a short time. So, we need to come up with a different or at least partially different interpretation for the heads. Clearly the beast represents powers that oppress God's people. The seven heads give identity to a particular phase of the beast's power.

Maxwell points out that there have been many interpretations about these seven heads which represent mountains and kings. Three of the more well-known ones are: seven emperors, seven administrative styles that Rome passed through, and seven popes. He goes on to walk through a logical progression of thought that leads to a different conclusion. He points out that there is a frame of reference question that must be answered: should this be viewed from John's time or the end time? Recalling the outline that I have been referring to from time to time, the second half of the book has been mostly treated as end-time, rather than historical. The three angel's messages and the seven plagues of recent chapters have been interpreted from an end time (1798/1844) perspective. If this is the case, then the pagan Rome phase is in the past as well as the pre deadly wound (1798) Christian phase of Rome. So that would mean we could say according to the kingdom sequence laid out in Daniel's dreams and visions that Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the 1260 year little horn reign, are all in the past.<sup>439</sup>

### *Eighth, and one of the seven*

I'm just going to go directly with Maxwell here which is:

Let's not make the problem too hard. The beast isn't an eighth head! It's a beast, and the seven heads belong to it!<sup>440</sup>

The angels said the beast is an eighth but didn't say it was a head. The seven heads were kingdoms, and the beast is an eighth. But the angel said it was also one of the seven, which can agree with my statement that Daniel's little horn is one of the five passed.

As for beasts with seven heads and ten horns, there are two, the dragon, and the beast from the sea.

[Revelation 12:3](#) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup> His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. [Revelation 12:3-4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" [Revelation 13:1-4 NKJV](#)

These two beasts seem so similar because I believe they represent two phases of the Roman persecuting power.

Maxwell concludes that the sixth horn or king is the post deadly wound phase of Roman Catholic power where it is not wielding civil power for persecuting heretics. The seventh is in the future when the beast from the earth unites with it and forces all to worship the beast, the entire beast, the eighth.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p471-475.

<sup>440</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p475.

<sup>441</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p475.

### *Ten horns*

Ten horns on a beast first appeared in Daniel where they were interpreted to be the [divided kingdoms](#) that followed the fall of the Roman Empire. Today we call them the nations of Western Europe. Three were destroyed by the little horn, but personally, I have not been a proponent of the idea that there are exactly ten, no more and no less. I believe they were the fragments of the former territory controlled by the Roman Empire who according to Daniel would never unite into a single kingdom again. The problem that arises here is that these kings or kingdoms were in power at the same time as the little horn. But the angel said they are ten kings who have not received their kingdom. But Revelation 17:2 mentions kings of the earth who have committed act of immorality with her.

[Revelation 17:2](#) "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." [Revelation 17:2 NKJV](#)

Are those kings of the earth different from the kings of the ten horns? Again, going back to Maxwell, he claims that they are the same kings, and they were in power when they were in bed with the harlot, but when the beast, the harlot, and the little horn received its deadly wound, then then ten kings also lost their persecuting power. Maxwell refers to them as tolerant democracies today.<sup>442</sup>

It seems that these kingdoms will receive persecuting power with the beast for one hour. Clearly this is not one literal hour but is it a prophetic hour or is it a figure of speech? One hour is 1/24th of a day but a day in prophetic time is year in real time, so an hour would be 1/24<sup>th</sup> of a [360 day] year or 15 days, or roughly two weeks [see [Day for a year conclusion in Appendix B](#)].

I believe the time when these ten kings will persecute God's people will be the same time that the beast from the earth, the United States, also unites with the beast from the sea and tries to force all to worship the image of the beast. Both the United States and Western Europe are considered western civilizations, because their style of civilization is derived from the Western Roman Empire. I believe that these ten kingdoms can represent any nation which commits acts of immorality with the great harlot, as the kingdoms of Western Europe originally did.

### **Conclusion**

The point is really being driven home that there was a persecuting beast, but there is a window of time that he is not persecuting (is not), but then he will return to persecute again. Five stages of world kingdoms have passed, and according to Daniel, they are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Catholic Christian Rome (also known in Daniel as the little horn). Since the reformation, the whole world, but especially Western Europe has had a break from Roman Catholic persecution. But that peace will come to an end when kingdoms of the world unite with the scarlet beast and commit acts of immorality with the harlot.

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe the beast is the eighth or do you think it is an eighth head?
- Are you ok with Daniel's 5 kingdoms being past or do you prefer one of the other alternative interpretations?
- Do you think the 10 kingdom's giving their power to the beast coincides with the beast from the earth trying to force all to worship the beast?

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<sup>442</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. God Cares vol2 – The Message of Revelation for you and your family. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985, p475.

## Victory for the Lamb

### [Revelation 17:14-18](#)

[Revelation 17:14](#) "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those [who are] with Him [are] called, chosen, and faithful." <sup>15</sup> Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup> "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup> "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." [Revelation 17:14-18 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *War against the Lamb*

There was only one verse in the NKJV that had the words war and lamb and it was the verse currently being analyzed. You may recall the following verse from the scene with the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, from the [sixth bowl of wrath](#).

[Revelation 16:14](#) For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, [which] go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. [Revelation 16:14 NKJV](#)

In that scene I concluded that those who gathered together for war against God would be turned against each other, which is definitely what happens in this case.

I examined the word [Lamb](#) in [Revelation 14](#), for the topic of [the Lamb and the 144,000](#).

#### *Lord of Lord and King of Kings*

Aside from the verse currently being analyzed, the following 7 verses used the same language. Three of them referred to kings from Daniel's sequence of world dominating kingdoms. The rest refer to God.

[Deuteronomy 10:17](#) "For the LORD your God [is] God of gods and **Lord of lords**, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. [Deuteronomy 10:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 136:3](#) Oh, give thanks to the **Lord of lords!** For His mercy [endures] forever: [Psalm 136:3 NKJV](#)

[1 Timothy 6:15](#) which He will manifest in His own time, [He who is] the blessed and only Potentate, the **King of kings and Lord of lords**, [1 Timothy 6:15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:16](#) And He has on [His] robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. [Revelation 19:16 NKJV](#)

[Ezra 7:12](#) Artaxerxes, **king of kings**, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect [peace], and so forth. [Ezra 7:12 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 26:7](#) "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, **king of kings**, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. [Ezekiel 26:7 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 2:37](#) "You, O king, [are] a **king of kings**. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; [Daniel 2:37 NKJV](#)

### *Chosen and faithful*

Chosen was used 108 times, and faithful 85 times in the NKJV. "Chosen and faithful" only this once. That is not to say that the chosen were always unfaithful because there were many prophets and other people who were chosen by God that were faithful. Some examples of chosen are:

[Deuteronomy 7:6](#) "For you [are] a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has **chosen** you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. [Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 18:5](#) "For the LORD your God has **chosen** him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever. [Deuteronomy 18:5 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 28:2](#) Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: I [had] it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. <sup>3</sup> "But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you [have been] a man of war and have shed blood.' <sup>4</sup> "However the LORD God of Israel **chose** me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has **chosen** Judah [to be] the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make [me] king over all Israel. <sup>5</sup> "And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has **chosen** my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. [1 Chronicles 28:2-5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 33:12](#) Blessed [is] the nation whose God [is] the LORD, The people He has **chosen** as His own inheritance. [Psalm 33:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 89:3](#) "I have made a covenant with My **chosen**, I have sworn to My servant David: [Psalm 89:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 105:6](#) O seed of Abraham His servant, You children of Jacob, His **chosen** ones! [Psalm 105:6 NKJV](#)

[Acts 9:15](#) But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a **chosen** vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. [Acts 9:15 NKJV](#)

Let's look at some examples where God declared someone faithful.

[Numbers 12:7](#) Not so with My servant Moses; He [is] **faithful** in all My house. [Numbers 12:7 NKJV](#)

[1 Timothy 1:12](#) And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me **faithful**, putting [me] into the ministry, [1 Timothy 1:12 NKJV](#)

Of course, God is faithful.

[Deuteronomy 7:9](#) "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He [is] God, the **faithful** God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; [Deuteronomy 7:9 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 49:7](#) Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is **faithful**, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You." [Isaiah 49:7 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 11:12](#) "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies, And the house of Israel with deceit; But Judah still walks with God, Even with the Holy One [who is] **faithful**. [Hosea 11:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:9](#) God [is] **faithful**, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. [1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 10:13](#) No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God [is] **faithful**, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear [it]. [1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV](#)

[2 Thessalonians 3:3](#) But the Lord is **faithful**, who will establish you and guard [you] from the evil one. [2 Thessalonians 3:3 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 2:13](#) If we are faithless, He remains **faithful**; He cannot deny Himself. [2 Timothy 2:13 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 10:23](#) Let us hold fast the confession of [our] hope without wavering, for He who promised [is] **faithful**. [Hebrews 10:23 NKJV](#)

[1 John 1:9](#) If we confess our sins, He is **faithful** and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:5](#) and from Jesus Christ, the **faithful** witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, [Revelation 1:5 NKJV](#)

### *Ten horns and the beast turn on the harlot*

I already discussed how the ten horns represent the Western Civilized nations (of Europe) [[ten horns](#)]. For the [sixth bowl](#), I showed that one of the means that God used to defend His people was to turn their enemies against each other. In the first, the Midianites and Amalekites assembled for war against the Israelites.

[Judges 6:33](#) Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. [Judges 6:33 NKJV](#)

[Judges 7:12](#) Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. [Judges 7:12 NKJV](#)

[Judges 7:22](#) When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. [Judges 7:22 NKJV](#)

In the next case, from 2 Chronicles, the Moabites and Ammonites came out to make war with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

[2 Chronicles 20:1](#) It happened after this [that] the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and [others] with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup> Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which [is] En Gedi). <sup>3</sup> And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to ask [help] from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. [2 Chronicles 20:1-4 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 20:14](#) Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. <sup>15</sup> And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle [is] not yours, but God's. <sup>16</sup> 'Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup> 'You will not [need] to fight in this [battle]. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD [is] with you."

<sup>18</sup> And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with [his] face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. <sup>19</sup> Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

<sup>20</sup> So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." <sup>21</sup> And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy [endures] forever."

<sup>22</sup> Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. <sup>23</sup> For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy [them]. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. [2 Chronicles 20:14-23 NKJV](#)

### *Make her desolate, eat her flesh and burn her with fire*

This seems to be going a step beyond turning against each other. This sounds like one former ally that discovered that it has been deceived or used, taking its revenge. There are three verses from the Old Testament that use similar language. The first is about Egypt, the second about Jerusalem, and the third about Israel and Judah.

[Ezekiel 29:12](#) "I will make the land of Egypt **desolate** in the midst of the countries [that are] desolate; and among the cities [that are] laid waste, her cities shall be **desolate** forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries." [Ezekiel 29:12 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 33:28](#) "For I will make the land most **desolate**, her arrogant strength shall cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be so **desolate** that no one will pass through. [Ezekiel 33:28 NKJV](#)

[Micah 1:7](#) All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, And all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire; All her idols I will lay **desolate**, For she gathered [it] from the pay of a harlot, And they shall return to the pay of a harlot." [Micah 1:7 NKJV](#)

I found a few references to eating flesh, one in particular seemed possibly relevant, and another might be from an inverse perspective.

[2 Kings 9:36](#) Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, "This [is] the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'On the plot [of ground] at Jezreel dogs shall **eat** the **flesh** of Jezebel; [2 Kings 9:36 NKJV](#)

[John 6:53](#) Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you **eat** the **flesh** of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. [John 6:53 NKJV](#)

In the first case, Jezebel is a woman, the harlot is a woman. Jezebel led the Israelites into idolatry, the harlot was a symbol of the apostate Christian church. Jezebel persecuted and killed prophets and faithful followers of God, the harlot also killed true followers of God. Part of Jezebel's punishment was that her flesh would be eaten, the harlot's flesh was said to be eaten.

Finally, there is the burning her up. The following verse was part of the civil law given to the Israelites by Moses.

[Exodus 21:23](#) "But if [any] harm follows, then you shall give life for life, <sup>24</sup> "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> "burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. [Exodus 21:23-25 NKJV](#)

Interestingly one of the harlot's methods of torturing and killing heretics was to burn them at the stake. This consisted of tying a person to a pole or stake and then setting a fire under them which would inhumanely kill and then consume them. Even though I think the burn for burn may have been intended as penalty for injuring another, taken most literally, it could be interpreted life for life, burn for burn.

### *The woman is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth*

"Great city" was used a number of times in the Old Testament of the NKJV, I believe referring to size. Nineveh was even called an exceedingly great city, with a population of more than 120,000 people, plus animals.

[Jonah 3:3](#) So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an **exceedingly great city**, a three-day journey [in extent]. [Jonah 3:3 NKJV](#)

[Jonah 4:11](#) "And should I not pity Nineveh, that **great city**, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left--and much livestock?" [Jonah 4:11 NKJV](#)

The very next occurrence of "great city" is in the scene of the two witnesses in Revelation. In this verse, great city mystically refers to Sodom, Egypt and apparently Rome.

[Revelation 11:8](#) And their dead bodies [will lie] in the street of the **great city** which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. [Revelation 11:8 NKJV](#)

Then in the seventh bowl of wrath, it seems that the great city is Babylon the great.

[Revelation 16:19](#) Now the **great city** was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. [Revelation 16:19 NKJV](#)

Then Revelation 18 really helps us to clarify that the great city is Babylon.

[Revelation 18:10](#) "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that **great city** Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' [Revelation 18:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:21](#) Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw [it] into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the **great city** Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. [Revelation 18:21 NKJV](#)



Finally, we see that Daniel referred to literal Babylon's king as a king of kings.

[Daniel 2:37](#) "You, O king, [are] a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; [Daniel 2:37 NKJV](#)

## Conclusion

The Lamb is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Those who are waging war against the Lamb, are the beast, the harlot, and the ten kings. The ten kings are most likely all nations of the world who unite with the beast from the earth in forcing their citizens to worship the beast from the sea or its image. The chosen and faithful on the side of the Lamb, I'm pretty sure are the ones who have the seal of God. I kind of concluded that this scene was just a different viewpoint of the battle of Armageddon. It was there that I showed that God sometimes turns the enemies of His people against each other as is the case here where the kings and the beast turn on the harlot. The description of what they did to her is very graphic and it doesn't leave much possibility for her to be alive after eating her flesh and burning her up. So, the civil powers or kingdoms that she was harlot to finally had enough of her.

There is one thing that is a little strange because I have in previous scenes written about the beast from the sea as a combined church and state power. Here they are described as being two entities, with the civil apparently turning on and destroying the religious. Sounds a lot like what happened in the French Revolution. So, what is the beast if the religious element is completely removed? It seems that it should represent western civilized nations of the world. So, is this scene the French Revolution, or is it closer to the time of the end, when everyone has either the seal of God or the mark of the beast? I think it is the latter. In fact, I believe this scene is what follows after the beast from the earth tries to make everyone worship the image of the beast. I think the ten horns or kings are following the lead of the beast from the earth who joins with the beast from the sea in an attempt to force all to worship the beast (harlot). But when they realize they are deceived and are on the wrong side, they turn against the harlot and destroy her.

Finally, the woman or harlot is identified as "the great city" which referred to different things in the Bible, but in this case I believe it refers to symbolic Babylon. This is the same Babylon that was said to be the great harlot, and the mother of harlots at the beginning of [Revelation 17](#). This is the same Babylon that was said to be fallen in the [second angel's message](#), but is also recovered as the seventh in the sequence of seven mountains or heads [[eighth, and one of the seven](#)]. [Revelation 18](#) goes into more detail about the downfall of "the great city," Babylon.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the event pictured here occurred before or after the close of probation?
- Do you agree that this beast and the harlot that rides on it is represented by just the beast in earlier scenes in Revelation?
- Why do you think the name Babylon is associated with the harlot?

## Babylon is fallen

### [Revelation 18:1-3](#)

[Revelation 18:1](#) After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! <sup>3</sup> "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of

the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." [Revelation 18:1-3 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *Angel with great authority, glory and mighty voice*

I analyzed an angel flying in midheaven for the [first angel's message](#) in [Revelation 14:6-7](#). "Great authority" was used 2 other times in the NKJV. The first verse from Acts is about a eunuch who was high up in the court of the Ethiopian queen. The second case was about the dragon and the beast from the sea, which I determined represented the Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church, with the former turning over its throne and great authority in the west as it consolidated its power in the east.

[Acts 8:27](#) So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of **great authority** under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, [Acts 8:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:2](#) And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like [those] of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and **great authority**. [Revelation 13:2 NKJV](#)

This verse from Daniel, uses a slightly different word, which I believe to have the same meaning. It is about Alexander the Great who indeed had great authority, to the extent that he was mentioned multiple times in Bible prophecy (though not by name).

[Daniel 11:3](#) "Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with **great dominion**, and do according to his will. [Daniel 11:3 NKJV](#)

Glory and illuminated were found in one other verse.

[Revelation 21:23](#) The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the **glory** of God **illuminated** it. The Lamb [is] its light. [Revelation 21:23 NKJV](#)

But another case involving an angel and glory immediately came to mind.

[Luke 2:8](#) Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an **angel** of the Lord stood before them, and the **glory of the Lord shone around them**, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [Luke 2:8-11 NKJV](#)

Interestingly, I believe "The angel of the Lord," often referred to the pre-incarnate Son of God. But in this case, it did not because He was the babe in Bethlehem. The second interesting thing is that it says that it says the "glory of the Lord" shone around them. Do angels that shine only do so with God's glory, as Moses did after communicating with God?

Next, I looked up verses that mentioned "angel" and "loud voice." Our current verse was not among them because angel and voice were not in the same verse.

[Revelation 5:2](#) Then I saw a strong **angel** proclaiming with a **loud voice**, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" [Revelation 5:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:2](#) Then I saw another **angel** ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a **loud voice** to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, [Revelation 7:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third **angel** followed them, saying with a **loud voice**, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives [his] mark on his forehead or on his hand, ... <sup>15</sup> And another **angel** came out of the temple, crying with a **loud voice** to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." [Revelation 14:9, 15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:17](#) Then the seventh **angel** poured out his bowl into the air, and a **loud voice** came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" [Revelation 16:17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:17](#) Then I saw an **angel** standing in the sun; and he cried with a **loud voice**, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, [Revelation 19:17 NKJV](#)

The only other verse that I could find that mentioned a "mighty voice" is the following, which is undoubtedly referring to God.

[Psalm 68:33](#) To Him who rides on the heaven of heavens, [which were] of old! Indeed, He sends out His voice, a **mighty voice**. [Psalm 68:33 NKJV](#)

### *Babylon the great is fallen*

I examined the name Babylon in [the second angel's message](#). I believe this is the same Babylon the great that was introduced in [Revelation 17:5](#). Babylon and fallen are mentioned in three other verses in the NKJV.

[Isaiah 21:9](#) And look, here comes a chariot of men [with] a pair of horsemen!" Then he answered and said, "**Babylon is fallen**, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground." [Isaiah 21:9 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 51:8](#) **Babylon** has suddenly **fallen** and been destroyed. Wail for her! Take balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. [Jeremiah 51:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "**Babylon is fallen, is fallen**, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

The first, I believe, is a prophecy about the fall of literal Babylon. The second is about the fall of symbolic Babylon.

### *Dwelling place of demons*

Dwell or dwelling was used many times in the NKJV, and mostly has to do with a home, land or location where someone is living. The word living is also a synonym for dwelling. The following are some instances where the word referred to God dwelling in His sanctuary or temple on earth, or among His chosen people.

[Numbers 35:34](#) "Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I **dwell**; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel." [Numbers 35:34 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 25:8](#) "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may **dwell** among them. [Exodus 25:8 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 12:5](#) "But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His **dwelling** place; and there you shall go. [Deuteronomy 12:5 NKJV](#)

[Ezra 7:15](#) and [whereas you are] to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose **dwelling** [is] in Jerusalem; [Ezra 7:15 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:17](#) "So you shall know that I [am] the LORD your God, **Dwelling** in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again." [Joel 3:17 NKJV](#)

The next one was interesting, because in spite of the assurances of God that He dwells among His people, there was a notion that god's do not dwell among us on earth.

[Daniel 2:11](#) "[It is] a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose **dwelling** is not with flesh." [Daniel 2:11 NKJV](#)

The word demon was used 32 times in the NKJV, all in the New Testament. Virtually all of them were regarding demon possession. I would think that possessing a person would be similar to dwelling. The plural was used 49 times in the NKJV, only 4 of which were in the Old Testament, synonymous with false gods.

[Leviticus 17:7](#) "They shall no more offer their sacrifices to **demons**, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." ' [Leviticus 17:7 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 32:17](#) They sacrificed to **demons**, not to God, [To gods] they did not know, To new [gods], new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. [Deuteronomy 32:17 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 11:15](#) Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the **demons**, and the calf idols which he had made. [2 Chronicles 11:15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 106:37](#) They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to **demons**, [Psalm 106:37 NKJV](#)

Most of the rest from the New Testament were used essentially the same way as the singular, regarding demon possession.

A few other interesting points from those New Testament verses. Beelzebub in the NKJV, is the ruler of the demons.

[Matthew 12:24](#) Now when the Pharisees heard [it] they said, "This [fellow] does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." [Matthew 12:24 NKJV](#)

Paul used the word demons 5 times and I feel it is getting closer to the application currently under examination.

[1 Corinthians 10:20](#) Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to **demons** and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with **demons**.<sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of **demons**; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of **demons**. [1 Corinthians 10:20-21 NKJV](#)

[1 Timothy 4:1](#) Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of **demons**, [1 Timothy 4:1 NKJV](#)

The last three, including the one being examined, are from Revelation.

[Revelation 9:20](#) But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship **demons**, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. [Revelation 9:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 16:14](#) For they are spirits of **demons**, performing signs, [which] go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. [Revelation 16:14 NKJV](#)

*Prison of foul spirit*

Foul spirit was only used this one time in the NKJV, but is it equivalent to unclean spirit which is used 12 times in the NKJV? In this verse, foul is translated from the word [ἀκάθαρτος, akathartos](#)<sup>443</sup> which is most often translated to unclean in the NKJV. Unclean spirit was used in much the same way as demons, but why a dwelling place for demons and a prison for unclean spirits. The first and only one from the Old Testament seems synonymous with demon.

[Zechariah 13:2](#) "It shall be in that day," says the LORD of hosts, "[that] I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the **unclean spirit** to depart from the land. [Zechariah 13:2 NKJV](#)

The rest, all from the Gospels, and mostly from Mark, also seem interchangeable with the word demon.

[Matthew 12:43](#) "When an **unclean spirit** goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. [Matthew 12:43 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:23](#) Now there was a man in their synagogue with an **unclean spirit**. And he cried out,<sup>24</sup> saying, "Let [us] alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"<sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"<sup>26</sup> And when the **unclean spirit** had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. [Mark 1:23-26 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:30](#) because they said, "He has an **unclean spirit**." [Mark 3:30 NKJV](#)

[Mark 5:2](#) And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an **unclean spirit**, ...<sup>8</sup> For He said to him, "Come out of the man, **unclean spirit**!" [Mark 5:2, 8 NKJV](#)

[Mark 7:25](#) For a woman whose young daughter had an **unclean spirit** heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [Mark 7:25 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:25](#) When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the **unclean spirit**, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" [Mark 9:25 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:29](#) For He had commanded the **unclean spirit** to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. [Luke 8:29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:42](#) And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed [him]. Then Jesus rebuked the **unclean spirit**, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. [Luke 9:42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:24](#) "When an **unclean spirit** goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' [Luke 11:24 NKJV](#)

A verse in Jude comes to mind with the concept of a prison for evil angels.

[Jude 1:6](#) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; [Jude 1:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>443</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G169&t=NKJV>

Prison was used 93 times in the NKJV. It was used almost exclusively as a literal prison or a king's dungeon. God's messengers were often thrown into prison. Here are two verses where the word prison could mean something other than a literal prison or dungeon.

[1 Peter 3:19](#) by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in **prison**, [1 Peter 3:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:7](#) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his **prison** [Revelation 20:7 NKJV](#)

I don't know what to say about the verse from Peter, except that it seems like it could be possibly related to the verse in Jude. During the Millennium Satan was said to be in prison.

### *Unclean and hated bird*

The word bird was used 44, and birds 88, times in the NKJV. "Unclean birds" was only used one other time, referring to being not fit for food.

[Leviticus 20:25](#) 'You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between **unclean birds** and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. [Leviticus 20:25 NKJV](#)

Hated bird was only used in this one place in the NKJV, but the word hated was translated from [μισέω, miseō](#)<sup>444</sup> which was used by Jesus in the following ways.

[Matthew 5:43](#) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and **hate** your enemy.'<sup>44</sup> "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who **hate** you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, [Matthew 5:43-44 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:24](#) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will **hate** the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. [Matthew 6:24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:22](#) "And you will be **hated** by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. [Matthew 10:22 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:9](#) "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be **hated** by all nations for My name's sake.<sup>10</sup> "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will **hate** one another. [Matthew 24:9-10 NKJV](#)

The same Greek word for hate was used in the following way in Revelation.

[Revelation 2:6](#) "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also **hate**. [Revelation 2:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:16](#) "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will **hate** the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. [Revelation 17:16 NKJV](#)

<sup>444</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3404&t=NKJV>

As a harbinger of something bad, Pharaoh's baker had a dream that Joseph interpreted to mean that he would be hanged and that birds would eat his flesh.

[Genesis 40:19](#) "Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you." [Genesis 40:19 NKJV](#)

I didn't really find anything in the Bible that described what a hateful bird would be. But I did find something else interesting.

[Leviticus 11:13](#) 'And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they [are] an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, [Leviticus 11:13 NKJV](#)

Abomination is a word that might have some cause and effect relationship with hate or hated. In this case it means that you should very much not want to eat them because they are unclean. There are numerous verses in the Bible where these unclean birds are said to eat the flesh of dead people.

[1 Samuel 17:44](#) And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!" ... <sup>46</sup> "This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. [1 Samuel 17:44, 46 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 21:10](#) Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night. [2 Samuel 21:10 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 14:11](#) "The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!" ' [1 Kings 14:11 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 7:33](#) "The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten [them away]. [Jeremiah 7:33 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 15:3](#) "And I will appoint over them four forms [of destruction]," says the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. [Jeremiah 15:3 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 16:4](#) "They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, [but] they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth." [Jeremiah 16:4 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 19:7](#) "And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. [Jeremiah 19:7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 34:20](#) 'I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth. [Jeremiah 34:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:17](#) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ... <sup>21</sup> And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. [Revelation 19:17, 21 NKJV](#)

The picture that is painted from these verses is that there are birds that are classified as unclean that we should hate to eat, they also happen to be harbingers of death. In other words, when you see vultures and buzzards hovering in the sky, it often indicates that they are waiting for death to come so they can eat.

### *Wine of the wrath of her fornication*

Once again, not surprisingly, we are confronted with the same language that was used when Babylon was said to be fallen in the second angel's message.

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the **wine of the wrath of her fornication**." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

When studying that phrase, I recalled Belshazzar's drunken feast.

[Daniel 5:1](#) Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. <sup>2</sup> While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which [had been] in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup> Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which [had been] in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup> They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. [Daniel 5:1-4 NKJV](#)

There was a lot of literal wine, and most likely passion and immorality going on at that feast. There was also in a sense blasphemy of God by drinking out of His goblets while praising false gods. It was in the midst of this that Babylon fell.

### *Kings of the earth committed fornication with her*

I examined "kings of the earth" in my [introduction to the great harlot](#), in Revelation 17.

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the **kings of the earth committed fornication**, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." [Revelation 17:1-2 NKJV](#)

### *Merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury*

Merchants are mentioned 27 times in the NKJV. Ezekiel 27 is a chapter about the fall of Tyre, but the language is very similar.

[Ezekiel 27:21](#) "Arabia and all the princes of Kedar [were] your regular merchants. They traded with you in lambs, rams, and goats. <sup>22</sup> "The merchants of Sheba and Raamah [were] your merchants. They traded for your wares the choicest spices, all kinds of precious stones, and gold. <sup>23</sup> "Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Assyria, [and] Chilmad [were] your merchants. <sup>24</sup> "These [were] your merchants in choice items--in purple clothes, in embroidered garments, in chests of multicolored apparel, in sturdy woven cords, which were in your marketplace. [Ezekiel 27:21-24 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 27:33](#) "When your wares went out by sea, You satisfied many people; You enriched the kings of the earth With your many luxury goods and your merchandise. [Ezekiel 27:33 NKJV](#)



Later in Revelation we read another section that seems to be explaining how the merchants of the earth became rich, by selling to the great harlot.

[Revelation 18:11](#) "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: [Revelation 18:11 NKJV](#)

## Conclusion

This angel's message very closely mirrors the message of the [second angel](#) in Revelation 14, which I interpreted to have occurred in the early 1800's.

The big question is whether this chapter is referring to the same fall or a different one. Upon closer examination, there are some differences. Let's look at them in parallel.

<a href="#">Revelation 14:8</a> And another angel followed,	<a href="#">Revelation 18:1</a> After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven,
	having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice,
saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,	saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,
	and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!
because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." <a href="#">Revelation 14:8 NKJV</a>	<sup>3</sup> "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,
	the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." <a href="#">Revelation 18:1-3 NKJV</a>

Of course, Revelation 18 has more verses and hence more detail. But there is one thing that seems to be more than just detail. In 18, she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. If these were two different falls, the second one could possibly be made worse by the addition of demons and unclean spirits. In other words, perhaps in the second fall, Babylon has been additionally corrupted by demons. But how is this possible? What do Christianity and demon worship have in common? Well, what was Satan's first lie to Eve? God told Adam and Eve that if they ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would die.

[Genesis 3:2](#) And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> "but of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " [Genesis 3:2-3 NKJV](#)

Satan told Eve that she wouldn't die.

[Genesis 3:4](#) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [Genesis 3:4 NKJV](#)

Well, what religion teaches that people continue to exist after they die? Virtually all false religions do, but sadly, almost all of Christianity believes that when their loved ones die, they go straight to heaven. Communicating with

these loved ones may not be a generally accepted practice in Christianity today, but if one believes their departed loved one exists in heaven, and then an evil angel appeared in the form of the departed loved one, how easy would it be to accept that they are really talking to their loved one? There is a religion specifically based on the idea that departed souls can communicate with the living. According to Britannica.com:

**Spiritualism**, in religion, a movement based on the belief that departed souls can interact with the living. Spiritualists sought to make contact with the dead, usually through the assistance of a medium, a person believed to have the ability to contact spirits directly. Some mediums worked while in a trancelike state, and some claimed to be the catalyst for various paranormal physical phenomena (including the materializing or moving of objects) through which the spirits announced their presence.<sup>445</sup>

If Christianity were to embrace Spiritualism, then demons would truly be dwelling within it. Smith distinguishes this fall of Babylon from the earlier by the infiltration of Spiritualism.

*Chronology of This Movement.*—At what time do these verses have their application? When may this movement be looked for? If the position here taken is correct, that these churches, this branch of Babylon, experienced a moral fall by the rejection of the first message of chapter 14, the announcement in the chapter under consideration could not have gone forth previous to that time. It is, then, either synchronous with the message of the fall of Babylon, in chapter 14, or it is given at a later period than that. But it cannot be synonymous with that; for that merely announces the fall of Babylon, while this adds several particulars which at that time were neither fulfilled nor in process of fulfilment. As we are therefore to look this side of 1844, where the previous message went forth, for the announcement brought to view in this chapter, we inquire, Has any such message been given from that time to the present? The answer must still be in the negative; hence this message is yet future. But we are now having the third angel's message, which is the last to be given before the coming of the Son of man. We are therefore held to the conclusion that the first two verses of this chapter constitute a feature of the third message which is to appear when this message shall be proclaimed with power, and the whole earth be lightened with its glory.

The work brought to view in verse 2 is in process of accomplishment, and will soon be completed, by the work of Spiritualism. What are called in Rev. 16:14 "spirits of devils, working miracles," are secretly but rapidly working their way into the religious denominations above referred to; for their creeds have been formulated under the influence of the wine (errors) of Babylon, one of which is that the spirits of our dead friends, conscious, intelligent, and active are all about us; and this renders such denominations unable to resist the approach of evil spirits who come to them under the names and impersonations of their dead friends.

A significant feature in the work of Spiritualism, just now, is the religious garb it is assuming. Keeping in the background its grosser principles, which it has heretofore carried so largely in the front, it now assumes to appear as respectably religious in some quarters as any other denomination in the land. It talks of sin, repentance, the atonement salvation through Christ, etc., almost as orthodoxly as the most approved standards. Under the guise of this profession, what is to hinder it from intrenching itself in almost every denomination in Christendom? The basis of Spiritualism is a fundamental dogma in the creeds of almost all the churches. Its secret principles are, alas! too commonly cherished, and its dark practices too commonly, followed to put them at variance on that ground, so long as they seek a common concealment. What, then, can save Christendom from its seductive influence? Herein is seen another sad result of rejecting the truths offered to the world by the

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<sup>445</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/spiritualism-religion>

messages of chapter 14. Had the churches received these messages, they would have been shielded against this delusion; for among the great truths developed by the religious movement there brought to view, is the important doctrine that the soul of man is not naturally immortal; that eternal life is a gift suspended on conditions, and to be acquired through Christ alone; that the dead are unconscious; and that the rewards and punishments of the future world lie beyond the resurrection and the day of judgment. This strikes a death-blow to the first and vital claim of Spiritualism. What foothold can that doctrine secure in any mind fortified by this truth? The spirit comes, and claims to be the disembodied soul, or spirit, of a dead man. It is met with the fact that that is not the kind of soul, or spirit, which man possesses; that the “dead know not anything;” that this, its first pretension, is a lie, and that the credentials it offers, show it to belong to the synagogue of Satan. Thus it is at once rejected, and the evil it would do is effectually prevented. But the great mass of religionists stand opposed to the truth which would thus shield them, and thereby expose themselves to this last manifestation of Satanic cunning. [Smith, Daniel and the Revelation, p798-800](#)<sup>446</sup>

### Summary

I believe this fall of Babylon is different from the one announced by the second angel in [Revelation 14](#). Ellen White wrote this about it.

A similar work will be accomplished when that other angel, represented in Revelation [18], gives his message. The first, second, and third angels’ messages will be repeated. The call will be given to the church, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” [Verse 4.] [White, Ms 92a, 1898](#)<sup>447</sup>

Perhaps, as Israel was not ready to enter the Promised Land and had to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, God’s people in the last days were not ready after the three angel’s messages in the 1800’s and had to repeat them again after a period of wandering. I also agree with Smith, that because of their belief in the immortality of the soul, the majority of Christianity are susceptible to deception by demons and unclean spirits, which I believe will be a component of this second fall of Babylon. I also think that perhaps the first two angel’s messages in the early 1800’s were not global enough, meaning that they did not reach every tribe, nation, tongue and people, so they must be given again on a bigger scale.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think this angel, and not most of the others in Revelation is specifically said to have great authority, glory and a mighty voice?
- Do you think this angel is announcing the same fall as [Revelation 14:8](#) or another fall of Babylon?
- Do you think this fall is spiritual or physical? [spiritual meaning rejection by God for not keeping the commandments, or physical as in the French Revolution, or ten kings making her desolate, naked and burning her [Revelation 17:16](#)]

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<sup>446</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p798-800 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA798>

<sup>447</sup> White, Ellen. Ms 92a, 1898. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=EGWManuscript&bookCode=Ms92a-1898&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=1>

## Come out of her My people

### [Revelation 18:4-8](#)

[Revelation 18:4](#) And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. <sup>5</sup> "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. <sup>7</sup> "In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit [as] queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' <sup>8</sup> "Therefore her plagues will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her. [Revelation 18:4-8 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Come out of her My people*

Before Israel existed, it was prophesied that they would come out of Egypt, and then they did indeed come out.

[Genesis 15:14](#) "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall **come out** with great possessions. [Genesis 15:14 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 1:1](#) Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first [day] of the second month, in the second year after they had **come out** of the land of Egypt, saying: [Numbers 1:1 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 9:1](#) Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had **come out** of the land of Egypt, saying: [Numbers 9:1 NKJV](#)

[Acts 7:7](#) 'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,' said God, 'and after that they shall **come out** and serve Me in this place.' [Acts 7:7 NKJV](#)

Paul used the expression regarding believers and unbeliever not being bound together.

[2 Corinthians 6:14](#) Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among [them]. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." <sup>17</sup> Therefore "**Come out** from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." <sup>18</sup> "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." [2 Corinthians 6:14-18 NKJV](#)

Without actually using the phrase "come out," [Ezra](#) and [Nehemiah](#) told the story of the Jews' release from Babylon and their subsequent return to Jerusalem.

#### *Lest you share in her sins*

I believe the word share is translated from the Greek word [συγκοινωνέω, sygkoinōnēō](#)<sup>448</sup>, which was defined this way: to share in company with, i.e. co-participate in:—communicate (have fellowship) with, be partaker of.<sup>449</sup>

<sup>448</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4790&t=NKJV>

<sup>449</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4790&t=NKJV>

Here are some ways the word was used.

[Ephesians 5:11](#) And have no **fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [them]. [Ephesians 5:11 NKJV](#)

[Philippians 4:14](#) Nevertheless you have done well that you **shared** in my distress. [Philippians 4:14 NKJV](#)

I think perhaps the verses that best capture the sentiment of this statement are the ones quoted above from [2 Corinthians 6:14-18](#).

### *Receive her plagues*

The word plague was examined for the [seven plagues](#), mentioned back in [Revelation 15:8](#).

### *Sins reached to heaven*

The Day of Atonement was a sanctuary service that dealt with sins stored up in the sanctuary over the year.

[Leviticus 16:21](#) "Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send [it] away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. [Leviticus 16:21 NKJV](#)

Again, in Leviticus, God warns the Israelites what will happen if they disobey.

[Leviticus 26:21](#) 'Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your **sins**. [Leviticus 26:21 NKJV](#)

The following is an example of how one man's actions can lead to generations of sins.

[1 Kings 15:30](#) because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had **sinned** and by which he had made Israel **sin**, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. [1 Kings 15:30 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 16:2](#) "Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel **sin**, to provoke Me to anger with their **sins**, [1 Kings 16:2 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 3:3](#) Nevertheless he persisted in the **sins** of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel **sin**; he did not depart from them. [2 Kings 3:3 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 13:2](#) And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the **sins** of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel **sin**. He did not depart from them. [2 Kings 13:2 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 15:9](#) And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the **sins** of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel **sin**. [2 Kings 15:9 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 17:22](#) For the children of Israel walked in all the **sins** of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, [2 Kings 17:22 NKJV](#)

Just to be clear, God is willing to forgive us for our sins if we ask.

[1 John 1:9](#) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] **sins** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9 NKJV](#)

### *God remembered her iniquities*

When God forgives our sins, He remembers them no more.

[Jeremiah 31:34](#) "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." [Jeremiah 31:34 NKJV](#)

And if we confess our sins, he will forgive.

[1 John 1:9](#) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9 NKJV](#)

So, if God remembers her iniquities, then she must not have repented of them.

### *Render to her as she rendered to you*

God through Moses gave the Israelites a judicial principal that has been known as "eye for an eye."

[Exodus 21:24](#) "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [Exodus 21:24 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 24:20](#) 'fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. [Leviticus 24:20 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 19:21](#) "Your eye shall not pity: life [shall be] for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. [Deuteronomy 19:21 NKJV](#)

Obviously, it applies to more than just eyes, and can be looked at a couple ways. In those days, if someone injured someone else, a family member of the injured party might take vengeance by killing the one who inflicted the injury. This law given by God limited the vengeance to the same type of injury. This went all the way up to life for life. Nothing was really said about mercy and forgiveness in these type of cases, but since it was up to the injured family to inflict the punishment, I suppose it was up to them if they wished to show mercy.

We have been told that the harlot, which I interpret to be synonymous with Babylon, was drunk with the blood of saints [[Revelation 17:6](#)]. One of the many ways which she killed the saints and witnesses of Jesus was to burn them. A little bit further on in [Revelation 18:8](#), we read that she will be burned with fire.

### *Give her double according to her works*

First and probably most applicable is from a chapter in Isaiah about the Messiah's coming. Jerusalem was predicted to receive double warfare from the Lord because of her sins.

[Isaiah 40:1](#) "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. 2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD's hand **Double** for all her sins." [Isaiah 40:1-2 NKJV](#)

In certain cases, financial restitution in the Law of Moses required a 20% premium.

[Leviticus 6:1](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, 3 "or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely--in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: 4 "then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered

to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, <sup>5</sup> "or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add **one-fifth more** to it, [and] give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. [Leviticus 6:1-5 NKJV](#)

In other cases, including theft of livestock and personal possessions, the restitution was double.

[Exodus 22:4](#) "If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore **double**. [Exodus 22:4 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 22:7](#) "If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay **double**. [Exodus 22:7 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 22:9](#) "For any kind of trespass, [whether it concerns] an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, [or] for any kind of lost thing which [another] claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; [and] whomever the judges condemn shall pay **double** to his neighbor. [Exodus 22:9 NKJV](#)

Zacchaeus went above and beyond by returning 4 times.

[Luke 19:8](#) Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore **fourfold**." [Luke 19:8 NKJV](#)

### *In the cup she has mixed, mix double for her*

Surprisingly, the word cup was only used 69 times in the NKJV. Symbolically, a cup was used both in a positive and a negative sense.

I believe this is referring to the cup of suffering that she poured out on those who disagreed with her, mainly the true people of God. The cup of suffering was something that was mentioned by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

[Matthew 26:39](#) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this **cup** pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You [will]." [Matthew 26:39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:36](#) And He said, "Abba, Father, all things [are] possible for You. Take this **cup** away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You [will]." [Mark 14:36 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:42](#) saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this **cup** away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." [Luke 22:42 NKJV](#)

[John 18:11](#) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the **cup** which My Father has given Me?" [John 18:11 NKJV](#)

But what does this mean. Surely God will not pour out double suffering on the current leaders of the Church for the sins committed by her people in the dark ages? Surely, neither would He pour out double suffering on her members for the suffering her leaders inflict on His people at the end of time.

The cup was also mentioned symbolically as a punishment from God.

[Psalm 11:6](#) Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind [Shall be] the portion of their **cup**. [Psalm 11:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 75:8](#) For in the hand of the LORD [there is] a **cup**, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth Drain [and] drink down. [Psalm 75:8 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 51:17](#) Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD The cup of His fury; You have drunk the dregs of the **cup** of trembling, [And] drained [it] out. [Isaiah 51:17 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 25:15](#) For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: "Take this wine **cup** of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. [Jeremiah 25:15 NKJV](#)

Twice or double was already examined just above.

### *In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, give her torment and sorrow*

The word glorified was used 48 times in the NKJV, and in most cases had to do with glorifying God. Luxuriously was only used twice in the NKJV, and was translated from [σρηνιάω, strēniaō](#)<sup>450</sup>, which also was used only twice and meant: to be luxurious:—live deliciously<sup>451</sup>.

Torment was used 15 times in the NKJV. In this reference it was translated from the Greek word [βασανισμός, basanismos](#)<sup>452</sup> which I believe means exactly what you would think. A possible synonym could be torture, which is just what she dished out on others. Mourning was used 52 times in the NKJV and in the Old Testament is often associated with death. When not directly associated with death, Ezra mourned over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

[Ezra 10:6](#) Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and [when] he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he **mourned** because of the guilt of those from the captivity. [Ezra 10:6 NKJV](#)

In the book of Esther, there was mourning over bad news of impending death, and Haman mourned over his embarrassment and shame.

[Esther 4:3](#) And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, [there was] great **mourning** among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. [Esther 4:3 NKJV](#)

[Esther 6:12](#) Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, **mourning** and with his head covered. [Esther 6:12 NKJV](#)

Job and David had cause to mourned over their circumstances.

[Job 30:28](#) I go about **mourning**, but not in the sun; I stand up in the assembly [and] cry out for help. [Job 30:28 NKJV](#)

[Job 30:31](#) My harp is [turned] to **mourning**, And my flute to the voice of those who weep. [Job 30:31 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 38:6](#) I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go **mourning** all the day long. [Psalm 38:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 42:9](#) I will say to God my Rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go **mourning** because of the oppression of the enemy?" [Psalm 42:9 NKJV](#)

<sup>450</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4763&t=NKJV>

<sup>451</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4763&t=NKJV>

<sup>452</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G929&t=NKJV>



Mourning is contrasted with gladness, joy, dancing and festivals.

[Isaiah 61:3](#) To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for **mourning**, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." [Isaiah 61:3 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 31:13](#) "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together; For I will turn their **mourning** to joy, Will comfort them, And make them rejoice rather than sorrow. [Jeremiah 31:13 NKJV](#)

[Lamentations 5:15](#) The joy of our heart has ceased; Our dance has turned into **mourning**. [Lamentations 5:15 NKJV](#)

[Amos 8:10](#) I will turn your feasts into **mourning**, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only [son], And its end like a bitter day. [Amos 8:10 NKJV](#)

### *In one day her plagues will come, death, mourning, famine*

One day is hardly enough time to experience all the plagues mentioned, especially famine. So, I would conclude that the day is a [prophetic day](#), or a literal year.

I examined plagues in the introduction to the [seven plagues](#).

The word death in this case is translated from the Greek word [θάνατος, thanatos](#)<sup>453</sup>, which was translated to death in almost every instance. A possible related word in the Old Testament is pestilence, translated from the Hebrew word [דָּבַר, deber](#)<sup>454</sup>, and used 49 times in the KJV. In the Old Testament it was mostly defined by the synonyms, murrain and plague. It was also clear that it is something that can affect people and animals. Very often pestilence was said to be sent by God, usually to chastise His chosen, or punish their enemies.

Mourning was examined just above.

Famine was used 103 times in the NKJV, with only 6 of them coming from the New Testament. Famine and pestilence were mentioned 25 times in the same verse in the NKJV. A similar picture was painted in the [fourth seal](#).

[Revelation 6:7](#) When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." <sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with **hunger**, with **death**, and by the beasts of the earth. [Revelation 6:7-8 NKJV](#)

The fourth seal was interpreted to represent the era of church history where the Roman Catholic Church had great power to persecute, which according to the verses above, it did with sword and hunger. Since we are talking about the retribution on that church, getting back what she gave, it is fitting that the similar language is used.

<sup>453</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2288&t=NKJV>

<sup>454</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1698&t=NKJV>

### *She will be burned with fire*

The words burned and fire occurred in 76 verses in the NKJV. Interestingly, in the law given to Moses, the penalty for sexual immorality was burning with fire, and Babylon is accused of symbolic harlotry and immorality.

[Leviticus 20:14](#) 'If a man marries a woman and her mother, it [is] wickedness. They shall be **burned with fire**, both he and she, that there may be no wickedness among you. [Leviticus 20:14 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 21:9](#) 'The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be **burned with fire**. [Leviticus 21:9 NKJV](#)

The Israelites burned the cities of the Midianites who happened to be guilty of idolatry and sexual immorality, in addition to leading some Israelites into sin.

[Numbers 31:10](#) They also **burned with fire** all the cities where they dwelt, and all their forts. [Numbers 31:10 NKJV](#)

The Israelites burned Jericho with fire.

[Joshua 6:24](#) But they **burned the city** and all that [was] in it **with fire**. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. [Joshua 6:24 NKJV](#)

God destroyed Sodom and some of the surrounding cities with fire for their wickedness, including sexual immorality.

[Genesis 19:24](#) Then the LORD rained brimstone and **fire** on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. [Genesis 19:24 NKJV](#)

### Conclusion

This command to come out of her My people comes right on the heels of the declaration that Babylon is fallen. I had concluded that this announcement that Babylon is fallen is different from the earlier one in the second angel's message in [Revelation 14:8](#). The fact that God is calling for His people to come out of Babylon, implies that He has people there, and I think the announcement that Babylon is fallen, should help them realize that they need to come out, or they will participate in her sins. Those that choose to remain will participate in her sins and will receive her plagues.

Just as God declared in the law He gave to Moses for the Israelites, your punishment for wrongdoing is the same or in proportion to what you did. If you damaged someone's eye, your punishment was to have the same damage done to your eye. If you knocked out someone's tooth, the same tooth should be knocked out of your mouth. If you broke someone's bone, the same bone should be broken on you. Finally, if you killed someone, you should be killed. But there were some financial crimes in which restitution was to be double. So probably in some cases, Babylon would suffer the same as what she did to others, but in others it said to "give her double according to her deeds."

Plagues will come on her in one prophetic day or a literal year. It would seem that these plagues would naturally be the [seven last plagues](#) from [Revelation 15:1 – 16:21](#). But I don't think that pestilence or famine were specifically mentioned in those plagues, although the [fourth bowl](#) does mention men being scorched with fire.

Back in [Revelation 17:14-18](#), where it described the ten horns and the harlot (Babylon) going to war with the Lamb, the ten horns turned on her, made her desolate and burned her up. Is this the same burning as was discussed in [Revelation 18:8](#). It hardly seems that she could be "burned up" more than once, because there would be nothing to burn a second time. But since so much of what is described is symbolic, I guess it doesn't eliminate the possibility of being burned up twice.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think they are called God's people because they come out of Babylon, or are they still His people before they come out?
- Much of Revelation is symbolic, but how is Babylon punished and destroyed except through its leaders and people?
- Does it seem fair to punish the people of Babylon double for the actions of their predecessors?

## Lament for Babylon

### [Revelation 18:9-24](#)

[Revelation 18:9](#) "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, <sup>10</sup> "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

<sup>11</sup> "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: <sup>12</sup> "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; <sup>13</sup> "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. <sup>14</sup> "The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. <sup>15</sup> "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, <sup>16</sup> "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! <sup>17</sup> 'For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance <sup>18</sup> "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What [is] like this great city?'

<sup>19</sup> "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'

<sup>20</sup> "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and [you] holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

<sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw [it] into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. <sup>22</sup> "The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. <sup>23</sup> "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. <sup>24</sup> "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." [Revelation 18:9-24 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *Kings of the earth who committed fornication with her and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her*

I examined "[kings of the earth committed fornication with her](#)," a few verses back in [Revelation 18:3](#). Weep is translated from the Greek word, [κλαίω, klaiō](#)<sup>455</sup>, with the definition: of uncertain affinity; to sob, i.e. wail aloud (whereas [G1145](#) is rather to cry silently):—bemoan, weep.<sup>456</sup> It was used 40 times in the KJV, and 4 times in the [verses 9-24](#) that are being analyzed right here.

Peter wept bitterly, I think with shame and regret, after he betrayed Jesus.

[Matthew 26:75](#) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and [wept](#) bitterly. [Matthew 26:75 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:72](#) A second time [the] rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he [wept](#). [Mark 14:72 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:62](#) So Peter went out and [wept](#) bitterly. [Luke 22:62 NKJV](#)

There was weeping, often including hired mourners, at the death or loss of a loved one or family member.

[Mark 5:38](#) Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who [wept](#) and wailed loudly. [Mark 5:38 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:10](#) She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and [wept](#). [Mark 16:10 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:13](#) When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not [weep](#)." [Luke 7:13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:52](#) Now all [wept](#) and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not [weep](#); she is not dead, but sleeping." [Luke 8:52 NKJV](#)

[John 11:33](#) Therefore, when Jesus saw her [weeping](#), and the Jews who came with her [weeping](#), He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. [John 11:33 NKJV](#)

[Acts 9:39](#) Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought [him] to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him [weeping](#), showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. [Acts 9:39 NKJV](#)

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, because of its impending fate.

[Luke 19:41](#) When He approached [Jerusalem,] He saw the city and [wept](#) over it, [Luke 19:41 NKJV](#)

There was weeping at the trial and death of Jesus.

[Mark 16:10](#) She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and [wept](#). [Mark 16:10 NKJV](#)

<sup>455</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2799&t=NKJV>

<sup>456</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2799&t=NKJV>

[Luke 23:28](#) But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not [weep](#) for Me, but [weep](#) for yourselves and for your children. [Luke 23:28 NKJV](#)

[John 20:11](#) But Mary stood outside by the tomb [weeping](#), and as she [wept](#) she stooped down [and looked] into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>13</sup> Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you [weeping](#)?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." [John 20:11-13 NKJV](#)

Lament was used 23 times in the NKJV, but only 4 in the New Testament. However, the Greek word [κόπτω, koptō](#)<sup>457</sup>, from which it is translated was used 8 times, 2 of which were in Revelation. Strong supplied the definition: a primary verb; to "chop"; specially, to beat the breast in grief:—cut down, lament, mourn, (be-)wail.<sup>458</sup>

[Matthew 11:17](#) "and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not [lament](#).' [Matthew 11:17 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:8](#) And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others [cut down](#) branches from the trees and spread [them] on the road. [Matthew 21:8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:30](#) "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will [mourn](#), and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [Matthew 24:30 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:8](#) And many spread their clothes on the road, and others [cut down](#) leafy branches from the trees and spread [them] on the road. [Mark 11:8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:52](#) Now all wept and [mourned](#) for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." [Luke 8:52 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:27](#) And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also [mourned](#) and lamented Him. [Luke 23:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:7](#) Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will [mourn](#) because of Him. Even so, Amen. [Revelation 1:7 NKJV](#)

### *Merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her because no one buys their merchandise anymore*

I examined [merchants](#) for [Revelation 18:3](#). Weep was analyzed just above. Mourn was translated from the Greek word [πενθέω, pentheō](#)<sup>459</sup>, which is used two more times in the verses currently being analyzed, and 10 times in total in the New Testament. The following are the 7 other times it was used outside of Revelation 18:9-24.

[Matthew 5:4](#) Blessed [\[are\] those who mourn](#), For they shall be comforted. [Matthew 5:4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 9:15](#) And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom [mourn](#) as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. [Matthew 9:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>457</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2875&t=NKJV>

<sup>458</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2875&t=NKJV>

<sup>459</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3996&t=NKJV>

[Mark 16:10](#) She went and told those who had been with Him, [as they mourned](#) and wept. [Mark 16:10 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:25](#) Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, For [you shall mourn](#) and weep. [Luke 6:25 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 5:2](#) And you are puffed up, and [have](#) not rather [mourned](#), that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. [1 Corinthians 5:2 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:21](#) lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and [I shall mourn](#) for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced. [2 Corinthians 12:21 NKJV](#)

[James 4:9](#) Lament and [mourn](#) and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and [your] joy to gloom. [James 4:9 NKJV](#)

Merchandise is translated from the Greek word [γόμος, gomos](#)<sup>460</sup>, which was only used once outside of these verses.

[Acts 21:3](#) When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her [cargo](#). [Acts 21:3 NKJV](#)

### *Alas, alas, the great city, for in one hour such great riches came to nothing*

Alas is translated from the Greek word [οὐαί, ouai](#)<sup>461</sup>, and was used 47 times in 36 verses in the KJV. It was a primary declaration of grief, or an interjection of grief or denunciation. It was used 27 times by Jesus, mostly as a denunciation against the religious leaders of the day. He also denounced with woes, the cities Chorazin and Bethsaida for rejecting Him in spite of all the miracles he performed there. It was used as a declaration of grief for those who would, through no fault of their own suffer hardship such as pregnant women in the time of trouble. It seemed to me a declaration of grief for those that were too rich or comfortable see their need of a Savior. In this case it seems to be a denunciation.

[Great city](#) was examined for [Revelation 17:18](#). I mentioned [one hour](#) for [Revelation 17:12](#), where the ten kings received power with the beast for one hour. I mentioned that if this was a symbolic time period, it would be 15 days or approximately two weeks.

The phrase “came to nothing,” was all translated from a single Greek word, [ἐρημόω, erēmoō](#)<sup>462</sup>, which was used 3 times outside of these verses 9-24.

[Matthew 12:25](#) But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself [is brought to desolation](#), and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. [Matthew 12:25 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:17](#) But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself [is brought to desolation](#), and a house [divided] against a house falls. [Luke 11:17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:16](#) "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her [desolate](#) and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. [Revelation 17:16 NKJV](#)

<sup>460</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G1117&t=NKJV>

<sup>461</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3759&t=NKJV>

<sup>462</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2049&t=NKJV>

*Rejoice heaven, apostles, and prophets, for God has avenged you on her*

Heaven is translated from the word [ούρανός, ouranos](#)<sup>463</sup>, which was used 284 times in the KJV. It had at least the three distinct meanings, the atmosphere, space or the universe, and the place where God lives. I would say that the meaning in this case is the last, or perhaps a variant of the last, meaning those who dwell in heaven with God. I believe the following is a similar use of the phrase:

[Revelation 12:12](#) "Therefore rejoice, [O heavens](#), and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

[Revelation 12:12 NKJV](#)

I believe the following verses from the Old Testament also convey the same idea:

[Isaiah 1:2](#) **Hear, O heavens**, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me; [Isaiah 1:2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 44:23](#) **Sing, O heavens**, for the LORD has done [it]! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel. [Isaiah 44:23 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 49:13](#) **Sing, O heavens!** Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted. [Isaiah 49:13 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 2:12](#) **Be astonished, O heavens**, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the LORD. [Jeremiah 2:12 NKJV](#)

The word apostles was used 60 times in the NKJV. It was by far mostly used to refer to the twelve disciples and Paul. In this instance it was translated from the Greek word [ἀπόστολος, apostolos](#)<sup>464</sup>, which was used 81 times in the KJV, with the additional count mostly coming from the singular form of the English translation. Strong's definition is:

a delegate; specially, an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ ("apostle") (with miraculous powers):—apostle, messenger, he that is sent.<sup>465</sup>

The word prophets was used 237 times in the NKJV. In this instance, it was translated from the Greek word [προφήτης, prophētēs](#)<sup>466</sup>, which has this outline of biblical use<sup>467</sup>:

- I. in Greek writings, an interpreter of oracles or of other hidden things
- II. one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation
  - a. the OT prophets, having foretold the kingdom, deeds and death, of Jesus the Messiah.
  - b. of John the Baptist, the herald of Jesus the Messiah
  - c. of the illustrious prophet, the Jews expected before the advent of the Messiah
  - d. the Messiah

<sup>463</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3772&t=NKJV>

<sup>464</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G652&t=NKJV>

<sup>465</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G652&t=NKJV>

<sup>466</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G4396&t=NKJV>

<sup>467</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G4396&t=NKJV>

- e. of men filled with the Spirit of God, who by God's authority and command in words of weight pleads the cause of God and urges salvation of men
- f. of prophets that appeared in the apostolic age among Christians
  - i. they are associated with the apostles
  - ii. they discerned and did what is best for the Christian cause, foretelling certain future events. (Acts 11:27)
  - iii. in the religious assemblies of the Christians, they were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak, having power to instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, convict, and stimulate, their hearers
- III. a poet (because poets were believed to sing under divine inspiration)
  - a. of Epimenides (Tit. 1:12)

Avenged is from the Greek word [κρίμα, krima](#)<sup>468</sup>, which was used twice in this passage and 27 other times in the KJV. Strong's definition for this word is: from [G2919](#); a decision (the function or the effect, for or against ("crime")):—avenge, condemned, condemnation, damnation, + go to law, judgment.<sup>469</sup> The following verses seemed especially applicable.

[Matthew 23:14](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater [condemnation](#). [Matthew 23:14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:40](#) "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater [condemnation](#)." [Mark 12:40 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:47](#) "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater [condemnation](#)." [Luke 20:47 NKJV](#)

It seems that God makes a distinction between those who, in His name and as His representatives, steal from widows, and those who steal with no religious pretense. This is why the fall of Babylon is so hard, because she was operating from the position of being God's representative on earth. In fact, she went so far above and beyond in her claims of representing Him, that at least some Popes thought of themselves as holding on this earth the place of God Almighty.<sup>470</sup>

### *By your sorcery all nations were deceived*

"All the nations" was used 47 times in the NKJV, and 7 times in the New Testament. First and foremost, it was prophesied that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's descendants. I believe this was a prophecy of the Messiah.

[Genesis 18:18](#) "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed in him? [Genesis 18:18 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 22:18](#) "In your seed **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." [Genesis 22:18 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 26:4](#) "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed; [Genesis 26:4 NKJV](#)

<sup>468</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G2917&t=NKJV>

<sup>469</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G2917&t=NKJV>

<sup>470</sup> Monseigneur Charles De T'Serclaes. *The Life And Labors of Pope Leo XIII*. Rand, McNally & Company, 1903, p314.

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Life\\_and\\_Labors\\_of\\_Pope\\_Leo\\_XIII/OeNNAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA314](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Labors_of_Pope_Leo_XIII/OeNNAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA314)



Before He came as the Messiah, I believe God even intended for the nation of Israel to be a shining light, and an example to all nations of the benefits of keeping His Laws. But I believe they only achieved this through military might, beginning with David and Solomon and with a few other kings of Judah who obeyed and honored God.

[Deuteronomy 28:1](#) "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above **all nations** of the earth. [Deuteronomy 28:1 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 14:17](#) Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon **all nations**. [1 Chronicles 14:17 NKJV](#)

The corrupted Christian church that is Babylon, made all nation drink the wine of the passion of her immorality.

[Revelation 14:8](#) And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made **all nations** drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation 14:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 18:3](#) "For **all the nations** have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." [Revelation 18:3 NKJV](#)

The word deceived is translated from [πλανάω, planaō](#)<sup>471</sup>, which is defined by Strong as: to (properly, cause to) roam (from safety, truth, or virtue):—go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way.<sup>472</sup>

Sorcery is translated from [φαρμακεία, pharmakeia](#)<sup>473</sup>, which is defined: medication ("pharmacy"), i.e. (by extension) magic (literally or figuratively):—sorcery, witchcraft.<sup>474</sup> This word was used only two other times in the KJV.

[Galatians 5:19](#) Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, [sorcery](#), hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:20](#) But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. <sup>21</sup> And they did not repent of their murders or their [sorceries](#) or their sexual immorality or their thefts. [Revelation 9:20-21 NKJV](#)

Revelation 9:20, is from the [sixth trumpet](#).

I think the sorcery in this case could very well be witchcraft, as in the description of her fall, she was said to be the [dwelling place of demons](#).

<sup>471</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4105&t=NKJV>

<sup>472</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4105&t=NKJV>

<sup>473</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5331&t=NKJV>

<sup>474</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5331&t=NKJV>

### *In her was found the blood of prophets, saints, and all who were slain on the earth*

These are the very ones who were to rejoice at the judgment pronounced on Babylon by God. The ones whom Babylon had persecuted, and tortured and killed. I discussed most of this group of people a few verses back in this same section.

### Conclusion

I don't believe there is anything of significance to conclude here. The important conclusions like who is Babylon, and when is the fall were drawn in previous verses. There is one thing that seems a little strange. When studying victory for the Lamb in verses [Revelation 17:14-18](#), we read that then ten horns will turn on the harlot and burn her up. Ten horns are ten kings, but in these verses, it says that the kings of the earth will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning. So, are these kings mentioned in chapter 18, the same as the ten kings that burned the harlot themselves in chapter 17? Would they lament for her if they burned her themselves?

What do you believe?

- Do you believe this lament takes place at the end of the seven plagues?
- Do you think Babylon is gone for good or do you think she'll be back?
- Do you think the sorcery she used to deceive all nations is related to the demons and unclean spirits mentioned in her fall?

### Four Alleluia's

#### [Revelation 19:1-6](#)

[Revelation 19:1](#) After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power [belong] to the Lord our God! <sup>2</sup> "For true and righteous [are] His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants [shed] by her." <sup>3</sup> Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" <sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" <sup>5</sup> Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

<sup>6</sup> And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! [Revelation 19:1-6 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *A loud voice like a great multitude say alleluia!*

[Loud voice](#) was examined for the [third angel's message](#). I examined [voices in heaven](#) for the [seventh trumpet](#) which cross referenced with these verses. Great multitude was used in [Revelation 7:9](#) to refer to those who came out of great tribulation and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

[Revelation 7:9](#) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation [belongs] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" [Revelation 7:9-10 NKJV](#)

I think this is very relevant because many went through great tribulation at the hand of the great harlot, Babylon, whose judgment they are now rejoicing about.

Alleluia is translated from the Greek word [ἀλληλουϊά, hallēlouia](#)<sup>475</sup>, which was defined by Strong in the following way: of Hebrew origin (imperative of [H1984](#) and [H3050](#)); praise ye Jah!, an adoring exclamation:—alleluia.<sup>476</sup> This word was only used these four times in the entire Bible.

### *Salvation and glory and power belong to our God*

The word salvation was used 162 times in the NKJV, more than half of which are from Psalms and Isaiah. It was also used 44 times in the New Testament, and 3 times in Revelation. In almost every case, salvation, both temporal and eternal came from God. In all 3 cases in Revelation, it was translated from the Greek word [σωτηρία, sōtēria](#)<sup>477</sup>, which according to Strong means: feminine of a derivative of [G4990](#) as (properly, abstract) noun; rescue or safety (physically or morally):—deliver, health, salvation, save, saving.<sup>478</sup>

Glory is translated from the Greek word [δόξα, doxa](#)<sup>479</sup>, which was used 168 times in the KJV. Strong's definition is: from the base of [G1380](#); glory (as very apparent), in a wide application (literal or figurative, objective or subjective):—dignity, glory(-ious), honour, praise, worship.<sup>480</sup>

Power is used 245 times in various ways in the NKJV. A person exercised their power over another, and a nation over another, but God had absolute power over all. In this verse in Revelation, it was translated from [δύναμις, dynamis](#)<sup>481</sup>, meaning: from [G1410](#); force (literally or figuratively); specially, miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself):—ability, abundance, meaning, might(-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle(-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.<sup>482</sup>

### *Because His judgments are true and righteous*

Judgments is translated from the word [κρίσις, krisis](#)<sup>483</sup>, meaning: decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, justice (especially, divine law):—accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment.<sup>484</sup>

### *He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her immorality*

“He has judged,” [κρίνω, krinō](#)<sup>485</sup>, is obviously related to judgments and means: properly, to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish:—avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think.<sup>486</sup>

The [great harlot](#) was discussed at the beginning of [Revelation 17](#), as a symbol for the corrupt Christian church of the middle ages.

<sup>475</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G239&t=NKJV>

<sup>476</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G239&t=NKJV>

<sup>477</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G4991&t=NKJV>

<sup>478</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G4991&t=NKJV>

<sup>479</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1391&t=NKJV>

<sup>480</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1391&t=NKJV>

<sup>481</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1411&t=NKJV>

<sup>482</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1411&t=NKJV>

<sup>483</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2920&t=NKJV>

<sup>484</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2920&t=NKJV>

<sup>485</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2919&t=NKJV>

<sup>486</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2919&t=NKJV>

Corrupted, [φθείρω, phtheirō](#)<sup>487</sup>, means: probably strengthened from φθίω phthiō (to pine or waste); properly, to shrivel or wither, i.e. to spoil (by any process) or (generally) to ruin (especially figuratively, by moral influences, to deprave):—corrupt (self), defile, destroy.<sup>488</sup> It was only used 8 times in 7 verses in the KJV, here are the other 7.

[1 Corinthians 3:17](#) If anyone [defiles](#) the temple of God, God [will destroy](#) him. For the temple of God is holy, which [temple] you are. [1 Corinthians 3:17 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:33](#) Do not be deceived: "Evil company [corrupts](#) good habits." [1 Corinthians 15:33 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:2](#) Open [your hearts] to us. We have wronged no one, [we have corrupted](#) no one, we have cheated no one. [2 Corinthians 7:2 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:3](#) But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds [may be corrupted](#) from the simplicity that is in Christ. [2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:22](#) that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which [grows corrupt](#) according to the deceitful lusts, [Ephesians 4:22 NKJV](#)

[Jude 1:10](#) But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things [they corrupt themselves](#). [Jude 1:10 NKJV](#)

I examined the word [immorality](#) when I introduced the [great harlot](#) in [Revelation 17](#). I think the chapter in [Ezekiel 16](#) really says it all. Turning away from God and from following His commandments is spiritual immorality.

### *He has avenged the blood of His servants*

Avenged is a word translated from [ἐκδικέω, ekdikeō](#)<sup>489</sup>, meaning: ek-dik-eh'-o; from G1558; to vindicate, retaliate, punish:—a (re-)venge.<sup>490</sup> It is used in the following ways.

[Luke 18:3](#) "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, '[Get justice](#) for me from my adversary.'" [Luke 18:3 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:5](#) 'yet because this widow troubles me [I will avenge](#) her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " [Luke 18:5 NKJV](#)

[Romans 12:19](#) Beloved, do not [avenge](#) yourselves, but [rather] give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance [is] Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. [Romans 12:19 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:6](#) and being ready [to punish](#) all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. [2 Corinthians 10:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:10](#) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and [avenge](#) our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" [Revelation 6:10 NKJV](#)

This word appears to have more to do with legal protection or sentencing for a crime. It also appears that we are told not to take our own revenge but leave it to God.

<sup>487</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5351&t=NKJV>

<sup>488</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5351&t=NKJV>

<sup>489</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G1556&t=NKJV>

<sup>490</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G1556&t=NKJV>

The blood of His bond-servants, was essentially covered by "[drunk with the blood of saints](#)," in the introduction to the [great harlot](#).

### *A second time they say alleluia*

[Alleluia](#) was examined for the first verse.

### *Her smoke rises up forever and ever*

I discussed this for the question: [is there everlasting torture in hell?](#) This is a figure of speech referring to eternal death at the final judgment.

### *Twenty-four elders and four creatures fell down and worshipped God saying amen alleluia*

The twenty-four elders and the four creatures were discussed when we first came across them in [Revelation 4](#) in the [throne room](#) of God.

### *A loud voice like a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and peals of thunder say alleluia! For the Lord God Almighty reigns*

[A loud voice like a great multitude](#) was examined for the start of this passage. [Voice from heaven like many waters and thunder](#), was discussed for the Lamb and the 144,000 in [Revelation 14](#).

## **Conclusion**

I don't think there is much to conclude. In the Bible, there are many examples of repetition in praising God. Songs of praise to God contain repetition and are also repeated time after time. So, who are saying these alleluias? The first and second are described as a loud voice like a great multitude. In the sequence of this chapter, I don't believe the saved have been taken to heaven yet, so this great multitude I presume to be the angels in heaven. The third alleluia is clearly said to be spoken by the twenty-four elders and the four creatures. The last is a great multitude again, but this time including a voice like many waters and peals of thunder. This last part seems to fit the description of the Son of God. So perhaps this last alleluia is spoken by all the angels, the twenty-four elders and the Son of God, directed at the God the Father.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think all four alleluias are directed to the same subject?
- Do you think these alleluias are more about rejoicing over the judgment of the great harlot, Babylon, or about praise to God Almighty?
- Do you think the Son of God would declare alleluia for God the Father?

## **Marriage of the Lamb**

### [Revelation 19:7-10](#)

[Revelation 19:7](#) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." <sup>10</sup> And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that]! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." [Revelation 19:7-10 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *The marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready*

Marriage was given to man in the Garden of Eden by God Himself.

[Genesis 2:24](#) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. [Genesis 2:24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:4](#) And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made [them] at the beginning 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." [Matthew 19:4-6 NKJV](#)

Marriage is an act and a choice that two people be united as one, and according to God's plan for the rest of their lives. Throughout the Bible, God has used this union as an example of how close we can be to Him. The marriage analogy naturally leads to unfaithfulness being referred to as immorality and harlotry.

I examined the word [Lamb](#) in [Revelation 14](#), for the topic of [the Lamb and the 144,000](#). The Lamb is none other than Jesus, the Son of God, who became one of us to save us from sin.

So, the question is: who is the bride?

[Revelation 21:9](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, [Revelation 21:9-10 NKJV](#)

But I thought the bride would be people, maybe the ones who were saved at the second coming.

[Ezekiel 16](#) is a parable about how Israel (Jerusalem) became the wife of Jehovah but then was unfaithful. The prophet [Hosea](#) actually lived a parable of unfaithful Israel. In [Revelation 12](#), a pure woman symbolizes God's people through history. The pure woman is in contrast to the great harlot, Babylon, the apostate church. Obviously, a bride is a woman, and the church and Israel were symbolized as women.

### *Fine linen, the righteous acts of the saints*

Fine linen was translated from [βύσσινος, byssinos](#)<sup>491</sup> and was only used in one other verse outside of this chapter.

[Revelation 18:16](#) "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in [fine linen](#), purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! [Revelation 18:16 NKJV](#)

"Fine linen" was used a number of times in the Old Testament, mostly in connection with the Sanctuary construction and the clothing of the priests and Levites. Other than that, there were a few verses about royalty or the rich being dressed in fine linen.

<sup>491</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1039&t=NKJV>

“Righteous acts” was used 3 other times in 2 verses in the NKJV, and they all referred to the Lord or God.

[Judges 5:11](#) Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places, There they shall recount the **righteous acts** of the LORD, The **righteous acts** [for] His villagers in Israel; Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates. [Judges 5:11 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 12:7](#) "Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the **righteous acts** of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: [1 Samuel 12:7 NKJV](#)

Saints was translated from *ἅγιος, hagios*<sup>492</sup>, which meant: from ἅγιος hágos (an awful thing) (compare [G53](#), [G2282](#)); sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated):—(most) holy (one, thing), saint.<sup>493</sup> It was used 229 times in the New Testament, the great majority of which were in Holy Spirit. Here are a few verses where it was applied to people.

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies [of the saints](#) who had fallen asleep were raised; [Matthew 27:52 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:20](#) for Herod feared John, knowing that he [was] a just [and holy](#) man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [Mark 6:20 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:70](#) As He spoke by the mouth of His [holy](#) prophets, Who [have been] since the world began, [Luke 1:70 NKJV](#)

[Acts 3:21](#) "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His [holy](#) prophets since the world began. [Acts 3:21 NKJV](#)

[Acts 9:13](#) Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your [saints](#) in Jerusalem. [Acts 9:13 NKJV](#)

[Acts 9:32](#) Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all [parts of the country], that he also came down to [the saints](#) who dwelt in Lydda. [Acts 9:32 NKJV](#)

[Acts 9:41](#) Then he gave her [his] hand and lifted her up; and when he had called [the saints](#) and widows, he presented her alive. [Acts 9:41 NKJV](#)

[Acts 26:10](#) "This I also did in Jerusalem, and many [of the saints](#) I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against [them]. [Acts 26:10 NKJV](#)

[Romans 1:7](#) To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called [\[to be\] saints](#): Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Romans 1:7 NKJV](#)

[Romans 8:27](#) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit [is], because He makes intercession for [the saints](#) according to [the will of] God. [Romans 8:27 NKJV](#)

<sup>492</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G40&t=NKJV>

<sup>493</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G40&t=NKJV>

*Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb*

So, just who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus told a couple parables that might shed some light.

[Matthew 22:1](#) And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: <sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, <sup>3</sup> "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. <sup>4</sup> "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle [are] killed, and all things [are] ready. Come to the wedding." <sup>5</sup> "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. <sup>6</sup> "And the rest seized his servants, treated [them] spitefully, and killed [them]. <sup>7</sup> "But when the king heard [about it], he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. <sup>8</sup> "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' <sup>10</sup> "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding [hall] was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup> "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

<sup>12</sup> "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

<sup>13</sup> "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast [him] into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

<sup>14</sup> "For many are called, but few [are] chosen." [Matthew 22:1-14 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 25:1](#) "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> "Now five of them were wise, and five [were] foolish. <sup>3</sup> "Those who [were] foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. <sup>6</sup> "And at midnight a cry was [heard]: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' <sup>7</sup> "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us [some] of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> "But the wise answered, saying, '[No], lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' <sup>12</sup> "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' <sup>13</sup> "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. [Matthew 25:1-13 NKJV](#)

From these two parables we can see that not everyone who is invited, attended in the end. One other interesting point which may also be related to the fine linen is the wedding clothes that were required in the first parable. I think something that is not said in those verses is that the wedding clothes were provided by the king. After all, if he was inviting everyone from the highways and byways, he could not very well expect them all to have the appropriate wedding attire. This wedding garment has been understood to represent the righteousness of Christ.



### *Testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy*

Testimony is translated from the word [μαρτυρία, martyria](#)<sup>494</sup>, meaning: from [G3144](#); evidence given (judicially or genitive case):—record, report, testimony, witness.<sup>495</sup> It is used 37 times in the KJV. 4 times in Mark and Luke regarding testimony of witnesses in Jesus' trial. But John uses it the most, 14 times, and in the relevant context.

[John 1:6](#) There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for [a witness](#), to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light. [John 1:6-8 NKJV](#)

[John 5:30](#) "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. <sup>31</sup> "If I bear witness of Myself, My [witness](#) is not true. <sup>32</sup> "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the [witness](#) which He witnesses of Me is true. <sup>33</sup> "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup> "Yet I do not receive [testimony](#) from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. <sup>36</sup> "But I have a greater [witness](#) than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. [John 5:30-36 NKJV](#)

The spirit of prophecy is translated from the two Greek words [πνεῦμα, pneuma](#)<sup>496</sup>, which means: from [G4154](#); a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit:—ghost, life, spirit(-ual, -ually), mind.<sup>497</sup> And prophecy from [προφητεία, prophēteia](#)<sup>498</sup>, meaning: from [G4396](#) ("prophecy"); prediction (scriptural or other):—prophecy, prophesying.<sup>499</sup>

This is a little strange, because we can look at the meaning of the word "testimony," and it appears to be, telling what one has seen, heard or knows. But the angel seems to be defining it as something else. He says, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Uriah Smith explains it this way, assuming John is a prophet, after all he clearly had the spirit of prophecy. The angel is saying he is a fellow servant of God just as John is and as the prophets were that preceded him.<sup>500</sup>

### **Conclusion**

I believe the marriage of the Lamb is when Jesus is united with His people. But is this at the second coming or the third? It was recorded by John in [Revelation 21](#) that the bride of the Lamb is the holy city, the new Jerusalem. The holy city, the New Jerusalem doesn't come down to earth until after the millennium at the third coming. Considering that we have come to the end of the sixth section in the outline, I think it makes sense for this marriage of the Lamb to be after the millennium, even though some of the coming verses will be about the millennium.

In His parable, Jesus taught that initially (the Old Testament), certain people were invited, namely the Israelites. But when they rejected the invitation, then everyone was invited. This doesn't mean that if the Israelites had accepted the invitation, no one else would have been invited. I believe that if they had truly accepted the invitation, they would have

<sup>494</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3141&t=NKJV>

<sup>495</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3141&t=NKJV>

<sup>496</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4151&t=NKJV>

<sup>497</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4151&t=NKJV>

<sup>498</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4394&t=NKJV>

<sup>499</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4394&t=NKJV>

<sup>500</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation*. [p684. [https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit\\_3#page/684/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/danielrevelation00smit_3#page/684/mode/2up)] [p816. <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA816>]

realized that it was their duty to then extend the invitation to the rest of the world. So, all were invited, but not all were allowed. According to the parable, a wedding garment was required, which I believe can be symbolized by the fine linen. But if the bride is a city, we are now attributing human characteristics to a city, but this really makes sense if the city symbolizes the saved.

Lastly, John and other prophets, testified about Jesus and God's love for humanity.

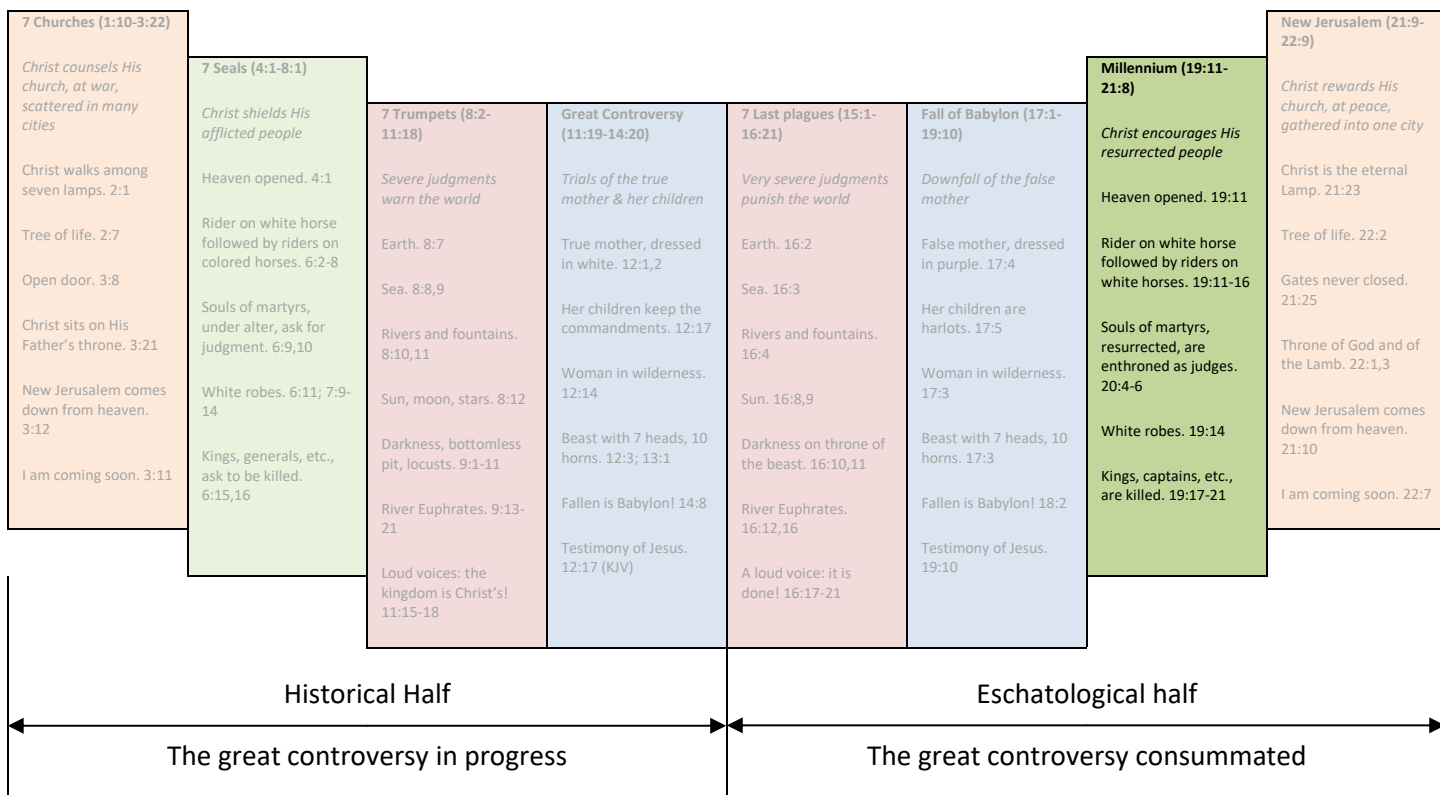
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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the Revelation identified the bride of the Lamb as a city rather than people?
- Why do you think this passage talks about the fine linen being the righteous act of the saints, rather than the acts of Jesus?
- If not everyone who is called attends the wedding, why do you think this passage says, "blessed are those who are called?"

# Revelation 19:11 – 21:8 The Millennium

We are moving into the seventh of eight sections in the outline pictured.



## Preface – Heaven opened

### [Revelation 19:11-16](#)

[Revelation 19:11](#) Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes [were] like a flame of fire, and on His head [were] many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> He [was] clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup> And He has on [His] robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. [Revelation 19:11-16 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Rider on a white horse*

In a typical Hebrew style of writing, the book of Revelation, as shown by the outline, has sections that mirror or contrast on either side of the center. In this case, the scene partly mirrors, but also differs based on the context. The [rider on a white horse](#) was examined in the corresponding section which is [the seven seals](#). In that case, the rider and horse

symbolized the spread of the pure, uncorrupted Gospel, in the apostolic period of the Christian church. In this we are clearly told that the rider is the Word of God, who is none other than the Son of God.

### *Faithful and true*

Faithful is translated from the word [πιστός, pistos](#)<sup>501</sup>, in this case meaning trustworthy. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is quoted as saying:

[John 14:6](#) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

[John 14:6 NKJV](#)

In opposition to Jesus is the devil who is the father of lies.

[John 8:44](#) "You are of [your] father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [resources], for he is a liar and the father of it. [John 8:44 NKJV](#)

### *In righteousness He judges and makes war*

The word righteousness was used many times in reference to humans striving for or achieving it. It was also used liberally in reference to the righteousness of God.

This seems a lot like a quotation from the book of Acts.

[Acts 17:31](#) "because He has appointed a day on which **He will judge the world** in [righteousness](#) by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." [Acts 17:31 NKJV](#)

The white horse in [Revelation 6:1-2](#) used the analogy of conquering to symbolize the spread of the Gospel. Conquering is related to waging war. Where else is God described as waging war?

[Isaiah 31:4](#) For thus the LORD has spoken to me: "As a lion roars, And a young lion over his prey (When a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him, [He] will not be afraid of their voice Nor be disturbed by their noise), **So the LORD of hosts will come down To fight** for Mount Zion and for its hill. <sup>5</sup> Like birds flying about, So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending, He will also deliver [it]; Passing over, He will preserve [it]." [Isaiah 31:4-5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:14](#) "These will make war with the Lamb, and **the Lamb will overcome them**, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those [who are] with Him [are] called, chosen, and faithful." [Revelation 17:14 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 2:44](#) "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms**, and it shall stand forever. <sup>45</sup> "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." [Daniel 2:44-45 NKJV](#)

<sup>501</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4103&t=NKJV>

### *Eyes like a flame of fire*

This description of Jesus was given in the very first chapter of Revelation.

[Revelation 1:14](#) His head and hair [were] white like wool, as white as snow, and His **eyes like a flame of fire**;

[Revelation 1:14 NKJV](#)

Daniel described someone he saw in vision that must be the pre-incarnate Son of God, also referred to in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord.

[Daniel 10:6](#) His body [was] like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his **eyes like torches of fire**, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. [Daniel 10:6](#)

[NKJV](#)

### *On His head are many crowns*

Crowns was used 7 other times in the NKJV.

[Psalm 103:4](#) Who redeems your life from destruction, Who **crowns** you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

[Psalm 103:4 NKJV](#)

[Song of Songs 7:5](#) Your head [**crowns**] you like [Mount] Carmel, And the hair of your head [is] like purple; A king [is] held captive by [your] tresses. [Song of Songs 7:5 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 23:42](#) "The sound of a carefree multitude [was] with her, and Sabeans [were] brought from the wilderness with men of the common sort, who put bracelets on their wrists and beautiful **crowns** on their heads. [Ezekiel](#)

[23:42 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:4](#) Around the throne [were] twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had **crowns** of gold on their heads. [Revelation 4:4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:10](#) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their **crowns** before the throne, saying: [Revelation 4:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:7](#) The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were **crowns** of something like gold, and their faces [were] like the faces of men. [Revelation 9:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten **crowns**, and on his heads a blasphemous name. [Revelation 13:1 NKJV](#)

It was used in Revelation 13, in the description of the [beast from the sea](#). A related form of the word, diadem, was used in [Revelation 12:3](#), describing the [dragon](#).

### *Clothed with a robe dipped in blood*

There was an interesting story of Joseph where his tunic was dipped in the blood of a male goat.

[Genesis 37:31](#) So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and **dipped the tunic in the blood**. [Genesis 37:31](#)

[NKJV](#)

The Old Testament Sanctuary services were filled with the blood of sacrificed animals, most of whom represented Jesus whose blood would be shed to pay the price for humanity's sins. The following is just one of the verses.

[Leviticus 9:9](#) Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. And he **dipped his finger in the blood**, put [it] on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. [Leviticus 9:9 NKJV](#)

### *His name is called the Word of God*

The Gospel of John uses Word as a name for Jesus.

[John 1:1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [John 1:1 NKJV](#)

"Word of God" was used 48 times in the NKJV, 44 of which are from the New Testament. In virtually all the uses, it referred to a message from God or the scriptures, which were considered the written word of God. John used the proper name "Word" for Jesus, which is fitting since the Bible is really all about Jesus.

### *Armies in heaven clothed in fine white linen followed Him on white horses*

Armies in heaven are presumed to be good angels, that they are good is indicated by their white linen. [Fine linen](#) was examined just a few verses back, for the marriage of the Lamb, and was said to be the righteous acts of the saints.

In the corresponding section, mirrored across the middle of the book as illustrated in the outline, the rider on the white horse was followed by riders on various colored horses. This symbolized the degradation in purity of the Christian church. In this case, the rider on the white horse, who is Jesus, is followed by the armies of heaven, also riding on white horses.

### *From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that He may strike down the nations*

We've seen the sharp sword coming out of the mouth before, in the first chapter of Revelation where John was describing Jesus who appeared to him in vision.

[Revelation 1:16](#) He had in His right hand seven stars, **out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword**, and His countenance [was] like the sun shining in its strength. [Revelation 1:16 NKJV](#)

Here are a few more verses that liken the word of God to a sword.

[Ephesians 6:17](#) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; [Ephesians 6:17 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 4:12](#) For the word of God [is] living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [Hebrews 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:16](#) "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. [Revelation 2:16 NKJV](#)

So, is God striking down the nations with His power or is it the word of God that conquers the nations? God struck the land of Egypt with miracles and plagues.

[Exodus 3:20](#) "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. [Exodus 3:20 NKJV](#)

God struck other nations with His miraculous power.

[2 Samuel 5:24](#) "And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." [2 Samuel 5:24 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 11:4](#) But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. [Isaiah 11:4 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 21:4](#) 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that [are] in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who besiege you outside the walls; and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. <sup>5</sup> "I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. <sup>6</sup> "I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. [Jeremiah 21:4-6 NKJV](#)

### *And rule them with a rod of iron*

I examined this for [Revelation 12:5-6](#) where the [male child](#), who is Jesus, is said to [rule all nations with a rod of iron](#).

### *He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*

I examined the [wine press of the wrath of God](#) for [the reaping](#) in [Revelation 14:15-20](#).

### *On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

I wondered what the significance of the word thigh was. It was translated from [ἄρπός, mēros](#)<sup>502</sup>, and was only used this one time in the Bible, meaning simply thigh.

I looked at "[King of Kings](#)," for [Revelation 17:14-18](#), under the heading [victory for the Lamb](#).

"Lord of Lords," was used 4 other times in the NKJV, 2 of which also included "King of kings."

[Deuteronomy 10:17](#) "For the LORD your God [is] God of gods and **Lord of lords**, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. [Deuteronomy 10:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 136:3](#) Oh, give thanks to the **Lord of lords**! For His mercy [endures] forever: [Psalm 136:3 NKJV](#)

[1 Timothy 6:15](#) which He will manifest in His own time, [He who is] the blessed and only Potentate, the **King of kings** and **Lord of lords**, [1 Timothy 6:15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 17:14](#) "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is **Lord of lords** and **King of kings**; and those [who are] with Him [are] called, chosen, and faithful." [Revelation 17:14 NKJV](#)

### **Conclusion**

This is a new scene, corresponding with a new section of the outline. As is most often the case in these new scenes, there is a glimpse into heaven. There are many symbols described by John that we have seen already, although they may have different meanings in this case.

The rider on the white horse, seen in the first of the seven seals, represented the rapid spread of the Gospel after Jesus returned to heaven. In this case, Jesus Himself is riding on the white horse. There is a lot of imagery in these verses

<sup>502</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3382&t=NKJV>

depicting war, armies, and battle. The horse has been previously mentioned to give advantage in battle, over simply soldiers on foot. Jesus doesn't need the advantage of the horse to be victorious, but it can be symbolic of His power. The rider, Jesus, the Word of God, is also depicted in some of the ways He has been described before. His eyes are like fire, He has many crowns on His head, and He has a sharp sword coming out of His mouth.

I believe the riders on the other white horses are the heavenly hosts, the angels. These verses being examined do not really tell us much more, because they are just the introduction to this scene. The coming verses should make it clear that Jesus and the heavenly hosts are on their way to earth for the second coming.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think war is spoken of leading to the second coming?
- Do you think this is a literal war or symbolic, as in the spread of the Gospel symbolized by the white horse in the first seal?
- What do you think it means for Jesus to rule with a rod of iron?

## Beast and kings of earth assembled for war

### [Revelation 19:17-19](#)

[Revelation 19:17](#) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,"<sup>18</sup> "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all [people], free and slave, both small and great."<sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

[Revelation 19:17-19 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Angel standing in the sun, crying with a loud voice*

I have examined angel before in the [first angel's message](#), and "[strong angel](#)" in the scene of [the little book](#), where I determined that angels are primarily messengers for God. But is this angel actually standing in the sun? I believe the angel and the act of standing in the sun is most likely symbolic. Taking a peek at the word midheaven that was also examined for the first angel's message, it had the meaning: the highest point in the heavens, which the sun occupies at noon, where what is done can be seen and heard by all<sup>503</sup>. This could be interpreted to mean that the angel was positioned between the target audience and the sun, when it was at its highest point, and hence be seen and heard by everyone under the sun. I examined "[loud voice](#)" for the [third angel's message](#).

<sup>503</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3321&t=NKJV>



***Birds in midheaven called by the angel to eat the flesh of all men***

The word from which bird is translated is [ὄρνεον, orneon](#)<sup>504</sup>, which is only used in two other places in the New Testament.

[Revelation 18:2](#) And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated [bird](#)!

[Revelation 18:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:21](#) And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all [the birds](#) were filled with their flesh. [Revelation 19:21 NKJV](#)

One was just a chapter back and the other is just a few verses ahead, and both are clearly referring to the type of birds that feed on dead flesh, also known as scavengers. And whose flesh are they called to eat? The flesh of all men, which leads me to conclude that all those not taken to heaven at the second coming will die. There will not be any living person left on earth when Jesus returns to heaven with those who are saved.

***Beast and kings gathered to make war***

Those who are assembled for war against Jesus are the beast and the civil powers supporting him. We have been introduced to these entities before. The beast is the [beast from the sea](#), that persecuted and killed the saints. The kings are the [ten horns of the dragon](#) and possibly also the [beast from the earth](#).

**Conclusion**

It is difficult to conclude too much on just these verses, [Revelation 19:17-19](#), but based on following verses and the entire section, the occasion is the second coming. We have already seen prophesied that the beast, the ten horns and the beast from the earth will work together to force all the world to make a choice which will result in two groups. Those who go along will receive the mark of the beast, and those who do not at the peril of their lives will receive the seal of God. Those who received the mark of the beast are the ones who will assemble for battle against Jesus, who comes to save those with the seal of God.

What do you believe?

- Do you think that birds and animals will be left alive during the Millennium?
- Do you think the beast from the earth and the ten horns represent all the civil powers of the earth?
- Do you think there is a literal battle at the second coming when Jesus takes His people back to heaven?

**The end of the beast and the false prophet**

[Revelation 19:20-21](#)

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.<sup>21</sup> And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. [Revelation 19:20-21 NKJV](#)

<sup>504</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3732&t=NKJV>

## Examining the elements

### *The beast and the false prophet*

We have seen [the beast](#) quite extensively in the second half of Revelation. It has played a long and very large role in Christianity, and in the world in general. We were not introduced to the [false prophet](#) until the [sixth plague or bowl](#), which is in the next outline section which I titled [the seven plagues](#). The beast was the persecuting Christian church that assumed or controlled civil powers. I concluded that the false prophet will be the protestant church originating from the United States ([beast from the earth](#)), who will make an image to or of the beast and force people to worship it, hence the false prophet.

### *Those who were deceived receive the mark of the beast*

The mark of the beast was examined also quite extensively. See [beast from the earth](#), [third angel's message](#). This is also connected to the beast from the earth and the false prophet forcing people to worship the image to the beast. Those who comply will receive the mark of the beast.

### *Beast and the false prophet thrown into the lake of fire*

Here is where I think it is possible that some of the imagery from the end of the Millennium may be portrayed here at the start. I had always thought the lake of fire a symbol of the second death which occurs at the end of the Millennium. Another way to look at it is that these two powers will be alive right up to the coming of Christ and the end of the history of the world. They will be destroyed and not allowed to continue their existence during the Millennium.

### *All the rest are killed*

All the rest of mankind, who do not have the seal of God are destroyed as well. Does that mean that there are some who do not have the mark of the beast, but also do not have the seal of God? Or does this simply mean that the beast and the false prophet represent the powers that be, and the rest of mankind are their subjects?

## Conclusion

The main conclusion that I draw from this is that all of humanity that are not taken to heaven at the second coming will die. There will be no people alive on earth, which will explain something that is still coming regarding Satan and his angels being chained on earth.

What do you believe?

- Do you think that all who are not saved from all nations and all religions will have the same mark of the beast, or will eastern religions which account for a great share of the world's populations have their own test?
- Do you think the lake of fire described here is looking forward to the end of the Millennium?
- Do you think Revelation completely clear that there will be no people alive on earth during the Millennium?

## Satan is bound

### [Revelation 20:1-3](#)

[Revelation 20:1](#) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is [the] Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup> and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. [Revelation 20:1-3 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *Key to the bottomless pit and a great chain*

The word key, translated from [κλείς, kleis](#)<sup>505</sup>, was used 5 other times in the New Testament.

[Matthew 16:19](#) "And I will give you [the keys](#) of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." [Matthew 16:19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:52](#) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away [the key](#) of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." [Luke 11:52 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:18](#) "I [am] He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have [the keys](#) of Hades and of Death. [Revelation 1:18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 3:7](#) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has [the key](#) of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': [Revelation 3:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:1](#) Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given [the key](#) to the bottomless pit. [Revelation 9:1 NKJV](#)

I examined the [bottomless pit](#) for the [fifth trumpet](#).

Great is translated from the word [μέγας, megas](#)<sup>506</sup>, which is obviously where we get the English word mega from.

Chain from the word [ἄλυσις, halysis](#)<sup>507</sup>, which was used 10 other times in the New Testament.

[Mark 5:3](#) who had [his] dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even [with chains](#),<sup>4</sup> because he had often been bound with shackles and [chains](#). And [the chains](#) had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. [Mark 5:3-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:29](#) For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound [with chains](#) and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. [Luke 8:29 NKJV](#)

[Acts 12:6](#) And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two [chains](#) between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.<sup>7</sup> Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by [him], and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his [chains](#) fell off [his] hands. - [Acts 12:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Acts 21:33](#) Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded [him] to be bound with two [chains](#); and he asked who he was and what he had done. [Acts 21:33 NKJV](#)

[Acts 28:20](#) "For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see [you] and speak with [you], because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this [chain](#)." [Acts 28:20 NKJV](#)

<sup>505</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G2807&t=NKJV>

<sup>506</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3173&t=NKJV>

<sup>507</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G254&t=NKJV>

[Ephesians 6:20](#) for which I am an ambassador in [chains](#); that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. [Ephesians 6:20 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 1:16](#) The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my [chain](#); [2 Timothy 1:16 NKJV](#)

It seems kind of fitting that the demoniac was chained, and he broke them repeatedly, but Satan will be chained with a mega chain. Whether because prisons were not secure or to just make it more uncomfortable for prisoners, it seems that often they were chained even when in prison.

### *The dragon, the serpent, the devil, Satan bound for a thousand years*

I examined [the great red dragon, Satan](#) from [Revelation 12:3-4](#). In that case, I concluded that the dragon symbol had a dual application because clearly it was identified as Satan, but in the text, it was pretty clear that it referred to Rome in its role of persecuting Christ and Christians.

I examined [serpent](#) from [Revelation 12:13-17](#), where it seemed the dragon, Satan, after having failed to destroy the child, now went after the woman and the rest of her children.

The binding of Satan was alluded to in the previous sentence, with a mega chain. Here it is said that he will be bound for 1000 years. But is he literally bound with a real chain? And is this 1000 years literal or prophetic?

### *He would not deceive the nations until the thousand years were finished*

Finally, we are told the purpose of his binding, that he would not deceive the nations until the end of the 1000 years. We read just a few verses back that all men who did not go to heaven at the second coming would die, so there are actually no people for Satan to deceive. Apparently, he will be confined to this earth but will not be able to tempt and deceive the nations because there will be none.

### **Conclusion**

We are just examining 3 verses here but so much time is covered. The first point may be that this takes place in what is called the abyss. I think the definition of the word abyss could be related to the Greek mythology of hades or hell which is supposedly deep in the earth. Another application of the word comes from the description of earth before creation.

[Genesis 1:2](#) The earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. [Genesis 1:2 NKJV](#)

It is conceivable that at the second coming, the world is so completely destroyed that it is essentially formless and void and dark. If Satan were somehow confined to earth in this state, it could be said that he was chained, and if there were no people, there would be no one for him to deceive. But there is an end to this sentence, which is 1000 years, after which it is inferred that he would be able to deceive the nations again.

The one question that remains for me is whether these 1000 years should be interpreted as literal or prophetic? Let's look at some of the logic that was applied when assigning the day/year prophetic time interpretation. I would say that if you believe the Young Earth Creationist interpretation of the Bible (see [Age of the World](#)), then it hardly seems that it would make sense for the history of earth to occupy about 6000 literal years, and then for God to leave sin unresolved for 360,000 years. Secondly, I would add that in the weekly cycle of 6 days of work and one day of rest, it would seem logical that after 6000 years of history, God might assign 1000 years of rest for the earth. But what else might be happening during this millennium? We will see in the coming verses.

So, Satan is confined to this world, apparently with his evil angels, with no human beings to deceive. The earth will be completely destroyed, perhaps by a nuclear holocaust, but if not, God is able to reduce this world to its original state. Satan will have 1000 years to contemplate what he has done, and I would guess his angels will not be pleasant companions. Perhaps he will also spend the 1000 years preparing for the last great battle at the end of the millennium. It implies that at the end of the 1000 years, he will again be able to deceive the nations. I take this to mean that he will tell them that they have a chance in the great battle against God, knowing full well that they don't.

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What do you believe?

- How do you think God chains or confines Satan to this earth?
- What do you think Satan will be able to do on this earth during the 1000 years?
- For what purpose do you think God will allow the nations to be deceived again by Satan when the 1000 years are completed?

## Thrones and Judgment given to them

### [Revelation 20:4-6](#)

[Revelation 20:4](#) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then [I saw] the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received [his] mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4-6 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Judgment was committed to them*

[Judgment](#) was examined in [the first angel's message](#). While that was referring to the judgment of God, this one clearly states that judgment is given to people.

#### *Souls of those who had been beheaded*

Souls of those who were beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, would seem to imply those who were killed because of their faith in Jesus. Does this mean only those who were killed after Jesus came? Clearly there were many prophets before the time of Christ who were tortured and killed because they were faithful to God. I examined [heaven, saints, apostles and prophets, who were to rejoice over the judgment of Babylon](#). But is that Babylon that is fallen only referring to the beast which is the corrupt Christian Church that persecuted the saints?

#### *Those who did not worship the beast or his image*

The [beast from the sea](#), and the image created by the [beast from the earth](#), were studied back in [Revelation 13](#). Those who worshipped the beast or his image received his mark on the hand or forehead. Those who didn't, received the seal of God.

***Lived and reigned with Christ for 1000 years***

In this case I'm not going to examine words as much as the idea of a resurrection for those who will be taken to heaven.

[1 Thessalonians 4:14](#) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 12:2](#) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame [and] everlasting contempt. [Daniel 12:2 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:52](#) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [1 Corinthians 15:52 NKJV](#)

[John 5:28](#) "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup> "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. [John 5:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Acts 24:15](#) "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of [the] dead, both of [the] just and [the] unjust. [Acts 24:15 NKJV](#)

[John 6:40](#) "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." [John 6:40 NKJV](#)

What is made apparent from these verses is that there is a resurrection for both the good and the evil. The good to everlasting life and the rest to judgment and everlasting contempt. What these verses outside of Revelation 20 do not tell us is that there is 1000 years between the two resurrections.

***The rest of the dead did not live again until the 1000 years were completed***

The same verses quoted above support the idea of a resurrection for those who will not be saved, a resurrection of judgment after which they will die the second death. This verse in Revelation is very clear that the wicked are not resurrected until the end of the 1000-year time period. But do we get this notion from any other verse in the Bible? I would say, no, but the doctrine of two resurrections separated by 1000 years is not derived from a single verse but from a whole chapter about the millennium.

***Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection***

Those who have part in the first resurrection are the ones fit to take to heaven. It stands to reason that they could be called blessed and holy.

***They shall be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for 1000 years***

What is a priest and what is his role? Merriam webster offers the following definition:

one authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God<sup>508</sup>

<sup>508</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/priest>

The word priest was used 515 times in 456 verses in the NKJV, and 74 times in the New Testament. The word was used for false religions and gods as well as the worship of the one true God. Among the Israelite nation, anyone from the tribe of Levi was designated for sanctuary or temple service, but only the sons of Aaron could be priests. But was this God's original plan? The following verses recorded by Moses were from a time before the sons of Levi were chosen and the sons of Aaron designated for priesthood.

[Exodus 19:5](#) 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth [is] Mine. <sup>6</sup> 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These [are] the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." [Exodus 19:5-6 NKJV](#)

I think it's fair to say that a priest would be in a position to instruct people about what God or gods require of them. Probably also to teach the people about God or gods. Of the verses in the New Testament, let's look at some that are not just specifically referring to the Jewish temple priests or high priest.

[Romans 15:16](#) that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. [Romans 15:16 NKJV](#)

The word priest is used 26 times in the book of Hebrews, mostly about Jesus as our high priest. Now Jesus was not a descendant of Aaron, so he was a different kind of high priest, at least not of the order of Jewish priests. In fact, Paul goes into detail explaining this, using Melchizedek, who was a priest of the Most High God before Levi or Aaron even existed.

[Hebrews 5:1](#) For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things [pertaining] to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. <sup>3</sup> Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer [sacrifices] for sins. <sup>4</sup> And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron [was].

<sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but [it was] He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."

<sup>6</sup> As [He] also says in another [place]: "You [are] a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek"; <sup>7</sup> who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, <sup>8</sup> though He was a Son, [yet] He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, <sup>10</sup> called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," [Hebrews 5:1-10 NKJV](#)

The first verse confirms the definition and role of a priest. The second though affirms that priests are still just people with the same weaknesses to sin. So how can a person who is not perfect, and has the same inherent tendencies to sin be an intermediary between God and people? I think that even as the Old Testament sanctuary and temple services were symbols or examples of things in heaven, the high priest was a symbol of the true High Priest in heaven who is Jesus. So even as sinful human high priests try to teach us about God, our true High Priest in heaven, gave us a perfect picture and demonstration of God.

So, the real question here is, who are the saved human beings from the first resurrection serving as priests to? Who are they teaching, about love of God that was so great that He was willing to risk everything to save mankind from sin?

## Conclusion

Now we're talking about some of what will happen during the 1000-year period known as the millennium. First, we are told that those who were killed for Christ's sake will judge. But who will they judge, since God has already decided who will be saved and taken them to heaven? I believe they will be looking over the cases of those who are lost, perhaps especially those they are surprised are not there. This is a time for all who are saved for eternity, to see that God was fair and just in His judgment of all humanity. But is it only those who were tortured and killed for Christ's sake that will judge, or is it everyone who is saved? If my belief is correct in what this judgment represents, then I think it is inclusive of all humanity that is saved.

In addition to those who were beheaded for Christ's sake, were included those who did not worship the beast and his image. We know that image of the beast worship is an end time test, so this is specifically referring to those who were killed by the civil powers enforcing the worship of the beast and his image. These civil powers would be the ten horns and the beast from the earth. We know that there will be some at the second coming who will be taken to heaven without dying, but this is talking about those came to life after having not worshipped the beast or his image. These and the first mentioned will reign with Christ for 1000 years. What does it mean to reign with Christ? Is it fair to say that the way kings reign on this earth is not a good example of what it means for Christ to reign? When He was here on earth Jesus taught His disciples that even though He was their master, He would serve them as a servant.

[John 13:12](#) So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" <sup>13</sup> "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for [so] I am. <sup>14</sup> "If I then, [your] Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. <sup>17</sup> "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. [John 13:12-17 NKJV](#)

Ellen white put this very eloquently in *Desire of Ages*.

The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister," (Matthew 20:28), had been the lesson of His every act. But not yet had the disciples learned the lesson. At this last Passover supper, Jesus repeated His teaching by an illustration that impressed it forever on their minds and hearts. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p642](#)<sup>509</sup>

So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p644-645](#)<sup>510</sup>

Finally, it says that all who will come up in the first resurrection, who are blessed and holy, will be priests of God and Christ and will reign with Him for 1000 years. This last sentence kind of confirms to me that it is not just those who were tortured and killed for Christ's sake but all who come up in the first resurrection. This includes almost everyone

<sup>509</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p642.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=642>

<sup>510</sup> White. p644-645. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=644>



who will be saved. And being priests of God and Christ, and reigning will be what they will do for the millennium. I mentioned that the role of a priest is a person who leads out in religious rites and ceremonies, and teaches people about a religion, in this case, the love of Christ and God, and salvation. So, it seems one of the things those saved at the start of the millennium will do for 1000 years is to teach others about the love of God and what He did to save them. Perhaps the same people that they are priests to will be who they will reign over as well.

What do you believe?

- What do you think this judgment is that will be done by those who were beheaded?
- Do you believe that there are different groups among the saved who will have different roles in heaven?
- What do you think it means for those who came up in the first resurrection to reign with Christ?

## Satan released

### [Revelation 20:7-10](#)

[Revelation 20:7](#) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number [is] as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Revelation 20:7-10 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Satan released from his prison*

It was already mentioned in [verse 3](#) that Satan would be released at the end of the 1000 years. It didn't say back then, nor does it say here that he will be released from this earth. I think it is worth pondering with the supernatural power that Satan and his angels have, if it were possible to physically confine him deep enough in the earth so that he would be literally imprisoned? Obviously, God's power is greater, and He could simply use that to confine Satan even to the surface of the earth, but sometimes it seems that God likes to use nature and natural laws to accomplish things.

#### *Deceive the nation which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog*

It was already mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, [Revelation 19:20-21](#), that all humankind not taken at the second coming would die. Then it was also said, in [Revelation 20:5](#), that they would be resurrected at the end of the 1000 years. So, if Satan's prison were merely meant to imply that he was prevented from doing what he does which is to deceive the nations, then fact that the nations are resurrected could in a sense release him to do what he does again.

Four corners of the earth was discussed when studying the [sealing of the 144,000](#) from [Revelation 7:1-8](#). I determined that it meant the entire earth. In other words, people would be resurrected all over the planet, presumably where they lived and more importantly died.

Gog and Magog are not mentioned elsewhere in Revelation, but the same translated words are used a number of times in [Ezekiel 38, 39](#). I will not include those two chapters here, but you can go read them. Those chapters are a prophecy of an invasion by Gog and Magog of the land of Israel, and of God's deliverance. The Bible doesn't actually record the history of this invasion and rescue, so we can't refer to that passage. Either this prophecy was fulfilled

and not written down, or it was referring to the last battle of Satan against God and His people in the New Jerusalem come down to earth. The Hebrew meaning of the word Gog, is mountain, and it is also a proper masculine noun. Except for its single mention as a son of Shemiah, a Reubenite [[1 Chronicles 5:4](#)], it is only found Ezekiel. Apparently, Gog is a person, a leader, likely a king, from Magog.<sup>511</sup> I wonder if the definition of the word, "mountain," implied that he was a giant, like some that the Israelites faced when clearing out the land of Canaan. Finally, I would add, that if [Ezekiel 38, 39](#) were a prophecy that was fulfilled in Old Testament times, and not simply a prophecy of the current last battle being discussed, then it is likely that Gog and his army or many of his army would be resurrected at the end of the 1000 years and again be willing to do battle against Jerusalem. Perhaps he is representative of all the other giant kings who will also be resurrected to unite with Satan in a final battle against God.

### *Gather them together for battle*

Satan will gather all the nations resurrected at the end of the 1000 years and organize them for battle. As I mentioned above, there will probably be many great and even giant people among those raised. Many people with great egos but they will all fall in line behind Satan. The thing is, I don't see any way that Satan will really believe that he can defeat God, because he knows how powerful God truly is. In addition to that he knows what is written in the Bible about his end. But the prophecy says he will go forth to deceive the nations, meaning to convince them that they can triumph over God and take the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.

### *Whose number is like the sand of the seashore*

At this time, every person who has made a choice for or against God will be alive on the planet. Not surprisingly, those on the outside will be as numerous as the sand on the seashore. There have been people, perhaps many who have never had the ability to make a decision for or against God. Ellen White has this to say about it.

I saw that the slave master [See Appendix.] will have to answer for the soul of his slave whom he has kept in ignorance; and the sins of the slave will be visited upon the master. God cannot take to heaven the slave who has been kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master's lash, and holding a lower position than the brutes. But He does the best thing for him that a compassionate God can do. He permits him to be as if he had not been, while the master must endure the seven last plagues and then come up in the second resurrection and suffer the second, most awful death. Then the justice of God will be satisfied. [White. Early Writings, p276](#)<sup>512</sup>

A curious thought just occurred to me. How will the slave masters endure the seven last plagues?

There have been slaves and many others who have been severely oppressed and controlled throughout the history of the world that may fall into this category as well. I know that those who have lost babies and little children envision their little ones being resurrected and going to heaven with them, but I wonder if these will fall into this category as well. So many people have said that God is a perfect judge and knows what a person would have done if they had lived or had the opportunity to make a choice, but I believe that God knows the end from the beginning and knows what every person actually chooses or will choose but how can He know what someone would choose if they never made the choice. Isn't that what free will and freedom of choice are about? I do believe that God loves each and every human being and will do everything He can to save as many as He can but ultimately if sin is not to rise a second time, His hands are tied to so speak.

<sup>511</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1463&t=NKJV>

<sup>512</sup> White, Ellen G. *Early Writings*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1882, p276.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=EW&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=276>

### *The nations gathered to surround the beloved city*

In [Revelation 19:19](#) John described the [kings of the earth assembling to make war](#) against Jesus, presumably at the Second Coming. In this case, at the end of the Millennium, the third coming, Satan has just been released from his prison. He has convinced all the wicked who have just been resurrected, including Gog and Magog, to gather together with him, to take the beloved city of God. In chapter 19, it seems that Satan or the Devil was not personally described as leading the beast and the false prophet in their campaign against God, but he is here. Is that because before the second coming Satan can only work through human proxies, but after the millennium he is not restricted?

### *Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them*

Interestingly, [fire from heaven](#) was one of the signs that [the beast from the earth](#) used to deceive. Perhaps it is fitting, that now that the false prophet (the beast from the earth) will be defeated and punished, with real fire from God out of heaven. The interesting thing here is that the fire is said to come "down" from God out of heaven. So, is God not in the city that is being surrounded by the Devil, the nations and God and Magog? Is the city on earth being surrounded and God is still above in heaven, or is it just a figure of speech that heaven is wherever God is? Or is God in the city, but He still brings the fire down from the sky?

### *Devil, beast and false prophet, cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*

This seems to be the same scene as that described in chapter 19 regarding the [end of the beast and the false prophet](#). But is it? I have previously identified the beast as the religious entity, that persecuted the saints, as the Roman Catholic Church. The false prophet I identified as the United States because it made an image to the beast and tried to compel all to worship it. In [Revelation 19:19-20](#), which I generally applied to the second coming, was an eerily similar scene, except that in that case, the Devil was not said to be thrown into the lake or fire. So, the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire, but they are alive again? But the beast and the false prophet do not represent two individuals, so does that mean that after the resurrection at the end of the millennium, the organizations or governments were reassembled? I don't think so, but a major difference is that at the second coming, only the wicked that were alive at that time in history could be thrown into the lake of fire. After the millennium, all individuals who were responsible for the atrocities committed by the beast and the false prophet are alive and available for punishment.

### *Tormented day and night forever and ever*

Very similar language was seen in the [third angel's message](#) in Revelation 14.

[Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives [his] mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." <sup>12</sup> Here is the patience of the saints; here [are] those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. [Revelation 14:9-12 NKJV](#)

I think this warning in the third angel's message is a warning about the same event. The word tormented is translated from [βασανίζω, basanizō](#)<sup>513</sup>, which was used 10 other times in the New Testament.

[Matthew 8:6](#) saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully [tormented](#)." [Matthew 8:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>513</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G928&t=NKJV>

[Matthew 8:29](#) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here [to torment](#) us before the time?" [Matthew 8:29 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:24](#) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, [tossed](#) by the waves, for the wind was contrary. [Matthew 14:24 NKJV](#)

[Mark 5:7](#) And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not [torment](#) me." [Mark 5:7 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:48](#) Then He saw them [straining](#) at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [Mark 6:48 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:28](#) When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not [torment](#) me!" [Luke 8:28 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 2:8](#) (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, [tormented](#) [his] righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing [their] lawless deeds)-- [2 Peter 2:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 9:5](#) And they were not given [authority] to kill them, but [to torment them](#) [for] five months. Their torment [was] like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. [Revelation 9:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:10](#) And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets [tormented](#) those who dwell on the earth. [Revelation 11:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:2](#) Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in [pain](#) to give birth. [Revelation 12:2 NKJV](#)

The word had a wide range of application.

But what can be said about the extent or duration of this torture? A few verses back, the lake of fire and brimstone was not said to last forever and ever.

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. <sup>21</sup> And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. [Revelation 19:20-21 NKJV](#)

But that has been explained to be a different event. In this case it says they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. The warning of this event in [Revelation 14:11](#) says the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever. So, are they actually supernaturally kept alive in fire and brimstone forever and ever, or are they consumed and their smoke ascends forever and ever, and they remain dead forever and ever? Well, just based on the literal reading of this single verse alone, you could conclude they are kept alive in the fire and tormented forever and ever. I did a pretty comprehensive study on [Hell](#) and concluded otherwise. I believe the forever and ever language refers to the finality of their death. I would say however, that there are degrees of evil and that in His justice, God will make a way for some to suffer less, than others.

## Conclusion

At the end of the millennium, the nations of those who will be lost are resurrected to face their judgment. Satan knowing full well that he cannot triumph will deceive the people to think that they can prevail against God. With this

deception he is able to convince all the wicked, who are now alive, to assemble for battle. I concluded that the fire and brimstone that destroy Satan and the wicked is not an everlasting hell, after all in the very next chapter of Revelation, John describes seeing a new heaven and a new earth. I believe the earth is cleansed with fire and brimstone before God re-creates it.

What do you believe?

- How do you think Satan is imprisoned?
- Who do you think the beast and the false prophet represent in this case at the end of the millennium?
- Do you think there will be people who will not be saved, but will also not be raised only to face judgment and death again?

## The great white throne and judgment for the wicked

### [Revelation 20:11-15](#)

[Revelation 20:11](#) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:11-15 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Great white throne*

White was used 75 times in the NKJV, with 39 of them coming from the two books, Leviticus and Revelation. 21 of the 22 times white was mentioned in Leviticus, were from chapter 13, about skin diseases. In Revelation the word was usually associated with robes or garments, or horses. In the case of robes or garments, it was a pretty easy to make a connection to the righteousness of Christ which covers those who repent of and forsake their sins.

[Revelation 3:5](#) "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. [Revelation 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 7:14](#) And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [Revelation 7:14 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 1:18](#) "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. [Isaiah 1:18 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 11:35](#) "And [some] of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify [them], and make [them] white, [until] the time of the end; because [it is] still for the appointed time. [Daniel 11:35 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 12:10](#) "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. [Daniel 12:10 NKJV](#)

I think in horses as symbols, white still represented the purity of Christ.

I examined the word [throne](#) for the [fifth bowl](#).

Ultimately, I don't think there is anything too deep here. White is a symbol of purity, and this is the throne of God.

### *Earth and heaven fled from the face of Him who sat on it*

Heaven and earth were both mentioned in 127 different verses in the NKJV. The following are some verses that speak of God owning or possessing or ruling both heaven and earth.

[Genesis 14:19](#) And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;  
[Genesis 14:19 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 24:3](#) "and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; [Genesis 24:3 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 4:39](#) "Therefore know this day, and consider [it] in your heart, that the LORD Himself [is] God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; [there is] no other. [Deuteronomy 4:39 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 10:14](#) "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, [also] the earth with all that [is] in it. [Deuteronomy 10:14 NKJV](#)

[Joshua 2:11](#) "And as soon as we heard [these things], our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He [is] God in heaven above and on earth beneath. [Joshua 2:11 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 29:11](#) Yours, O LORD, [is] the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all [that is] in heaven and in earth [is Yours]; Yours [is] the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. [1 Chronicles 29:11 NKJV](#)

[Ezra 5:11](#) And thus they returned us an answer, saying: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. [Ezra 5:11 NKJV](#)

The next few verses emphasize that God is the creator of heaven and earth, and that is ultimately why He is worthy of our worship.

[2 Kings 19:15](#) Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, [the One] who dwells [between] the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. [2 Kings 19:15 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 2:12](#) Hiram also said: Blessed [be] the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, for He has given King David a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal house for himself! [2 Chronicles 2:12 NKJV](#)

[Nehemiah 9:6](#) You alone [are] the LORD; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You. [Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 134:3](#) The LORD who made heaven and earth Bless you from Zion! [Psalm 134:3 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 37:16](#) "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, [the One] who dwells [between] the cherubim, You [are] God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. [Isaiah 37:16 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:24](#) So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You [are] God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, [Acts 4:24 NKJV](#)

[Acts 14:15](#) and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, [Acts 14:15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:7](#) saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." [Revelation 14:7 NKJV](#)

The question about this verse, is whether heaven and earth are literal here or symbolic of things, objects or people inhabiting the heavens and the earth. There are examples of inanimate things in nature, that seemingly react to the presence of God.

[Job 9:6](#) He shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble; [Job 9:6 NKJV](#)

[Job 26:11](#) The pillars of heaven tremble, And are astonished at His rebuke. [Job 26:11 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 60:2](#) You have made the earth tremble; You have broken it; Heal its breaches, for it is shaking. [Psalm 60:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 114:7](#) Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, At the presence of the God of Jacob, [Psalm 114:7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 10:10](#) But the LORD [is] the true God; He [is] the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation. [Jeremiah 10:10 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 2:19](#) They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. [Isaiah 2:19 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 13:13](#) Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger. [Isaiah 13:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 64:1](#) Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence-- [Isaiah 64:1 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 38:20](#) 'so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who [are] on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.' [Ezekiel 38:20 NKJV](#)

[Joel 3:16](#) The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel. [Joel 3:16 NKJV](#)

[Haggai 2:6](#) "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it [is] a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; [Haggai 2:6 NKJV](#)

I believe it is very difficult to assume sequence in Revelation because I think that John saw vision after vision and perhaps wrote them down in the sequence he saw them. But I think at times he may have seen one scene after

another showing the same event from a different perspective or highlighting different details. I think that could be the case with this scene and the previous. You may have seen movies that showed a meteor impact, and rapid dispersion of earth from the point of impact. Perhaps that is what John saw when he wrote, earth and heaven fled from the face of God. On the other hand, if the wicked were already resurrected and assembled with Satan around the city, then God on His great white throne ascended over the city and His glory shown forth, I could definitely envision the people and even Satan cowering, and turning their backs so as not to look into the brightness and glory of the face of God.

### *Books were opened, the dead (resurrected) were judged by their works, which were written in the books*

Books have a very distinct meaning to us, but even as it may have meant something different back in Bible times, it may be something much more at this time. Whatever it is, for those on the outside, it will be a record of choices and actions that culminated in them being where they are. The books will present the evidence, and I think each person will be able to see the choices they made that led to them being lost. There will be no question that God was fair and just in His judgment.

### *Another book, the book of life*

I examined the [book of life](#) back in Revelation 13. I believe it to be a record of all those throughout the history of the world who will be saved. I do not believe this in the sense of predestination, but as each person's life ends, if their name is in the book of life, they will be on the inside of the city at this time.

### *The sea, death and Hades gave up their dead*

This phrase raises an interesting question. The resurrected wicked actually coming from three distinct places or is this merely a figure of speech. The sea and death could be interpreted in the sense that those who died at sea were not buried in a specific place in the ground, whereas those actually buried, could arise out of the ground from the same place where they were buried. But are death and Hades two different places?

### *Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire*

I examined [death and Hades](#) way back in [Revelation 6](#), for the [fourth seal](#). I couldn't really conclude how Hades was different from death, but I proposed that perhaps it could have something to do with whether there was a body to bury or not. In any case, by mentioning the sea, death and Hades, I believe all cases are covered.

### *Second death*

This exact phrase was used 3 other times in the NKJV.

[Revelation 2:11](#) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." ' [Revelation 2:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:8](#) "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:8 NKJV](#)



If there is a second death, there must be a first death, but I didn't find the exact phrase "first death" in the NKJV. There were occasions where Jesus referred to death as sleep.

[John 11:11](#) These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." <sup>12</sup> Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." <sup>13</sup> However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. [John 11:11-14 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 9:23](#) When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, <sup>24</sup> He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. [Matthew 9:23-24 NKJV](#)

I think it's actually very simple. The first death or sleep as Jesus called it, would be interrupted by the resurrection. Then those who died after the final judgement would be dying, literally, a second time, forever and ever.

### *Anyone not named in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire*

So, who lives and who dies, was determined by whether their name was written in the Book of Life. The book was mentioned just a few verses back, where I mention that I had examined the [book of life](#) back in Revelation 13.

### Conclusion

I believe these verses at the end of chapter 20 are yet another depiction of the judgment of the wicked and their death sentence. According to these verses, being cast into the lake of fire is equivalent to the second death. I know there are other depictions of this same event that describe the fire and brimstone as being forever and ever, but this one does not.

What do you believe?

- What do you think John meant by the words, "earth and heaven fled?"
- What do you think Hades means?
- Why do you think the sea is specifically mentioned as giving up her dead?

### All things made new

#### [Revelation 21:1-8](#)

[Revelation 21:1](#) Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them [and be] their God. <sup>4</sup> "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." <sup>6</sup> And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. <sup>7</sup> "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. <sup>8</sup> "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:1-8 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *New heaven and new earth*

This is not the only place a new heaven and a new earth are mentioned in the Bible.

[Isaiah 65:17](#) "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. [Isaiah 65:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 66:22](#) "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. [Isaiah 66:22 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 3:13](#) Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. [2 Peter 3:13 NKJV](#)

If there is a new creation of heavens and earth, there must have been a first. That of course is found at the beginning of the Bible, in [Genesis 1](#).

### *Holy city, the New Jerusalem as a bride*

This is actually just a glimpse of the detail that John will write about in the remainder of the book.

I already examined the [bride of the Lamb](#), where it was covered at the end of the last section of the outline in [Revelation 19:7-10](#).

I found "holy city" 9 other times in the NKJV.

[Nehemiah 11:1](#) Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the **holy city**, and nine-tenths [were to dwell] in [other] cities. [Nehemiah 11:1 NKJV](#)

[Nehemiah 11:18](#) All the Levites in the **holy city** [were] two hundred and eighty-four. [Nehemiah 11:18 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 48:2](#) For they call themselves after the **holy city**, And lean on the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts [is] His name: [Isaiah 48:2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 52:1](#) Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the **holy city**! For the uncircumcised and the unclean Shall no longer come to you. [Isaiah 52:1 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 9:24](#) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your **holy city**, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. [Daniel 9:24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 4:5](#) Then the devil took Him up into the **holy city**, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, [Matthew 4:5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:53](#) and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the **holy city** and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:53 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:2](#) "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the **holy city** underfoot [for] forty-two months. [Revelation 11:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:19](#) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the **holy city**, and [from] the things which are written in this book. [Revelation 22:19 NKJV](#)

In all the cases outside of Revelation, holy city referred to the literal ancient capital of Israel, Jerusalem. But this holy city is not just Jerusalem, but the New Jerusalem. This term is used once earlier in Revelation, in the message to the church of Philadelphia.

[Revelation 3:12](#) "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the **New Jerusalem**, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And [I will write on him] My new name. [Revelation 3:12 NKJV](#)

It seems fitting, that if we have a new heaven and earth, that there would also be a New Jerusalem.

In the verses being examined, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is said to be a bride, but it doesn't say who the groom is. The marriage of the Lamb was mentioned once before in chapter 19, without mentioning who the bride is.

[Revelation 19:7](#) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] those who are called to the **marriage supper of the Lamb!**' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." [Revelation 19:7-9 NKJV](#)

In the very next verses after [Revelation 21:1-8](#) currently being examined, we are told who the bride and groom are.

[Revelation 21:9](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, [Revelation 21:9-10 NKJV](#)

### *Tabernacle of God is with men, He will dwell with them and be their God*

This brought to mind a verse from the Bible about the purpose of the Old Testament sanctuary, the predecessor to the Temple.

[Exodus 25:8](#) "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. [Exodus 25:8 NKJV](#)

Even as the original temple was in the city of Jerusalem, the tabernacle of God is probably in the New Jerusalem. We are taught that God can be anywhere at once, but I think there must also be some sense of presence, based on what we read in the Bible.

[Exodus 19:3](#) And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: [Exodus 19:3 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 19:20](#) Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. [Exodus 19:20 NKJV](#)

So, is this dwelling with us after the creation of the new heaven and earth different from the times it said God was with Israel of old? I have always understood these verses to mean that as much as God's primary dwelling place is in heaven now, He will make the new heaven and earth His dwelling place.

### *God will wipe away every tear, no more death, sorrow, crying or pain*

The following are a couple other places in the Bible where it conveys the same message.

[Revelation 7:17](#) "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." [Revelation 7:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 25:8](#) He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. [Isaiah 25:8 NKJV](#)

### *Make all things new*

I think the following is a Messianic prophecy, but it has some similar language.

[Isaiah 42:9](#) Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them." [Isaiah 42:9 NKJV](#)

I believe this is reiterating the sentiment from the start of this chapter that this earth will be recreated.

### *I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End*

Alpha and Omega were the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The first chapter of Revelation is John's description of Jesus appearing to him in vision. He explains what He means by Alpha and Omega, adding that He is the beginning and the end, and then a little later on, the first and the last. Clearly, with regard to our existence, God was there at the beginning, and will be there at the end, but does this imply anything beyond a reference to our existence?

[Revelation 1:8](#) "I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the] Beginning and [the] End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." [Revelation 1:8 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:11](#) saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send [it] to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." [Revelation 1:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:17](#) And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last." [Revelation 1:17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:13](#) "I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the] Beginning and [the] End, the First and the Last." [Revelation 22:13 NKJV](#)

### *I will give of the fountain of the water of life*

Just to be clear, this water of life is not specifically said to give everlasting life, as the tree of life was said to do, although it could possibly be implied.

[Genesis 3:22](#) Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- [Genesis 3:22 NKJV](#)

This idea of water that gives life is, I am sure, the basis for the legends and myths of the fountain of youth. Here are a few other verses that communicate life giving water, though only one of them mentions everlasting life, and it is not clear that the eternal life is the result of drinking the water. In fact, the water Jesus was talking about wasn't actually even literal water.

[Revelation 7:17](#) "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." [Revelation 7:17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:17](#) And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. [Revelation 22:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 12:3](#) Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation. [Isaiah 12:3 NKJV](#)

[John 4:14](#) "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 36:9](#) For with You [is] the fountain of life; In Your light we see light. [Psalm 36:9 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 2:13](#) "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, [And] hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water. [Jeremiah 2:13 NKJV](#)

### *I will be his God and he shall be My son*

Obviously, Jesus was called the son of God, but that not who this is referring to. I searched for "my son," in the NKJV and found it 133 times. The following are the ones where God declared Israel His son, and in one case He told David that Solomon would be His son.

[Exodus 4:22](#) "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel [is] **My son**, My firstborn. <sup>23</sup> "So I say to you, let **My son** go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn." ' ' "[Exodus 4:22-23 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 7:12](#) "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> "I will be his Father, and he shall be **My son**. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. [2 Samuel 7:12-14 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 17:11](#) "And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go [to be] with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>12</sup> "He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. <sup>13</sup> "I will be his Father, and he shall be **My son**; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took [it] from [him] who was before you. <sup>14</sup> "And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever." ' ' "[1 Chronicles 17:11-14 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 11:1](#) "When Israel [was] a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called **My son**. [Hosea 11:1 NKJV](#)

### *Those not saved will take part in the lake of fire, which is the second death*

This verse didn't actually say "lake of fire," but clearly it was implied. "Lake of fire," was used in the following verses in the NKJV. Furthermore, it listed some characteristics or categories of people who will be cast into the fire, [cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars].

[Revelation 19:20](#) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the **lake of fire** burning with brimstone. [Revelation 19:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:10](#) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the **lake of fire** and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the **lake of fire**. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the **lake of fire**. [Revelation 20:10-15 NKJV](#)

In the first case, it was the beast and the false prophet, who were cast in. In [Revelation 20:10](#), it was the devil who was said to be cast into the lake of fire. Then in verse [14](#), death and Hades were thrown in. Finally, everyone not found in the Book of Life, was cast in.

Second death was used three other times, all in Revelation.

[Revelation 2:11](#) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." ' [Revelation 2:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:14](#) Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [Revelation 20:14 NKJV](#)

It shouldn't really be debatable what second means because I think it is literal. But with the belief held by many of everlasting torture in Hell, to them it is not literal, because people those people will never die.

## Conclusion

In this vision, John is seeing the new heaven and earth, the Holy City (New Jerusalem) and the Tabernacle. He sees God making His new dwelling place on the new earth and wiping away the negative effects of sin. God will give access to the fountain of the water of life, and give eternal life to those who are saved. He will call us His son's, and then finally, those who are lost die the second death.

The water of life is an interesting subject to me? Are the saved immortal at this point? Is the water of life needed to keep them immortal? If so then the myth or legend of the fountain of youth has a lot of basis in reality. I discussed something similar regarding the tree of life, originally in the Garden of Eden.

[Genesis 3:22](#) Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- [Genesis 3:22 NKJV](#)

According to this verse, in spite of sin, the tree could have perpetuated life indefinitely. So that made me wonder if even without sin if the tree was an integral component of eternal life? The tree is also mention multiple time in Revelation.

[Revelation 2:7](#) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." ' [Revelation 2:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:2](#) In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, [was] the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each [tree] yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations. [Revelation 22:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:14](#) Blessed [are] those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. [Revelation 22:14 NKJV](#)

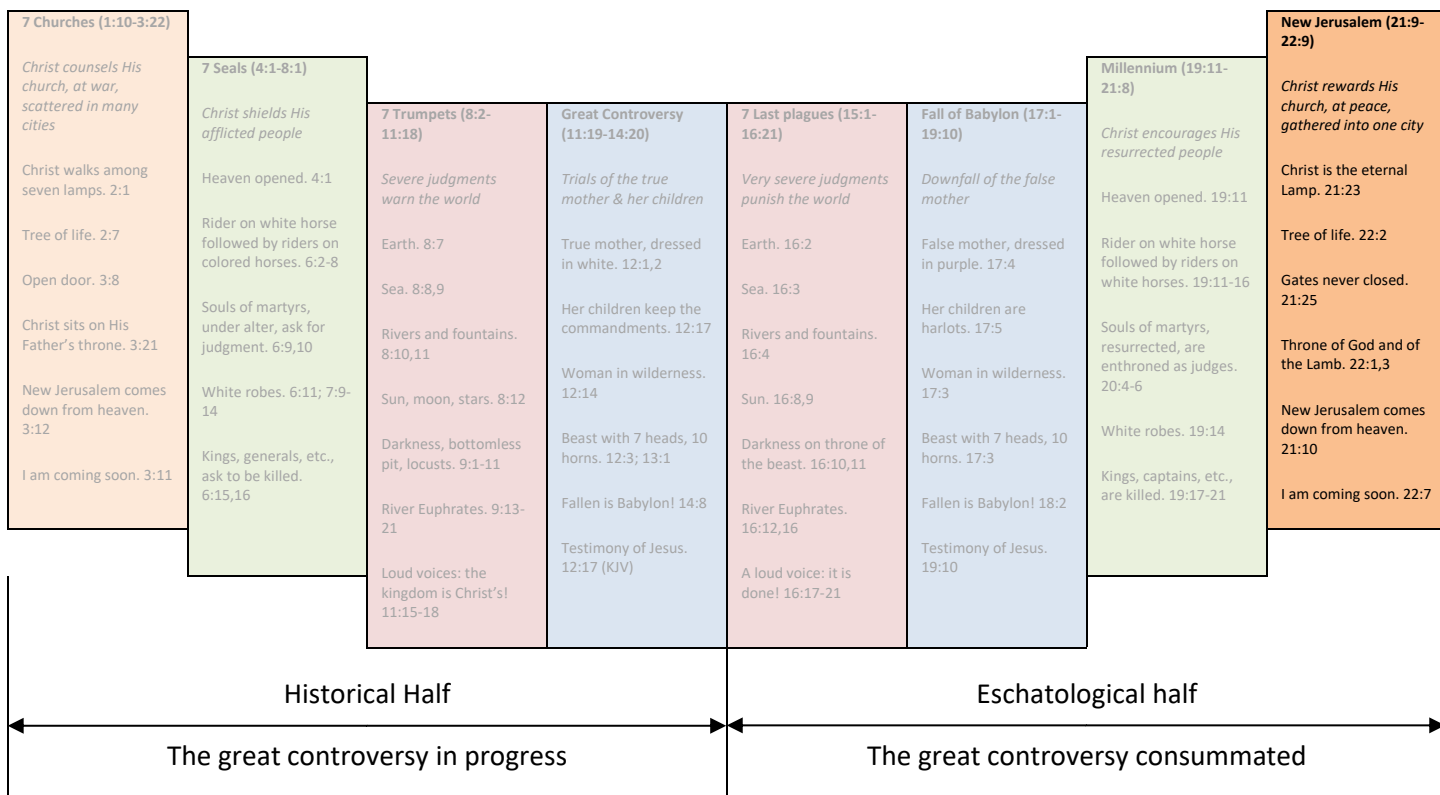
So, I had the same question regarding the tree that I just asked about the water. Do either or both play a role in everlasting life?

What do you believe?

- Do you believe God will literally change His residence from where He is now, to the new earth?
- What purpose do you think the water of life serves?
- Do you think the second death means literal and actual death?

# Revelation 21:9 – 22:9 The new Jerusalem

We are moving into the final section in the outline pictured.



## Preface – The bride, the wife of the Lamb and the twelves

### [Revelation 21:9-14](#)

[Revelation 21:9](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her light [was] like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: <sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. <sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. [Revelation 21:9-14 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *The bride, the Lamb's wife*

I already examined the [bride of the Lamb](#), where it was covered at the end of the last section of the outline in [Revelation 19:7-10](#). But this verse in [Revelation 21:10](#) is really the clearest statement about who the bride of the Lamb is. It states without any ambiguity that the bride, the wife of the Lamb is the holy city, Jerusalem. I ask again,



how is a city the bride of the Lamb rather than a church or people? Well, I had showed how in the Bible, that Jerusalem was symbolized as a woman [[Ezekiel 16](#)]. So, if old Jerusalem is symbolized as a woman, unfaithful though she be, then why not use new Jerusalem also as a symbol of a pure, faithful bride and wife of the Lamb. As a bride, Jerusalem need not simply represent a city as in buildings, walls and streets, but also the people inside.

### *Great high mountain*

“Great high mountain” was not used elsewhere in the NKJV, but it did ring a bell for me.

[Matthew 4:8](#) Again, the devil took Him up on an **exceedingly high mountain**, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. [Matthew 4:8 NKJV](#)

I believe this is symbolic because one would not really be able to see all the kingdoms of the world from a single physical high mountain on earth. I would add that in this case, I think Satan was trying to entice Jesus with the wealth and grandeur of buildings, rather than the character of those inhabiting them.

Where else was someone given a view, perhaps even a futuristic view of something from a mountain?

[Deuteronomy 34:1](#) Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, <sup>2</sup> all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, <sup>3</sup> the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. <sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to him, "This [is] the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see [it] with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there." [Deuteronomy 34:1-4 NKJV](#)

So why did John need to be taken to a great high mountain just to see the holy city? It must have been massive, and it is very hard to get a proper perspective on the size of something when you are too close to it. In this case, just a high mountain was not enough to get a proper perspective, it had to be a great high mountain. I think what John was shown must have been a combination of building and inhabitants. Building for sure because of the dimensions and detailed description, but even those physical features of the holy city, were associated with the people.

### *Holy city, Jerusalem descending out of heaven*

This must be taking place after the millennium because there is no description of a city coming down from heaven at the second coming. Furthermore, the human inhabitants of the holy city are the ones that were taken to heaven at the second coming.

### *Crystal clear jasper*

The brilliance of the city was described as crystal clear jasper. There are 4 times prior to this that the word Jasper is used in the NKJV. The first two verses are about the breastplate of the Jewish High Priest. The verse from Ezekiel is presumed to be about Satan or Lucifer before his fall and the verse from Revelation 4 is describing God on His throne.

[Exodus 28:20](#) "and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. [Exodus 28:20 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 39:13](#) the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. [They were] enclosed in settings of gold in their mountings. [Exodus 39:13 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 28:13](#) You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone [was] your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. [Ezekiel 28:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:3](#) And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and [there was] a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. [Revelation 4:3 NKJV](#)

The description of Jasper according to a mineral and gemstone website follows:

Jasper is an opaque variety of Chalcedony, and is usually associated with brown, yellow, or reddish colors, but may be used to describe other opaque colors of Chalcedony such as dark or mottled green, orange, and black. Jasper is almost always multicolored, with unique color patterns and habits.<sup>514</sup>

The verse being examined describes the brilliance of the holy city as crystal clear jasper. Crystal clear and opaque are sort of opposite, so it is possible that we are not even talking about the same gemstone. It is translated from [ἴασπις](#), [iaspis](#)<sup>515</sup>, which is defined as:

ἴασπις, -ιδος, ἡ, [from Plato down], jasper; a precious stone of divers colors (for some are purple, others blue, others green, and others of the color of brass; Pliny, h. n. 37, 37 (8)): Revelation 4:3; Revelation 21:11, 18f. [But many think (questionably) the diamond to be meant here; others the precious opal; see Riehm, HWB, under the word Edelsteine, 8 and 10; B. D. under the word Jasper; cf. 'Bible Educator' 2:352.]<sup>516</sup>

I tend to believe that this is not really jasper as we know it. A gem of more transparent nature is more likely. As such the glory of God would shine through it. On the other hand, perhaps the glory of God is so bright that something opaque to light as we know it is needed to shield His glory from us. In the throne room scene in Revelation 4, in addition to the description "like a jasper," there was flashing of lightning. In Revelation 4, and at least the first 2 uses in Revelation 21, it would seem that John is describing something transparent, or at least translucent, that the glory of God shines through. In the city, God is on His throne and His glory shines forth, even reaching and penetrating the walls of the holy city.

### *Names of the twelve tribes of Israel on the gates*

I don't know that there is any particular significance to the twelve angels, except that they are like guards or sentries at the gates. I guess with God protecting the city, there is really no need for guards, but perhaps they are symbolic.

Twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes written on them could symbolize that one must be a member of one of the tribes in order to enter the city. Well, that seems like a problem for many people who do not have Jewish blood then. But let's see what the Bible says about this.

In His conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus said this.

[John 4:22](#) "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.<sup>23</sup> "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. [John 4:22-23 NKJV](#)

The statement by Jesus could be interpreted a number of different ways. Primarily, that Jesus was a Jew, and it was He that made salvation possible. One could also say that a Gentile could learn of salvation through the Jews. In addition to

<sup>514</sup> [https://www.minerals.net/gemstone/jasper\\_gemstone.aspx](https://www.minerals.net/gemstone/jasper_gemstone.aspx)

<sup>515</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2393&t=NASB>

<sup>516</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2393&t=NASB>

that, assuming such a thing is possible, it could also be said that one must become a “true” Jew or child of Abraham to be saved. Let’s see what the Apostle Paul said regarding this.

[Romans 2:28](#) For he is not a Jew who [is one] outwardly, nor [is] circumcision that which [is] outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but [he is] a Jew who [is one] inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise [is] not from men but from God. [Romans 2:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Romans 4:16](#) Therefore [it is] of faith that [it might be] according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all [Romans 4:16 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 3:6](#) just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." <sup>7</sup> Therefore know that [only] those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, [saying], "In you all the nations shall be blessed." <sup>9</sup> So then those who [are] of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. [Galatians 3:6-9 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 3:28](#) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you [are] Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [Galatians 3:28-29 NKJV](#)

Jesus said this about the Roman centurion who was not an Israelite but believed in His power to heal.

[Matthew 8:11](#) "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>12</sup> "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 8:11-12 NKJV](#)

Jesus also told some parables that seemed to say the same thing.

[Matthew 22:8](#) "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' [Matthew 22:8-9 NKJV](#)

### *Names of the twelve apostles on the foundation stones*

The apostles were clearly instrumental in the spread of the Gospel, and hence fitting in this symbol of the holy city. A curious question since the names are not given, might be what are the twelve names? There were obviously twelve disciples, but one of them was Judas. He was replaced by Matthias, but wasn't Paul also called an apostle? In fact, is it possible that Paul was God's choice to replace Judas as the twelfth?

### **Conclusion**

This is the start of a new outline section, which of course is not indicated in the writings of Revelation themselves. However, organizationally it appears to be the start of the last section describing the holy city, Jerusalem, which I believe can also be called the New Jerusalem. As an introduction, I threw in the word preface in my title, which introduces us to the bride, the wife of the Lamb. We get a high-level glimpse of who or what this bride is, with more detail to follow.

So how can the bride or wife of the Lamb be a city or building? It doesn't seem to make sense, unless the city is not referring to a building but is symbolic of people somehow? I think the key is the parable in [Ezekiel 16](#), which calls Judah, the Southern kingdom, by the name of their capitol city Jerusalem. It also refers to the unfaithful people of

the Northern kingdom by the name of their capitol city which was Samaria. So, unfaithful Jews were called Jerusalem, so why not call the new Jews, the new children of Abraham, the new Jerusalem?

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the angel said the bride, the wife of the Lamb is Jerusalem, rather than just saying the church?
- Why the prominent symbolism of ancient Israel as the twelve tribes?
- What do you think is the significance of the names on the gates and foundations?

## Dimensions of the New Jerusalem

### [Revelation 21:15-21](#)

[Revelation 21:15](#) And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. <sup>16</sup> The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> Then he measured its wall: one hundred [and] forty-four cubits, [according] to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. <sup>18</sup> The construction of its wall was [of] jasper; and the city [was] pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city [were] adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation [was] jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates [were] twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city [was] pure gold, like transparent glass.

[Revelation 21:15-21 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Gold reed*

In the context, when I read the words gold reed, I think of a yard stick. The words are translated from [χρυσοῦς](#), *chrysous*<sup>517</sup> [κάλαμος](#), *kalamos*<sup>518</sup>. The first word is pretty straight forward, simply meaning gold, made of gold or overlaid with gold.

Here are some uses of the second word:

[Matthew 11:7](#) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? [A reed](#) shaken by the wind? [Matthew 11:7 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:29](#) When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put [it] on His head, and [a reed](#) in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" [Matthew 27:29 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:19](#) Then they struck Him on the head [with a reed](#) and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. [Mark 15:19 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:36](#) Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put [it] on [a reed](#), and offered [it] to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." [Mark 15:36 NKJV](#)

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<sup>517</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5552&t=NKJV>

<sup>518</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2563&t=NKJV>

[3 John 1:13](#) I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with [pen](#) and ink; [3 John 1:13 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:1](#) Then I was given [a reed](#) like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. [Revelation 11:1 NKJV](#)

So, the word translated to reed can mean several things, such as:

- literal reed, part of a plant that usually grows near the water
- pen which is likely a writing instrument made from a literal reed
- stick sufficient to cause pain when hitting the crown of thorns on Jesus' head
- stick or pole long enough and stiff enough to put a sponge on the end and hold up to a person hanging on a cross
- reed, stick or rod which is used for measuring

I would speculate that the angel used a one stadion (see the following) long measuring reed, hence the unit of measure.

### *Square or cube shape*

The dimensions given are:

- [δώδεκα, dōdeka](#)<sup>519</sup> [χιλιάς, chiliar](#)<sup>520</sup> [στάδιον, stadion](#)<sup>521</sup> which word for word would be 12,000 stadion or furlongs. This dimension would have been known to all who were familiar with Greek athletics and races. It must have been one of the standard race lengths, just like today in international competition today we have 100, 200, 400, 800 meter races. According to Wikipedia, this was a sprint that was 180-190 meters in length<sup>522</sup>, making it close to our 200-meter race. According to Thayers Greek lexicon:

1. a measure of length comprising 600 Greek feet, or 625 Roman feet, or 125 Roman paces (Pliny, h. n. 2, 23 (21), 85), hence, one-eighth of a Roman mile (i. e. 606 3/4 English feet (about 15 miles less than one-fifth of a kilometer)); the space or distance of that length (A. V. a furlong): (Matthew 14:24 Tr text WH text); Luke 24:13; John 6:19; John 11:18; Revelation 14:20; Revelation 21:16.<sup>523</sup>

Using the 606.75 foot measurement, or about 185 meters, giving a length of 2,220 km, which is approximately 1379 (5280 foot) miles.

- 144 cubits was translated from [ἑκατόν, hekaton](#)<sup>524</sup> [τεσσαράκοντα, tessarakonta](#)<sup>525</sup> [τέσσαρες, tessares](#)<sup>526</sup> [πίχυς, pēchys](#)<sup>527</sup>. Of course, the exact length of the cubit in your familiar measurements would be required to give a meaningful length. A very typical size for a cubit is 1.5 feet or 18 inches, yielding a length of 216 feet.

<sup>519</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G1427&t=NKJV>

<sup>520</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5505&t=NKJV>

<sup>521</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4712&t=NKJV>

<sup>522</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion\\_\(running\\_race\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion_(running_race))

<sup>523</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4712&t=NKJV>

<sup>524</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G1540&t=NKJV>

<sup>525</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5062&t=NKJV>

<sup>526</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5064&t=NKJV>

<sup>527</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4083&t=NKJV>

A question still remains, whether the first measurement is the length of a side of the city or of the circumference which was a common way of measuring cities back then.<sup>528</sup> I would say though, that if the length of one side of the city was 1379 miles or one quarter of that for a circumference measurement, it's still pretty big.

A cube is the first shape that comes to my mind when I think of something whose width, length and height are equal. But is that reading more into the text that what it actually says? Some have speculated that it could be a pyramid, mountain, or that the tallest buildings or spires are what the height refers to. Numbers seem to be pretty important in the Bible and with regards to this city, the number twelve. It has already been mentioned that there are twelve gates, twelve foundation stones, and a factor of 12 in the size.

Jon Paulien wrote an interesting blog post that said most interpreters believe the shape to be a cube. He also pointed out that a cube has twelve edges, which neither a pyramid or mountain possesses. He also points out what many others have done, which is that the shape of the most holy place in the Israelite sanctuary is a cube.<sup>529</sup>

But if a cube with width, length and height equal, then what is the wall dimension of 216 feet, given in the next verse? The word translated to equal is ἴσος, *isos*<sup>530</sup>, which could also be interpreted consistent. Being a square, length and width being consistent would be identical, but has a city wall height ever been the same height as the length or width of a city? Perhaps a height of 216 feet is consistent with the length and width of 1380 miles.

Some have speculated that the city is symbolic or spiritual and hence the dimensions as well. But why would the angel say the numbers were given in human measurements?

### *Construction of the wall*

It simply states the material of the wall is jasper but follows that up with the statement that the city is "pure gold, like clear glass." I guess I would interpret this to mean that the outer walls of the city are jasper, but most everything else in the city is made from pure gold. I examined the word Jasper above, where it said in [Revelation 21:11](#), of the holy city, "Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." As I mentioned above, it is very likely that the word Jasper refers to a different gemstone that it not opaque. Diamond was mentioned as a possibility.

### *Foundations of the wall*

There were twelve foundation stones, which could possibly mean layers, but could mean something else. Each stone was identified by name, but as was the case with the Jasper, the names might not correspond to what we currently think of them as.

I just mentioned jasper above as the material the wall was made of. From a distance, the whole city was described as being made of [crystal clear jasper](#). What the distinction is between the wall made of jasper and the first foundation stone of the same material I don't know. The four verses where the word jasper was used in the Bible prior to Revelation 21 were quoted when I studied [crystal clear jasper](#) for [Revelation 21:11](#).

Sapphire was mentioned 8 times prior to this chapter. This first mention occurred 4 chapters after the Ten Commandments. It was a covenant affirming event, where Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders were to present themselves to God as the representatives of the people. I believe the priests and the elders probably went part way up the mountain, but only Moses was allowed to go further and closer. I've read the Bible multiple times before,

<sup>528</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. P846 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA846>

<sup>529</sup> <https://revelation-armageddon.com/2018/07/shape-new-jerusalem-pyramid-cube-new-earth-7/>

<sup>530</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2470&t=NKJV>

but it never really struck me before that these others besides Moses were allowed to see something of the glory of God. The verse says they saw God, but I'm sure not in the way that Moses saw Him. They probably just saw a very bright light, but Moses specifically records that the ground was sapphire, clear as the sky. Sapphire is a gem that I typically think of as blue, so it seems fitting for this description if the pavement was a light transparent blue like the sky.

[Exodus 24:10](#) and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. [Exodus 24:10 NKJV](#)

These next two verses were both describing the same thing, the breastplate of the high priest.

[Exodus 28:18](#) "the second row [shall be] a turquoise, a **sapphire**, and a diamond; [Exodus 28:18 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 39:11](#) the second row, a turquoise, a **sapphire**, and a diamond; [Exodus 39:11 NKJV](#)

There were twelve precious stones arranged in 4 rows of 3. The stones were:

- **Sardius, topaz, emerald**
- Turquoise, **sapphire**, diamond
- **Jacinth**, agate, **amethyst**
- **Beryl**, onyx, **jasper**

I find it interesting that there were 12 gemstones, but they were not all the same as the foundation stones. In the NKJV the following 8 were common: sardius, sapphire, beryl, jasper, amethyst, emerald, topaz, jacinth. So, the natural question to me was, were the other 4 actually the same stones but got translated differently between the Hebrew and Greek? Let's look at the ones that don't exactly match:

#### Old Testament

- Turquoise
- Diamond
- Agate
- Onyx

#### New Testament

- Chalcedony
- Sardonyx
- Chrysolite
- Chrysoprase

I found some relationship between agate and chalcedony, and between onyx and sardonyx, but found it difficult to correlate the rest. I think the important thing in the names of the stones may be the color rather than the composition. Regarding this Smith suggested a possible correlation with the colors of the rainbow.<sup>531</sup>

[Revelation 4:3](#) And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and [there was] a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. [Revelation 4:3 NKJV](#)

Of the unmatched 4, Chalcedony, sardonyx, chrysolite, and chrysoprase were only used this one time the in the NKJV.

#### *Pearl gates*

The word pearl was only used one other times in the NKJV, and the first likely doesn't even refer to a literal pearl.

[Matthew 13:46](#) "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. [Matthew 13:46 NKJV](#)

<sup>531</sup> Smith, Uriah. *Daniel & Revelation - The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy*. Washington D.C., Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 1907. p852 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA852>

A gate or door of pearl is an interesting thought. There is a pop culture phrase, “pearly gates,” which refers to the gate(s) that one would pass through to enter heaven. A pearl is spherical in nature, but how would a spherical gate work? If literally a single pearl sphere per gate, one way I envisioned it could work is like the turnstile doors often seen at airports. I guess this doesn’t actually have to be a sphere if God is making it. We know that pearls are formed by clam shells covering an irritant with the shiny material that coats the inside of their shell. Would God need to make a clam large enough to create a pearl big enough to be a gate or door, or could He just create a gate of the same material in whatever shape He wished.

I think that probably the gates are spherical and have a passage through them when rotated to the right position. This is exactly how ball valves work. See Wikipedia for illustrations and explanation of a ball valve.<sup>532</sup>

### *Streets of gold*

“Streets of gold,” like “pearly gates,” has also become a pop culture phrase when referring to heaven. I thought it would have been mentioned multiples times in the Bible, but only found it this once. The puzzling thing to me is how gold is transparent like glass. There is a lot of discussion on the internet about whether gold can be transparent. I believe the answer to be both yes and no. I don’t believe that there is any level of purity of gold as we know it that would make it transparent. However, in a thin enough layer as gold can be made because of its properties, light can pass through it. A thin layer of gold is used to coat the visor to protect astronauts from harmful radiation from the sun.<sup>533</sup> Obviously it is transparent enough for them to see clearly through it.

### **Conclusion**

It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about this section. First, I would say that we should not limit the possibility of things when God is involved. Secondly, I would say that sometimes it can be very difficult to get a clear picture of something when it is only described by a few words, and not to mention, written in a different language. Thirdly, there are many symbols in Revelation and sometimes I think it can be difficult to separate the literal from the symbolic. In this case, the fact that the angel said the dimensions were given in human measurements, makes it seem pretty literal.

First, regarding the shape, if a cube: whether 1,379 miles or 345 if the dimension was given as a circumference, it doesn’t seem physically possible for our planet to support something of that size and height on the surface. After all our tallest peak, Mount Everest, is 29,029 feet, which is about 5.5 miles tall. That is not to say that God could not make it possible. It is possible to interpret the dimensions of the city as square, with the height of the wall proportional. Then do not forget the 216-foot measurement of the wall. Is this to be interpreted as the height or width of the wall? Just for a little perspective, our moon is 2159 miles in diameter, so if we’re talking about a cube 1,379 miles on edge, here’s a little interesting math. The formula for computing the diagonal of a cube given the length of an edge is:

$$diagonal = edge\sqrt{3}$$

Which gives a diagonal of about 2388 miles which interestingly is close to the diameter of the moon. So, if the length of a side of the city is 1379 miles, and it is the shape of a cube, then it would be relatively close to the size of the moon. Another way to say this is that if the moon and the 1379-mile cube were superimposed, the corners of the cube would only stick out of the sphere about 100 miles.

I believe that the city is literal and not symbolic, and that it has physical dimensions, but whether it is 1379 miles on a side or circumference, I don’t know. Whether it is cube shaped with walls 216 feet thick, or with walls 216 feet

<sup>532</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball\\_valve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball_valve)

<sup>533</sup> <https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/content/good-gold-are-satellites-covered-gold-foil>



high, I don't think it really changes the message. It is a massive city, illuminated by the glory of God, in which the saved of earth who have been with Him in heaven for 1000 years, are returning to earth.

I came across a Facebook post by Bill Fagal that I really loved, maybe because I like math which you can see from what I have just written.

The Bible describes the New Jerusalem in concrete terms with specific dimensions. Have you ever thought about them? I enjoy taking biblical information and thinking through the implications. In the case of the New Jerusalem, it's almost as if we are being invited to use a little math, so that's what I did:

Here is John's description of the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21:9-10 and 15-16 NIV: "One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. . . . "The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long." (NIV footnote: 12,000 stadia is about 1,400 miles.)

So the New Jerusalem is clearly described as a cube of 1,400 linear miles per side. Have you ever tried to wrap your mind around its sheer size?

Squaring the 1,400-mile linear length of each side of the New Jerusalem reveals that each side has an area of 1.96 million square miles.

Cubing 1,400 miles gives us the volume of the New Jerusalem, which is 2.7 billion cubic miles.

For comparison, the diameter of the moon is about 2,160 miles, or 27% of the diameter of the earth. If you were to slice off the moon's curved surfaces to make it into the largest cube that can be contained within its diameter, it would be slightly smaller than the New Jerusalem.

Since so many of the dimensions and features of the New Jerusalem have to do with the number 12, let's imagine that the city is divided into 144 floors (12x12). The ceiling of each of these 144 floors would be 9.7 miles high, or more than 51,000 feet. For comparison, Mt. Everest is a little more than half that tall at 29,000 feet. 51,000 feet is roughly the average height of earth's troposphere, the portion of the atmosphere that contains the weather systems. With such high "ceilings" inside the New Jerusalem, assuming similar lighting to earth's, the sky would appear blue due to atmospheric Rayleigh scattering, much like it does on earth.

With sufficient moisture, clouds and even supercell storms could develop on each of the 144 floors, complete with lightening, thunder, and rain.

Assuming 144 floors in the New Jerusalem, that would be about 282 million square miles of habitable area. Let's compare this with the habitable area of planet earth. After you subtract the uninhabitable oceans, deserts, and icy arctic latitudes, earth has about 25 million square miles of habitable land, or less than one tenth the habitable area of the New Jerusalem.

In this scenario, how many people could live comfortably in the New Jerusalem? The population density of Holland is 970 people per square mile. At this population density, the New Jerusalem could hold about 274 billion people. However, it is estimated that the total number of people who have ever lived on planet earth is

only about 100 billion. So if every person who has ever lived were to inhabit the New Jerusalem in this scenario, it would be at only 36% capacity.

For me, this little exercise brought a new perspective to Jesus' words in John 14:2, 3, "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Oh, and by the way, the New Jerusalem isn't a building. It is described as a fully mobile spaceship. Are there any engineers or physicists out there who would like to calculate the forces required to accelerate and decelerate such a colossal vehicle for interstellar travel? [Bill Faga](#)<sup>534</sup>

By the names on the foundations and gates, God is showing that He is fulfilling His covenant with the children of Israel, but not by blood or genetics, but by belief and choice.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the city is a cube shape?
- Do you think it is the size of the moon?
- Do you think there is a significance to the actual composition of the foundation stones?

## **The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple and its light**

### [Revelation 21:22-27](#)

[Revelation 21:22](#) But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb [is] its light. <sup>24</sup> And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. <sup>25</sup> Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). <sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. [Revelation 21:22-27 NKJV](#)

### **Examining the elements**

#### *No temple*

God instructed the Israelites to build a temple so He could dwell among them.

[Exodus 25:8](#) "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. [Exodus 25:8 NKJV](#)

But we also know that many of the sanctuary services and rituals that became deeply embedded in their culture, were to teach them and the world about how God was dealing with sin. While the whole sanctuary and even the courtyard were considered holy, there were degrees of holiness for the different compartments. In fact, they have names that imply as much. I mentioned above the possible correlation between the cube shape of the most holy place and the possible cube shape of the holy city. Perhaps the holy city, the throne of God, the mercy seat, is what remains of the heavenly sanctuary after the end of sin.

<sup>534</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/bill.fagal/posts/10159110103778856>

*No need of sun or moon*

Here are a couple verses that describe the glory of God being like the sun. In fact, it seems that John in this verse is quoting the prophet Isaiah.

[Psalm 84:11](#) For the LORD God [is] a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good [thing] will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. [Psalm 84:11 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 60:19](#) "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. [Isaiah 60:19 NKJV](#)

My understanding is that the holy city, at the end of the millennium will come to earth, where we do have a sun and a moon. But the glory of God and the Lamb will so illuminate the city, that there will be no night, because the constant presence of God will be there. Apparently, the city will not be dependent on the sun for light and warmth because of the presence of God. An interesting question that popped into my head was, if the holy city and God were in one place on the earth, will the other side of the planet not be covered by the glory and illumination of God? Or will the entire planet somehow bask in the light and warmth of the glory of God 24 hours each day? Is it possible that the city could orbit the earth opposite the sun, thus providing constant light for the planet 24 hours a day?

*Nations and kings of earth bring their glory in to it*

The word nations was used throughout the Bible nearly 500 times. I mostly referred to groups of people that were united because of some common factor such as language, proximity, or ancestry. The Israelites were somewhat united though their common ancestry through Jacob, and also through the language. Generally, in order for large groups of people to coexist together and benefit and protect each other, there must be laws, and when there are laws, there must be someone to enforce them. This was generally a king in ancient times.

The word nations was used 18 times in the book of Revelation, consistent with what was described above. One interesting distinction I would make is that there are references to nations before the second coming, but also nations at the end of the millennium.

[Revelation 20:7](#) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the **nations** which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number [is] as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Revelation 20:7-10 NKJV](#)

This particular one is a reference to the nations of the lost who will assemble to try to take the holy city by force. On the other hand, the verses currently being examined are referring to nations of the saved. That seems to imply that even after we are saved and living in the new earth, there will be groupings of people. But is there really a need for kings, which are mentioned in this context as well. Based on my description of the role of a king, it doesn't seem necessary. I guess one way to look at it is that if people continue to have their different abilities, then some people are more naturally gifted at leading. After all, there is a hierarchy among the angels, or at least a leader. Lucifer, before his fall was the leader of the angels in heaven. So perhaps these nations spoken of in the new earth are groups of people who naturally congregate together for whatever reason, and their leader could be called their king.

### *Gates never close*

If gates never close, then why have them at all? I mentioned that I thought the pearl gates could function as ball valves. Clearly if there is no sin, there is no need of the typical function of city gates, which in ancient times were usually closed at night to keep bad people out. First and foremost, the Almighty God can protect His people from any threat, but secondly, there is no threat. Isaiah was quoted above for his prophecy of the new earth. The following verse could possibly have applied to ancient Israel if they had been faithful to God. It describes how God intended them to be a power for good, and how they could have been kept completely safe from attack.

[Isaiah 60:11](#) Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, That [men] may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession. [Isaiah 60:11 NKJV](#)

However, when looking at the entire chapter, clearly it will only be fulfilled when the holy city is brought down to earth and God dwells among His people.

### *Nothing will enter that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie*

The word unclean in the Bible is very much focused on the idea of ceremonial cleanness as specified in Jewish Law. I believe these laws that were given to Moses for the Israelites, were mostly to protect them and give them better health, without having to understand all the science behind it. It applied to foods that they should not eat, diseases which were contagious, and other things such as mold and mildew which could be harmful. The word was used 208 times in the NKJV, mostly in this context. We know the Israelite sanctuary had a lot of symbolism representing what happened in heaven, and I think perhaps the following verse applies in this case.

[2 Chronicles 23:19](#) And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one [who was] in any way unclean should enter. [2 Chronicles 23:19 NKJV](#)

This verse applied to ceremonial uncleanness but could also be seen as symbolic of the eventual absence of any thing that is unclean in the new earth.

### *Lamb's book of life*

The Lamb's [book of life](#) was examined for the [42 month prophecy](#), although it was mentioned once before that in [Revelation 3:5](#). It was mentioned 5 times in Revelation prior to the verse in [21:27](#) being examined now. Quite simply, I believe the Lamb's book of life contains the names of every person who will be saved.

### **Conclusion**

I don't think there are major conclusions to be draw here, but in summary, the Temple or Sanctuary that served the purpose of taking care of sin is no longer needed on the new earth. All that remains of the temple is God, who was the focal point of the temple, and the reason we could be saved from sin. Still talking about this massive city, there is no need for sun and moon because God and the Lamb will be present, and their glory illuminate the entire city. Having said that the verse said the city has no need of the sun, but it doesn't say the earth doesn't need the sun anymore. With God's presence, and the absence of sin, the gates of the city never need to be closed. The only people around are those who are saved because their names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

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What do you believe?

- Clearly the city has no need of the sun because God illumines the city, but do you think God illumines the whole earth?

- Do you think there is any possibility that the earth will orbit around the holy city instead of the sun?
- Why do you think there are nations and kings in the new earth?

## Tree of life

### [Revelation 22:1-11](#)

[Revelation 22:1](#) And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. <sup>2</sup> In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, [was] the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each [tree] yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. <sup>4</sup> They shall see His face, and His name [shall be] on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

<sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, "These words [are] faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

<sup>7</sup> "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed [is] he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

<sup>8</sup> Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that]. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." <sup>10</sup> And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. <sup>11</sup> "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

[Revelation 22:1-11 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *River of water of life*

Throughout earth's history, there have been legends and stories about people searching for sources of immortality. Water has probably been one of the primary mediums in these legends for imparting immortality. I touched on this subject under the examination of the [fountain of the water of life](#).

Human life could not exist without water, so, in a way it could be said to be a source of life. While there are rivers mentioned in Eden, they were not said to bring eternal life.

[Genesis 2:10](#) Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.

[Genesis 2:10-14 NKJV](#)

Without rain in the Garden of Eden, how integral were the rivers mentioned above? What was the source of the water?

There is another place in the Bible that water is mentioned in connection with everlasting life.

[John 4:14](#) "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14 NKJV](#)

But in this case, I do not believe Jesus is talking about literal water or a river or fountain in the new earth. I believe the water that He shall give is symbolic of the truth of the message of salvation.

### *Tree of life*

Here is an interesting picture that leaves a little to the imagination. The tree of life is described as being on either side of the river. But what does that mean? It is spoken of as a singular tree. I think most have pictured this as a tree with two trunks that join over the river into a single tree. But the description doesn't end there. It bears a different fruit each month, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. Twelve months seems to imply that we will still have the moon for marking months. It doesn't say anything about eating the fruit of the tree, but it does say the leaves are for healing. Why would anyone need healing, if sickness and death are done away with? I think that question takes me back to the tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden before the fall, where it does talk about eating the fruit.

[Genesis 3:22](#) Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- [Genesis 3:22 NKJV](#)

Based on my reading of the following verse, I assume it had a part to play in man's pre-sin immortality and would have done the same after sin if he had been allowed to keep eating from it. The tree of life is also mentioned multiple time in Revelation. What is not clear is whether one exists in heaven for the angels, or whether the tree described by John is only on the new earth.

[Revelation 2:7](#) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." ' [Revelation 2:7 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:2](#) In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, [was] the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each [tree] yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations. [Revelation 22:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:14](#) Blessed [are] those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. [Revelation 22:14 NKJV](#)

I feel there is enough similarity between angels and human beings, that if man needed the tree to perpetuate everlasting life, I believe the angels would as well.

### *No more night, God will illumine*

Assuming we still have the sun, since we still have the moon, then there would be a side of the earth not facing the sun at all times. But God is said to be so bright He can replace the light of the sun. But if such is the case, how would God illuminate the other side of the earth from where He is? Perhaps my assumption is wrong and the statement that there is no night there refers to the city. I believe there is still the concept of days because Isaiah says that we will still worship on the Sabbath.

[Isaiah 66:22](#) "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. <sup>23</sup> And it shall come to pass [That] from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. [Isaiah 66:22-23 NKJV](#)

The idea of no night, is described with what I consider another view of this same scene, recorded at the end of chapter 21.

[Revelation 21:22](#) But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb [is] its light. <sup>24</sup> And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. <sup>25</sup> Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). <sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. [Revelation 21:22-27 NKJV](#)

### *They will reign forever and ever*

Who will reign forever and ever? The throne of God and the Lamb are just mentioned, and the saved are called His servants, so is this saying God and the Lamb will reign forever and ever? Here are a few other verses from the NKJV that had the word's reign and forever.

[Exodus 15:18](#) "The LORD shall reign forever and ever." [Exodus 15:18 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:10](#) The LORD shall reign forever--Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD! [Psalm 146:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 11:15](#) Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become [the kingdoms] of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" [Revelation 11:15 NKJV](#)

[Micah 4:7](#) I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever. [Micah 4:7 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:33](#) "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." [Luke 1:33 NKJV](#)

There was one verse that implied that people would reign with God, but I believe this scene was in heaven during the millennium, and not on the new earth. Furthermore, it doesn't say they will reign forever, but for a thousand years.

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NKJV](#)

I think many have assumed that this verse in chapter 22 means that people will reign, but is that a correct interpretation? After all, just a couple verses back, people were referred to as God's servants, who will serve Him.

### *Words are faithful and true*

The words spoken of here are undoubtedly the words just written and possibly including all the words of the book. The words faithful and true occurred together in 6 other verses in the NKJV.

[Jeremiah 42:5](#) So they said to Jeremiah, "Let the LORD be a **true** and **faithful** witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. [Jeremiah 42:5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:11](#) "Therefore if you have not been **faithful** in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the **true** [riches]? [Luke 16:11 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 5:12](#) By Silvanus, our **faithful** brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the **true** grace of God in which you stand. [1 Peter 5:12 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 3:14](#) "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the **Faithful** and **True** Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: [Revelation 3:14 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:11](#) Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him [was] called **Faithful** and **True**, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. [Revelation 19:11 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:5](#) Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are **true** and **faithful**." [Revelation 21:5 NKJV](#)

The verses in Luke and Peter are not relevant to this discussion. Revelation 3 and 21 say essentially the same thing as the verse currently being examined. And Jeremiah and Revelation 19 call God faithful and true.

### *Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book*

The following verse from the beginning of Revelation seems very applicable and appears to include all the future words of the whole book. It seems fitting that at the beginning and ending of the book is a promise of blessing to those who read and heed the contents of the book.

[Revelation 1:3](#) Blessed [is] he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time [is] near. [Revelation 1:3 NKJV](#)

### *John saw and wrote the things in the book*

In the first few verses of the book of Revelation, John identified himself as the writer.

[Revelation 1:1](#) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified [it] by His angel to His servant **John**,<sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.<sup>3</sup> Blessed [is] he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time [is] near.

<sup>4</sup> **John**, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, [Revelation 1:1-4 NKJV](#)

Again, as with the blessing, at the beginning and the end of the book, John essentially signs his name as the author of the book.

### *The angel refused worship because he is a fellow servant*

As I read this I wondered, how many other times angels refused worship from human beings, but the following was the only other I could find.

[Revelation 19:10](#) And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that]! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." [Revelation 19:10 NKJV](#)

### *Do not seal the words of the prophesy of this book*

Where else in the Bible does it talk about sealing or not sealing a book.

[Daniel 8:26](#) "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For [it refers] to many days [in the future]." [Daniel 8:26 NKJV](#)



[Daniel 12:4](#) "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." [Daniel 12:4 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 12:9](#) And he said, "Go [your way], Daniel, for the words [are] closed up and sealed till the time of the end." [Daniel 12:9 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 12:27](#) "Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees [is] for many days [from now], and he prophesies of times far off.' [Ezekiel 12:27 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 6:3](#) When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." [Revelation 6:3 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 10:4](#) Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them." [Revelation 10:4 NKJV](#)

If Revelation was written 2000 years ago, what did the angel mean by saying not to seal it up and that the time was at hand?

## Conclusion

In these first verses from the last chapter of Revelation, we see more details about the new Jerusalem and the new earth. We see that one of the elements from the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life, is here. But we are told more about it, such as the different fruit each month, and that the leaves have healing properties. It is my belief that these biological bodies that God made for us, even before sin, required something from the Tree of Life in order to exist forever. Whatever this was I believe would have had the same effect after sin, hence God prevented Adam and Eve from eating from the tree.

[Genesis 3:22](#) Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- [Genesis 3:22 NKJV](#)

As for the healing of the nations, if we continue to have these biological bodies, and the Tree of Life is needed to perpetuate eternal life, it could be possible that our physical bodies could experience injury that could be healed by the leaves of this tree.

In Eden, there was a river that flowed out of the center of the garden, but it was not said to give eternal life.

[Genesis 2:10](#) Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. [Genesis 2:10-14 NKJV](#)

In this case, the river flows out from the throne of God, and is said to be water of life.

We are told again that there will be no more night, because the glory of God will be light like the sun. And God will be with us and reign forever.

Then an angel specifically assured John of the truth of the things he was seeing and writing, and that those who read and heed the words of the book would be blessed.

I think it is worth mentioning, that in the Hebrew style of writing, we are seeing some mirrored elements from the beginning of the first book of the Bible.

Finally, why was John told not to seal up the words of the prophecy of this book? Was that referring to the entire book, or just this end part? I believe the sealing of portions of the book of Daniel meant that those prophecies would not be understood until much later. Conversely does that mean that Revelation was meant to be understood from its earliest days?

What do you believe?

- Do you think the river of life has physical healing or life giving properties like the Tree of Life?
- What type of healing do you envision the leaves of the Tree of Life providing?
- Do you think that the human beings that are saved will reign over anything?

## Testimony of Jesus to the Church

### [Revelation 22:12-17](#)

[Revelation 22:12](#) "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to give to every one according to his work. <sup>13</sup> "I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the] Beginning and [the] End, the First and the Last." <sup>14</sup> Blessed [are] those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> But outside [are] dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. <sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." <sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. [Revelation 22:12-17 NKJV](#)

### Examining the elements

#### *Coming quickly*

What did Jesus mean by coming quickly? By the Biblical standard of the [age of the world](#), it has been approximately 1/3 the history of the world since John wrote this, which to doesn't seem to qualify as quickly. The word quickly is translated from [ταχύ, tachy](#)<sup>535</sup>, which is defined by Strong as: takh-oo'; neuter singular of G5036 (as adverb); shortly, i.e. without delay, soon, or (by surprise) suddenly, or (by implication, of ease) readily:—lightly, quickly.<sup>536</sup> So, it seems that word also could have been interpreted by surprise or suddenly.

I don't think the following is what Jesus meant, but it's worth mentioning that time is different for God.

[Psalm 90:4](#) For a thousand years in Your sight [Are] like yesterday when it is past, And [like] a watch in the night.

[Psalm 90:4 NKJV](#)

[2 Peter 3:8](#) But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day [is] as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. [2 Peter 3:8 NKJV](#)

I don't believe that God is constrained to the passage of time as we are. If we have free will and God knows the beginning and the end of everything, then one possible explanation is that He can travel backward and forward through time.

<sup>535</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5035&t=NKJV>

<sup>536</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5035&t=NKJV>

### *Reward everyone according to his work*

Where else does the Bible talk about rewards? The word was used 55 times in the NKJV.

[Ruth 2:12](#) "The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." [Ruth 2:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 24:19](#) "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day." [1 Samuel 24:19 NKJV](#)

[Job 34:11](#) For He repays man [according to] his work, And makes man to find a reward according to [his] way. [Job 34:11 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 58:11](#) So that men will say, "Surely [there is] a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth." [Psalm 58:11 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 4:9](#) And it shall be: like people, like priest. So I will punish them for their ways, And reward them for their deeds. [Hosea 4:9 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:4](#) "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." [Matthew 6:4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:42](#) "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold [water] in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward." [Matthew 10:42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:27](#) "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." [Matthew 16:27 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:35](#) "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil." [Luke 6:35 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 3:8](#) Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. [1 Corinthians 3:8 NKJV](#)

The idea of being rewarded by God for good deeds is a recurring theme in the Bible. That does not necessarily mean that we earn eternal life by our good deeds. I think that good deeds are a natural product of living a Godly life.

### *Alpha and Omega*

This was mentioned back in [Revelation 21:6](#), along with the Beginning and the End. What is added here is the First and the Last. I don't think anything is really added by the First and Last, so refer to my comments on the [Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End](#) from there.

### *Blessed are those who do His commandments*

Is this related to being rewarded according to our works? The words do and commandments occurred in 35 verses in the NKJV, but most of them were not in the same sense as our verse being examined. The words keep and commandments were used in 59 verses in the NKJV, 22 of which were from Deuteronomy. That is quite a few times as far as I'm concerned. Let's look at some of them.

[Exodus 15:26](#) and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His **commandments** and **keep all His statutes**, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I [am] the LORD who heals you." [Exodus 15:26 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 20:6](#) but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and **keep My commandments**. [Exodus 20:6 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 22:31](#) "Therefore you shall **keep My commandments**, and perform them: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 22:31 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 26:3](#) 'If you walk in My statutes and **keep My commandments**, and perform them, [Leviticus 26:3 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 4:2](#) "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may **keep the commandments** of the LORD your God which I command you. [Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 5:29](#) 'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always **keep all My commandments**, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! [Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 12:13](#) Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and **keep His commandments**, For this is man's all. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil. [Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 9:4](#) And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who **keep His commandments**, [Daniel 9:4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:17](#) So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. But if you want to enter into life, **keep the commandments**." [Matthew 19:17 NKJV](#)

[John 14:15](#) "If you love Me, **keep My commandments**. [John 14:15 NKJV](#)

[1 John 2:3](#) Now by this we know that we know Him, if we **keep His commandments**. <sup>4</sup> He who says, "I know Him," and does not **keep His commandments**, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. [1 John 2:3-4 NKJV](#)

[1 John 5:2](#) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and **keep His commandments**. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we **keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome. [1 John 5:2-3 NKJV](#)

In the Old Testament, it seems that God often tried to motivate the Israelites to keep His commandments by promising something in return. In the New Testament I find it interesting that there is more of a sense that if you love Him you will Keep His Commandments. In any case, it is abundantly clear to me that God wants us to keep His Commandments.

### *Outside are dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters and liars*

This is like the verse at the end of the last section of the outline that lists some of the type of people who will find themselves on the outside looking in. The two lists are not the same, although there is a lot of overlap.

[Revelation 21:8](#) "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:8 NKJV](#)

I'm not sure why these sins are specifically mentioned. The two lists and the Ten Commandments side by side look like this:

<a href="#">Revelation 21:8</a>	<a href="#">Revelation 22:15</a>	10 Commandments [ <a href="#">Exodus 20</a> ]
Cowardly		
Unbelieving		
Abominable		1 <sup>st</sup> : No other Gods before Me
Murderers	Murderers	6 <sup>th</sup> : Do not murder
Sexually immoral	Sexually immoral	7 <sup>th</sup> : Do not commit adultery
Sorcerers	Sorcerers	
Idolaters	Idolaters	2 <sup>nd</sup> : Do not bow down to images
Liars	Liars	9 <sup>th</sup> : Do not bear false witness
	Dogs	

I was curious about the word dog, which is translated from [κύων, kyōn](#)<sup>537</sup>, which can be a metaphor for a man of impure mind, an impudent man.<sup>538</sup>

### *I am the root and offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star*

Here are a few verses that speak of Jesus being a descendant of David, using plant symbolism.

[Revelation 5:5](#) But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the **Root** of **David**, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." [Revelation 5:5 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 11:1](#) There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a **Branch** shall grow out of his **roots**. [Isaiah 11:1 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 6:12](#) "Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name [is] the BRANCH! From His place He shall **branch out**, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; [Zechariah 6:12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 22:42](#) saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "[**The Son**] of **David**." <sup>43</sup> He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: <sup>44</sup> 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" ' ? <sup>45</sup> "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" [Matthew 22:42-45 NKJV](#)

[Romans 1:3](#) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the **seed of David** according to the flesh, [Romans 1:3 NKJV](#)

Here are the two other instances in the Bible that mention the morning star.

[2 Peter 1:19](#) And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the **morning star** rises in your hearts; [2 Peter 1:19 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:28](#) "and I will give him the **morning star**. [Revelation 2:28 NKJV](#)

Is there any question that this is Jesus?

<sup>537</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2965&t=NKJV>

<sup>538</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2965&t=NKJV>

### *Let him who thirsts say come*

The word "thirsts" was used in 5 other verses in the NKJV.

[Psalm 42:2](#) My soul **thirsts** for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? [Psalm 42:2 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 63:1](#) A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O God, You [are] my God; Early will I seek You; My soul **thirsts** for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. [Psalm 63:1 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 55:1](#) "Ho! Everyone who **thirsts**, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. [Isaiah 55:1 NKJV](#)

[John 7:37](#) On the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone **thirsts**, let him come to Me and drink. [John 7:37 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:6](#) And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who **thirsts**. [Revelation 21:6 NKJV](#)

The first 4 are all about our soul thirsting for God. Many people without God seem to experience meaninglessness and a longing for something. I believe the saving knowledge of God is likened to quenching a thirst. The verse in Revelation is from the section in chapter 21 that so closely mirrors this one.

One question I had was why are those who thirst, the ones doing the calling?

### *Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely*

I looked at [water of life](#) back in a previous section on the new heaven and earth. The water of life (eternal life) is not for sale. You are not born into it, or earn it, or deserve it, it is a free gift. Water of life was used two times before.

[Revelation 21:6](#) And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. [Revelation 21:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:1](#) And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. [Revelation 22:1 NKJV](#)

According to the first, verse of this chapter, the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God in the new earth. So, one would have to be there in order to partake freely. Does this mean that among those who are saved, whoever desires can take freely? Or does it mean that whoever desires, can be there and hence take freely?

One more verse which I think should not be overlooked is from the conversation Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well.

[John 4:14](#) "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14 NKJV](#)

### **Conclusion**

This section has been very much a repeat of what I wrote for [Revelation 21:1-8](#) which I entitled, [All things made new](#). Perhaps the most profound new thought to me in this passage was that Jesus didn't necessarily mean He was coming quickly, but could have meant, suddenly or by surprise. Not sure why specific sins were mentioned for those on the outside. It said before that those who do His commandments will be on the inside, meaning everyone else should be on the outside.

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What do you believe?

- What do you think is meant by coming quickly?
- Why do you think these specific sins are called out?
- What do you think it meant that him who thirsts calls come?

## A warning

### [Revelation 22:18-21](#)

[Revelation 22:18](#) For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;<sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book.<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!<sup>21</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen. [Revelation 22:18-21 NKJV](#)

## Examining the elements

### *Don't add to the words of prophecy in this book*

My first question is whether this refers to the book of Revelation, or the entire Bible. I think people have often applied it to the whole Bible. Let's see if we can find anything resembling this statement elsewhere in the Bible.

[Deuteronomy 4:2](#) "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. [Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 12:32](#) "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. [Deuteronomy 12:32 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 30:6](#) Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar. [Proverbs 30:6 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:6](#) 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. <sup>7</sup> "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: <sup>8</sup> 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with [their] lips, But their heart is far from Me. <sup>9</sup> And in vain they worship Me, Teaching [as] doctrines the commandments of men.' " [Matthew 15:6-9 NKJV](#)

I think that's pretty clear, but since the Bible as we know it didn't exist at that time, perhaps we shouldn't presume too much. These verses quoted above were referring to the Law given to the Israelites through Moses. I think a case could be made that they were primarily applicable to the actual Ten Commandments, but I think it could go further. Clearly after 1500 years of history, the traditions surrounding the Law of God had multiplied to the point that these warnings applied. I think in the 2000 plus years since these words of Jesus were spoken, the Christian Church has done the same thing that the Jews did, by establishing tradition and holding it on equal status with the direct commands of God.

My second question is, am I by writing a commentary on the book of Revelation adding to the words of the prophecy? If someone writes a book explaining or interpreting Revelation, are they adding to the words of the prophecy? I know there was a time in the dark ages when people's access to the Bible was severely restricted and the clergy would tell the common people what was expected of them. In that case specifically, the clergy were adding or taking away a lot of

words from the Bible. I think that commenting on the Bible is ok as long as you clarify that your words do not carry equal weight with the words directly from the Bible.

The penalty for doing, I believe is written in a poetic fashion, because adding words, results in something bad being added. In this case, if you add words to the Bible, or at least to the book of Revelation, the plagues mentioned in the book will be added to you.

### *Don't take away the words of prophecy in this book*

Taking away words from the Bible can have a very similar effect to adding, and I believe when Jews or Christians depend solely on others for the teaching of the Word of God, there is a possibility that words will be left out. Let's see what the rest of the Bible says about this.

[Deuteronomy 12:32](#) "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

[Deuteronomy 12:32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:52](#) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." [Luke 11:52 NKJV](#)

I think there is no problem with picking certain passages or books of the Bible to expound on and teach about, as long as the recipients have free access to all the words of the entire Bible.

Again, the penalty for doing, I believe is written in a poetic fashion, because taking away words, results in something good being taken away. The end result is the same as the penalty of adding, but taking away from the words of the Bible, or at least the book of Revelation, results in your name being taken away from the Book of Life. We have already read that only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be saved.

### *Surely I am coming quickly*

I commented on this [coming quickly](#) already. I don't think that there is really anything else I can add.

### **Conclusion**

Don't add or take away words from Revelation, or the Law God given through Moses, or just to be safe the entire Bible as we know it today. If we consider it to be God's word to us, who are we to add or take away from it.

Finally, regarding the last statement about coming quickly, perhaps the emphasis should be on surely.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the warning about adding or taking away was meant to apply to the whole Bible or just the book John was writing at the time?
- Do you think it is worse to add or take away from the scriptures?
- What are your thoughts on the coming quickly?

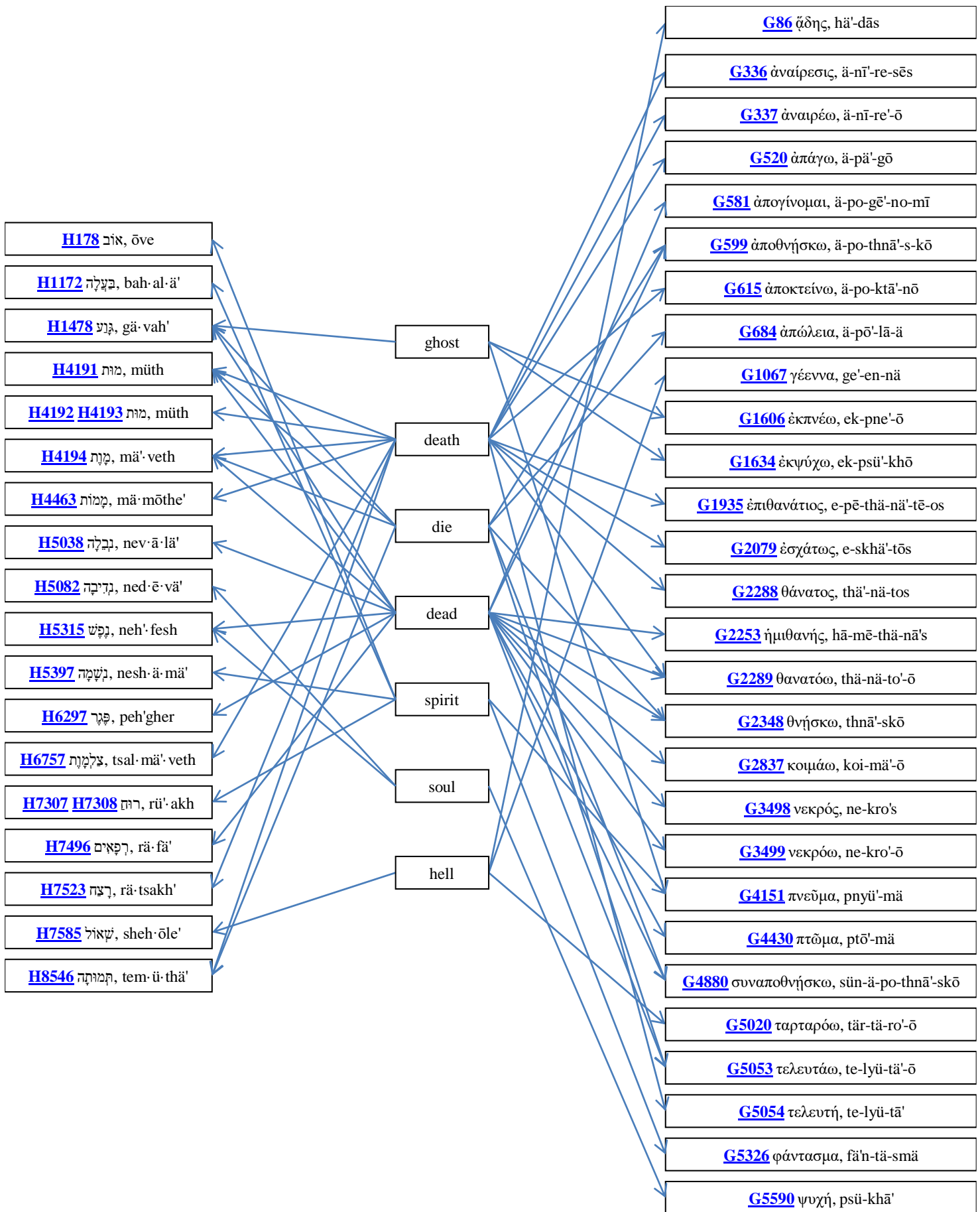


# Appendix A – Death word search

Let's take a look at what God tells us through the Bible about souls, spirits, ghosts, death, and hell. The first thing we will look at is the results on the LexiConc tab after searching for these words using <http://blueletterbible.org>. This will give us the Hebrew and Greek words that were translated to the word being searched. If you click on the H\* or G\* links, they will take you to a web page showing a dictionary style definition as well as all the verses in the KJV that contained that word.

The figure on the next page diagrams the relationship between our English translation and the original Hebrew and Greek words. Following that are tables showing the results of the word searches. I examined each verse referenced in the search to see what the Bible had to say about what happens after death. As might be expected, most of them make no such statements, but the ones that do have been listed with some commentary. It was my goal to not look for one or two key texts on which to base my belief, but to see what the Bible as a whole had to say about the subject. Is there a consistent message? Certainly there are some texts that are difficult to reconcile with the prevailing message conveyed in the Bible. These texts are listed in this study, and I believe that they can be understood in a consistent manner within the context of the entire Bible.

I will not claim this to be an exhaustive study because I did not read the larger context for every single verse. Many times upon just reading the verse on its own, I made the call that it didn't have anything to tell us about life after death, and moved on to the next one.



Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">soul</a> "			
<a href="#">H5082</a>	נְדִיבָה	nediybah	<b>soul</b>
<a href="#">H5315</a>	נֶפֶשׁ	nephesh	<b>soul</b> , life, person, mind, heart, creature, body, himself, yourselves, dead, will, desire, man, themselves, any, appetite, misc

[H5082](#) is only used once and is a reference by Job to people terrorizing his soul.

[H5315](#) is used very broadly and with many different meanings, from a living creature, to soul of man. The following verses are the only ones I found that possibly refer to the soul after death, and they seem to be in reference to the resurrection.

[Psalm 16:10](#) For You will not leave my soul [5315](#) in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. [Psalm 16:10 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 119:25](#) DALETH. My soul [5315](#) clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. [Psalm 119:25 NKJV](#)

Not allowing the body to undergo decay in the first one is a reference to the resurrection of Jesus, and if the body did not undergo decay, then it was the body and soul that came up from the tomb, not just the soul.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">soul</a> "			
<a href="#">G5590</a>	ψυχή	psychē	<b>soul</b> , life, mind, heart, heartily, not tr

In the New Testament, [G5590](#) is used very similarly to [H5315](#) in that it refers to both soul and breath of life including animals. The uses differ in that the breath of life is what keeps the body alive and applies to all creatures. The soul has to do with emotions, desires, choices, imagination, and personality which are considered human traits. This is what makes us different from the animals.

[Luke 9:24](#) "For whoever desires to save his life [5590](#) will lose it, but whoever loses his life [5590](#) for My sake will save it. [Luke 9:24 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:33](#) "Whoever seeks to save his life [5590](#) will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. [Luke 17:33 NKJV](#)

[John 10:17](#) "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life [5590](#) that I may take it again. [John 10:17 NKJV](#)

[John 12:25](#) "He who loves his life [5590](#) will lose it, and he who hates his life [5590](#) in this world will keep it for eternal life. [John 12:25 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:27](#) For You will not leave my soul [5590](#) in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. [Acts 2:27 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:9](#) receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of [your] souls [5590](#). [1 Peter 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:4](#) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then [I saw] the souls [5590](#) of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received [his] mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4 NKJV](#)

These verses I found that had any reference to the soul after death, don't really give us much details except for the last one in Revelation. That verse speaks of the righteous who are resurrected at His second coming going to reign with Him a thousand years. The one in Acts, is a quote of the Old Testament [Psalm 16:10](#).

Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">spirit</a> "			
<a href="#">H178</a>	אֹב	'owb	familiar <b>spirit(s)</b> , bottles
<a href="#">H1172</a>	בַּעַלָּה	ba`alah	mistress, hath (a familiar <b>spirit</b> )
<a href="#">H5397</a>	נְשָׁמָה	neshamah	breath, blast, <b>spirit</b> , inspiration, souls
<a href="#">H7307</a>	רוּחַ	ruwach	<b>Spirit</b> or <b>spirit</b> , wind, breath, side, mind, blast, vain, air, anger, cool, courage, misc
<a href="#">H7308</a>	רוּחַ (Aramaic)	ruwach	<b>spirit</b> , wind, mind

All the references to [H178](#) are about "familiar spirits", except for the one in Job which applied to the [wine] bottle meaning. The term refers to people who supposedly are able to talk to spirits of the dead. These references do not specifically support or deny that spirits of the dead exist, but they clearly say that these people should be avoided.

[H1172](#) essentially carries the same meaning as H178 except without the bottle meaning.

[H5397](#) in Genesis refers to the breath of God that gave life to Adam. Then there are the references to destruction of those that breathed. Job uses the word in reference to the breath of God as a destroying force, as life giving, and as an inspiration. The remaining references are mostly the same as the ones mentioned except for one in Proverbs that refers to the spirit of a man, and one in Isaiah that refers to the souls (or living beings) God made. None of the references mentioned anything about life after death.

[H7307](#) is translated spirit in most cases with the meaning of inspiration or motivation, as in the Spirit of God came upon someone motivating or making it possible for them to do something. Also a spirit or wisdom or jealousy might be said to be a reason for someone doing something. The following are the only verses I found that seemed to say anything about after death.

[Ecclesiastes 3:19](#) For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath<sup>7307</sup>; man has no advantage over animals, for all [is] vanity.<sup>20</sup> All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.<sup>21</sup> Who knows the spirit<sup>7307</sup> of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit<sup>7307</sup> of the animal, which goes down to the earth? [Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 NKJV](#)

In the first one, Solomon says we go back to the dust just like animals, then he seems to be asking, who can even know or prove what happens to the breath or spirit when we die.

[Ecclesiastes 12:7](#) Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit<sup>7307</sup> will return to God who gave it.

[Ecclesiastes 12:7 NKJV](#)

In the second one, Solomon claims that the spirit returns to God who gave it. This of course could be taken to mean different things. While it doesn't seem to indicate a continuing consciousness, I believe it does indicate a preservation of that unique consciousness for a future resurrection.

**H7308** is used exclusively in Daniel and mostly refers to the spirit of the holy gods being in him because of his wisdom. It is not used in any after death context.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">spirit</a> "			
<a href="#">G4151</a>	πνεῦμα	pneuma	<b>Spirit</b> , Holy Ghost, <b>Spirit</b> (of God), <b>Spirit</b> (of the Lord), (My) <b>Spirit</b> , <b>Spirit</b> (of truth), <b>Spirit</b> (of Christ), human ( <b>spirit</b> ), (evil) <b>spirit</b> , <b>spirit</b> (general), <b>spirit</b> , (Jesus' own) <b>spirit</b> , (Jesus' own) ghost
<a href="#">G5326</a>	φάντασμα	phantasma	<b>spirit</b>

**G4151** is by far mostly used in reference to the Holy Spirit, but it is also used many times to refer to evil spirits. So the common theme for this word is the spirit world of which both God and Satan are part. Now there were a few verses listed below that deserve some individual attention.

[Luke 1:17](#) "He will also go before Him in the spirit<sup>4151</sup> and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." [Luke 1:17 NKJV](#)

Some people might try to use this verse to say that Elijah was re-incarnated in John the Baptist. But Elijah was known to have gone to heaven without dying. So if Elijah was alive in heaven, then his spirit would not have been re-incarnated in someone else, so either John was Elijah or he was not. Jesus' statement: "And if you are willing to accept *it*, John himself is Elijah who was to come. [Matthew 11:14](#), leads me to believe that John was figuratively and not literally Elijah if it depended on people's belief.

[Luke 8:55](#) Then her spirit<sup>4151</sup> returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given [something] to eat. [Luke 8:55 NKJV](#)

This verse is about Jesus bringing a little girl back to life. As I previously discussed, at death, the spirit returns to God. I have still not come across any mention of consciousness during this time when the spirit is separated from the body. In fact in [verse 52](#), Jesus said she was sleeping. If the little girl had gone to heaven when she died, why would Jesus bring her back to this sinful world?

[Luke 23:46](#) And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit<sup>4151</sup>.' " Having said this, He breathed His last. [Luke 23:46 NKJV](#)

[John 19:30](#) So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit<sup>4151</sup>. [John 19:30 NKJV](#)

[Acts 7:59](#) And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on [God] and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit<sup>4151</sup>." [Acts 7:59 NKJV](#)

In support of Solomon's statement in [Ecclesiastes 12:7](#), when Stephen and Jesus knew they were about to die, they placed their spirits into the Father's keeping.

[Luke 24:37](#) But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit<sup>4151</sup>. [Luke 24:37 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:39](#) "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit<sup>4151</sup> does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." [Luke 24:39 NKJV](#)

The disciples recognized Jesus but since they knew He had been dead, they wondered if they were seeing a spirit or if Jesus was really there in front of them. If they believed in disembodied spirits, there would have been no need for fear even if Jesus were in spirit form, so perhaps they feared that it was an evil spirit masquerading as Jesus. Jesus assures them by eating and by letting them touch Him.

[Acts 16:7](#) After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit<sup>4151</sup> did not permit them. [Acts 16:7 NKJV](#)

Since we already had evidence that Jesus was resurrected bodily, this could possibly mean He appeared to them in a dream or vision.

[Romans 8:9](#) But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit<sup>4151</sup>, if indeed the Spirit<sup>4151</sup> of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit<sup>4151</sup> of Christ, he is not His. [Romans 8:9 NKJV](#)

In this one, the Spirit of Christ must be a reference to behaving like Him, even as John the Baptist had the spirit and power of Elijah.

[1 Corinthians 5:5](#) deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit<sup>4151</sup> may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. [1 Corinthians 5:5 NKJV](#)

I don't really get the first part about delivering to Satan, but the saving of his spirit would not come until the day of the Lord Jesus which I believe is a reference to the resurrection of the righteous as the time of the second coming of Jesus.

[Hebrews 12:23](#) to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits<sup>4151</sup> of just men made perfect, [Hebrews 12:23 NKJV](#)

This one was a little difficult for me to understand where Paul was coming from. First, it seems good to understand that the target audience was the Jews. Next thing I noticed was that the preceding chapter is the famous chapter on heroes of faith that ended by saying that these did not receive the promise. I believe this is a reference to the coming of the Messiah which would hardly be worth mentioning if they were in heaven with Jesus. Now let's try to understand the context or the time referred to in this chapter and verse. The chapter starts out by saying that we should persist in running the race, which is the Christian life, with endurance. Think of the pain as discipline which we didn't like when we were young, but was for our own good nonetheless. [Verses 18-21](#) reminded them of what probably was ancient Israel's closest experience to coming into the presence of God, which was the speaking of the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai. But Paul says this is better, that we have come to the very city of God in heaven. But the question is when? Is it literal or symbolic? I don't think he is talking about when we have all been taken to heaven because he is warning us not to ignore God's call to us. But when are we in the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with the angels? Maybe it all has to do with the fact that they had seen Jesus face to face and that with His death, there was no longer the need for the earthly Sanctuary service with its animal sacrifices. They no longer had this symbolic service but they could directly approach God through Jesus, our mediator in heaven. So finally, what about these spirits made perfect in heaven. Well, remember that Jesus and Stephen both committed their spirits to God when they died. This did not mean their spirits were conscious in heaven, but that they were preserved to be reunited with their bodies at the resurrection. But once they had died, a final judgment could be made, declaring them perfect or lost. Lastly, and this may seem like I'm avoiding a conclusion, but this verse really doesn't tell us whether these spirits are conscious or not, so I think it is left for us to determine this from what the rest of the Bible tells us about the subject.

[1 Peter 3:18](#) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit<sup>4151</sup>, [1 Peter 3:18 NKJV](#)

This one is talking about Jesus who died on the cross but was resurrected. I think Peter is saying that Jesus came back to life as God.

Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">ghost</a> "			
<a href="#">H1478</a>	גָּוַעַ	gava`	die, give up the <b>ghost</b> , dead, perish, dead

For [H1478](#), all 24 verses in the NKJV refer to death and make no mention of consciousness after it.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">ghost</a> "			
<a href="#">G1606</a>	ἐκπνέω	ekpneō	give up the <b>ghost</b>
<a href="#">G1634</a>	ἐκψύχω	ekpsychō	give up the <b>ghost</b> , yield up the <b>ghost</b>
<a href="#">G4151</a>	πνεῦμα	pneuma	Spirit, Holy <b>Ghost</b> , Spirit (of God), Spirit (of the Lord), (My) Spirit, Spirit (of truth), Spirit (of Christ), human (spirit), (evil) spirit, spirit (general), spirit, (Jesus' own) spirit, (Jesus' own) <b>ghost</b>

For [G1606](#), all three verses in the NKJV are about Jesus taking His last breath.

For [G1634](#), all three verses are in the book of Acts, the first two being about Ananias and Sapphira dying, and the last about King Herod's death.

[G4151](#) was covered already in conjunction with the word "spirit."

Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">dead</a> "			
<a href="#">H1478</a>	גָּוַעַ	gava`	die, give up the ghost, <b>dead</b> , perish, <b>dead</b>
<a href="#">H4191</a>	מוּתַ	muwth	die, <b>dead</b> , slay, death, surely, kill, <b>dead</b> man, <b>dead</b> body, in no wise, misc
<a href="#">H4194</a>	מָוַתַ	maveth	death, die, <b>dead</b> , deadly, slay
<a href="#">H5038</a>	נִבְלָהַ	nebelah	carcase, <b>dead</b> body, dieth of itself, <b>dead</b> of itself, died, body
<a href="#">H5315</a>	נֶפֶשַׁ	nephesh	soul, life, person, mind, heart, creature, body, himself, yourselves, <b>dead</b> , will, desire, man, themselves, any, appetite, misc
<a href="#">H6297</a>	פֶּגֶרַ	peger	carcase, <b>dead</b> body, corpse
<a href="#">H7496</a>	רָפָאִיםַ	rapha'	<b>dead</b> , deceased

[H1478](#) was covered already in under the word "ghost."

[H4191](#) had 835 occurrences in 694 verses in the KJV. Not surprisingly, most all references to the word were about dying and death. The following were the only ones that I found that talked about what happens after death.

[Job 14:10](#) But man dies [4191](#) and is laid away; Indeed he breathes his last And where [is] he? <sup>11</sup> [As] water disappears from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dries up, <sup>12</sup> So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens [are] no more, They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep. <sup>13</sup> "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave,

That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

<sup>14</sup> If a man dies<sup>4191</sup>, shall he live [again]? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes. <sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. [Job 14:10-15 NKJV](#)

[Job 21:23](#) One dies<sup>4191</sup> in his full strength, Being wholly at ease and secure; <sup>24</sup> His pails are full of milk, And the marrow of his bones is moist. <sup>25</sup> Another man dies<sup>4191</sup> in the bitterness of his soul, Never having eaten with pleasure. <sup>26</sup> They lie down alike in the dust, And worms cover them [Job 21:23-26 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 115:17](#) The dead<sup>4191</sup> do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence [Psalm 115:17 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:3](#) This [is] an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing [happens] to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness [is] in their hearts while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead<sup>4191</sup>. <sup>4</sup> But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead<sup>4191</sup> lion. <sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die<sup>4191</sup>; But the dead<sup>4191</sup> know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun [Ecclesiastes 9:3-6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 26:19](#) Your dead<sup>4191</sup> shall live; [Together with] my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew [is like] the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead [Isaiah 26:19 NKJV](#)

Most of them speak of unconsciousness of death. Several of them mention a time when life will be restored to the dead which I believe to be the resurrection when Christ comes back to earth.

**H4194** had 160 occurrences in 155 verses in the KJV. The following three were the only verses I found that had any mention of after death.

[Psalm 6:5](#) For in death<sup>4194</sup> [there is] no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks [Psalm 6:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 49:17](#) For when he dies<sup>4194</sup> he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not descend after him [Psalm 49:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 38:18](#) For Sheol cannot thank You, Death<sup>4194</sup> cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth [Isaiah 38:18 NKJV](#)

They all seem to agree that there is no consciousness after death

**H5038** is all about carcasses and dead bodies of animals and people.

[Isaiah 26:19](#) Your dead shall live; [Together with] my dead body<sup>5038</sup> they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew [is like] the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead [Isaiah 26:19 NKJV](#)

The only one I found that had any mention of life after death was this verse in Isaiah which seems to be a reference to a time when the dead will be resurrected.

**H5315** was already covered.

**H6297** is mostly about carcasses and dead corpses.

[Isaiah 66:24](#) "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses<sup>6297</sup> of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh [Isaiah 66:24 NKJV](#)



This verse in Isaiah 66 is a reference to the wicked after the righteous have been taken to heaven. I'm not sure why this verse sounds like carcasses of the dead will be laying visible, but they are carcasses and not alive. Whether symbolic or not, the worm not dying and the fire not being quenched does not make a carcass alive.

[H7496](#) is literally about ghosts of the dead, so this should be interesting.

[Job 26:5](#) "The dead<sup>7496</sup> tremble, Those under the waters and those inhabiting them [Job 26:5 NKJV](#)

The first one in Job is from a chapter which is talking about God's power over the living and the dead, the earth and the sea, and even the space in which our earth hangs. It doesn't really say much about the departed spirits but I think what it is saying is that even if they were under the sea, they would tremble before Him.

[Psalm 88:10](#) Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead<sup>7496</sup> arise [and] praise You? [Psalm 88:10 NKJV](#)

I believe David is asking rhetorical questions. A few verses before in [88:5](#) it says, "...Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more..." So the answers to the two questions in verse 10 are no and no.

[Proverbs 9:18](#) But he does not know that the dead<sup>7496</sup> [are] there, [That] her guests [are] in the depths of hell [Proverbs 9:18 NKJV](#)

Solomon here is talking about following the woman of folly. The naïve doesn't know that it will lead to death.

[Isaiah 14:9](#) "Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet [you] at your coming; It stirs up the dead<sup>7496</sup> for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations [Isaiah 14:9 NKJV](#)

The first half of this verse in Isaiah is talking about a time when Israel and Judah will inhabit the land again and will rule over their oppressors. It refers to a time when the land will be at rest and quiet. The land of Palestine has been anything but restful and quiet and I don't think it will be until Jesus comes back. I think it's saying that as Jesus approaches the earth, Sheol (the grave) will spontaneously give up its dead.

[Isaiah 26:14](#) [They are] dead, they will not live; [They are] deceased<sup>7496</sup>, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And made all their memory to perish [Isaiah 26:14 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 26:19](#) Your dead shall live; [Together with] my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew [is like] the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead<sup>7496</sup> [Isaiah 26:19 NKJV](#)

In the last two verses, which are from the same chapter, I think that Isaiah is referring to the new earth. The wicked dead will not rise and all remembrance of them is wiped out, but the righteous (Your dead) will live, "those who lie in the dust will awake and shout for joy."

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">dead</a> "			
<a href="#">G581</a>	ἀπογίνομαι	apoginomai	being <b>dead</b>
<a href="#">G599</a>	ἀποθνήσκω	apothnēskō	die, be <b>dead</b> , be at the point of death, perish, lie a dying, be slain, vr <b>dead</b>
<a href="#">G2253</a>	ἥμιθανής	hēmithanēs	half <b>dead</b>

<a href="#">G2289</a>	θανατόω	thanatoō	put to death, cause to be put to death, kill, become <b>dead</b> , mortify
<a href="#">G2348</a>	θνήσκω	thnēskō	be <b>dead</b> , die, <b>dead</b> man, <b>dead</b>
<a href="#">G2837</a>	κοιμάω	koimaō	sleep, fall asleep, be asleep, fall on sleep, be <b>dead</b>
<a href="#">G3498</a>	νεκρός	nekros	<b>Dead</b>
<a href="#">G3499</a>	νεκρόω	nekroō	be <b>dead</b> , mortify
<a href="#">G4430</a>	πτῶμα	ptōma	<b>dead</b> body, carcass, corpse
<a href="#">G4880</a>	συναποθνήσκω	synapothnēskō	die with, be <b>dead</b> with
<a href="#">G5053</a>	τελευτάω	teleutaō	die, be <b>dead</b> , decrease

[G581](#) is not a reference to physical death.

[G599](#) as could be expected is mostly about people dying. There were several instances where people died and then were resurrected by Jesus. In each of these stories, there was never any discussion of their consciousness during the short time that they were dead.

[Luke 16:22](#) "So it was that the beggar died<sup>599</sup>, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died<sup>599</sup> and was buried [Luke 16:22 NKJV](#)

The first one that we will mention, the story of the rich man and Lazarus, is probably the Bible verse quoted most often to support the idea that people go directly to heaven or hell when they die. I believe this story to be a parable which doesn't really tell us whether it was something that actually happened or not, but we can see from [Luke 16:31](#) that Jesus had a main point to draw from this parable. If they don't believe Moses and the prophets, then they would not believe even if someone came back from the dead to warn them. The doubters were asking Jesus for a sign, a miracle, possibly even the resurrection of someone from the dead to convince them of who He was. This story and His conclusion were in response to this. In order to make His main point, His parable involved some people who were conscious after death. Based on the conclusions that we will draw from our research, I believe that taking this story literally would be inconsistent with what the Bible teaches. Not long after, Jesus actually did give a sign in raising Lazarus from the dead. I kind of doubt the name choice in His parable was merely chance, and His conclusion was validated when they decided they needed to kill Lazarus in addition to Jesus [[John 11](#)].

[Luke 20:36](#) "nor can they die<sup>599</sup> anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection [Luke 20:36 NKJV](#)

If you look at the context of this verse, especially the question in [20:33](#) where they ask "in the resurrection," it is clear that this verse is talking about that time.

[John 6:50](#) "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die<sup>599</sup> [John 6:50 NKJV](#)

[John 6:58](#) "This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead<sup>599</sup>. He who eats this bread will live forever [John 6:58 NKJV](#)

[John 8:52](#) Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead<sup>599</sup>, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' [John 8:52 NKJV](#)

[John 11:25](#) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die<sup>599</sup>, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die<sup>599</sup>. Do you believe this?" [John 11:25-26 NKJV](#)

In these four verses in John, Jesus is talking about what I call the second or final death from which there is no resurrection. In other words He is saying that if we accept Him and are taken to heaven when He comes back, we will live forever. We know this because all of His disciples died.

[John 21:23](#) Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die<sup>599</sup>. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die<sup>599</sup>, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you?" [John 21:23 NKJV](#)

This one is an off handed comment Jesus made to the disciples about it being no concern of theirs if He wanted John to live until He came back.

[Romans 6:8](#) Now if we died<sup>599</sup> with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies<sup>599</sup> no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. [Romans 6:8-9 NKJV](#)

Paul is talking about our salvation in these verses in Romans and doesn't say when we will live again. I believe it is necessary to determine this timeframe in the context of what Paul and the rest of the Bible teaches. In [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) he speaks of the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the righteous.

[Romans 6:10](#) For [the death] that He died<sup>599</sup>, He died<sup>599</sup> to sin once for all; but [the life] that He lives, He lives to God. [Romans 6:10 NKJV](#)

[Romans 14:9](#) For to this end Christ died<sup>599</sup> and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. [Romans 14:9 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:15](#) and He died<sup>599</sup> for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died<sup>599</sup> for them and rose again. [2 Corinthians 5:15 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:14](#) For if we believe that Jesus died<sup>599</sup> and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. [1 Thessalonians 4:14 NKJV](#)

Paul mentions multiple times that Christ died and lived again.

[Hebrews 11:4](#) By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead<sup>599</sup> still speaks. [Hebrews 11:4 NKJV](#)

In this verse in Hebrews, Paul is speaking of Abel whom I believe will be saved as being dead, not alive or in spirit in heaven. Of course he does not speak to us physically but by the record of his life.

[Revelation 14:13](#) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] the dead who die<sup>599</sup> in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." [Revelation 14:13 NKJV](#)

John wrote in Revelation that those who die in the Lord will rest from their labors, not immediately be taken to heaven.

[G2253](#) has only a single reference that is of no interest to this discussion.

[G2289](#) in the Gospels is mostly used in the context of killing or putting to death. Paul however uses it several times in the context of symbolically dying to sin and living for Christ.

**G2348** mostly refers to people who are dead.

[John 11:44](#) And he who had died<sup>2348</sup> came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go." [John 11:44 NKJV](#)

This verse in John is about Lazarus who died but was brought back to life by Jesus.

[Acts 25:19](#) "but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died<sup>2348</sup>, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. [Acts 25:19 NKJV](#)

Here is yet another mention of Jesus who died as being alive.

**G2837** is a word which is translated many times as literal sleep, but is also used figuratively to refer to the first death from which there will be a resurrection.

[John 11:11](#) These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps<sup>2837</sup>, but I go that I may wake him up." [John 11:11 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:36](#) "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep<sup>2837</sup>, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; [Acts 13:36 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13](#) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep<sup>2837</sup>, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep<sup>2837</sup> in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep<sup>2837</sup>. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 NKJV](#)

The last one, from Thessalonians is probably one of the most well know texts on the second coming and the resurrection of the righteous and the translation of the living.

**G3498** has a very simple and direct translation which is dead. It can refer to physical death as well as spiritual death. There were many uses of this word in conjunction with resurrection including both body and soul, but there was no mention of any consciousness between the death and the resurrection.

[Matthew 10:8](#) "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead<sup>3498</sup>, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. [Matthew 10:8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:5](#) "[The] blind see and [the] lame walk; [the] lepers are cleansed and [the] deaf hear; [the] dead<sup>3498</sup> are raised up and [the] poor have the gospel preached to them. [Matthew 11:5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:15](#) So he who was dead<sup>3498</sup> sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. [Luke 7:15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:22](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that [the] blind see, [the] lame walk, [the] lepers are cleansed, [the] deaf hear, [the] dead<sup>3498</sup> are raised, [the] poor have the gospel preached to them. [Luke 7:22 NKJV](#)

[John 12:1](#) Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [John 12:1 NKJV](#)

[John 12:9](#) Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [John 12:9 NKJV](#)

[John 12:17](#) Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, bore witness. [John 12:17 NKJV](#)

These verses all refer to the resurrection of the dead by Jesus and His disciples.

[Matthew 14:2](#) and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, and therefore these powers are at work in him." [Matthew 14:2 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:14](#) Now King Herod heard [of Him], for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, and therefore these powers are at work in him." [Mark 6:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:7](#) Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, [Luke 9:7 NKJV](#)

These verses are not saying that John the Baptist had risen, but that is what Herod was speculating.

[Matthew 22:31](#) "But concerning the resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, <sup>32</sup> 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead<sup>3498</sup>, but of the living." [Matthew 22:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:25](#) "For when they rise from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> "But concerning the dead<sup>3498</sup>, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the [burning] bush [passage], how God spoke to him, saying, 'I [am] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? <sup>27</sup> "He is not the God of the dead<sup>3498</sup>, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken." [Mark 12:25-27 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:35](#) "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, neither marry nor are given in marriage; <sup>36</sup> "nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> "But even Moses showed in the [burning] bush [passage] that the dead<sup>3498</sup> are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' <sup>38</sup> "For He is not the God of the dead<sup>3498</sup> but of the living, for all live to Him." [Luke 20:35-38 NKJV](#)

The verses above are Jesus' answer to some people who were trying to trap or embarrass Him into getting confused or saying something contradictory. (We know this because the Sadducees who asked didn't even believe in the resurrection [[Luke 20:27](#)]) The Jews had a law that said that if a man died without bearing children, his brother should marry the wife and have a child to carry on the brother's name and inherit his property. They proposed a scenario where seven brothers all were married to the same woman, then they asked who's wife she would be when they were all resurrected.

[Matthew 17:9](#) Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>." [Matthew 17:9 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:9](#) Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>.<sup>10</sup> So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead<sup>3498</sup> meant. [Mark 9:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:64](#) "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him [away], and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." [Matthew 27:64 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 28:7](#) "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." [Matthew 28:7 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:5](#) Then, as they were afraid and bowed [their] faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead<sup>3498</sup>?" [Luke 24:5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:46](#) Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead<sup>3498</sup> the third day, [Luke 24:46 NKJV](#)

[John 2:22](#) Therefore, when He had risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. [John 2:22 NKJV](#)

[John 20:9](#) For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [John 20:9 NKJV](#)

[John 21:14](#) This [is] now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [John 21:14 NKJV](#)

[Acts 3:15](#) "and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, of which we are witnesses. [Acts 3:15 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:2](#) being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [Acts 4:2 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:10](#) "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, by Him this man stands here before you whole. [Acts 4:10 NKJV](#)

[Acts 10:41](#) "not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, [even] to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead<sup>3498</sup>.<sup>42</sup> "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God [to be] Judge of the living and the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [Acts 10:41-42 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:30](#) "But God raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [Acts 13:30 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:34](#) "And that He raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' [Acts 13:34 NKJV](#)

[Acts 17:3](#) explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, and [saying], "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." [Acts 17:3 NKJV](#)

[Acts 17:31](#) "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance<sup>3498</sup> of this to all by raising Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>."<sup>32</sup> And when they heard

of the resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this [matter]." [Acts 17:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Acts 26:23](#) "that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, and would proclaim light to the [Jewish] people and to the Gentiles." [Acts 26:23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 1:4](#) [and] declared [to be] the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [Romans 1:4 NKJV](#)

[Romans 4:24](#) but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, [Romans 4:24 NKJV](#)

[Romans 6:4](#) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup> by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [Romans 6:4 NKJV](#)

[Romans 6:9](#) knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. [Romans 6:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 7:4](#) Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, that we should bear fruit to God. [Romans 7:4 NKJV](#)

[Romans 8:11](#) But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead<sup>3498</sup> dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead<sup>3498</sup> will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. [Romans 8:11 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:9](#) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, you will be saved. [Romans 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 14:9](#) For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead<sup>3498</sup> and the living. [Romans 14:9 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:12](#) Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>? [1 Corinthians 15:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:20](#) But now Christ is risen from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, [and] has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [1 Corinthians 15:20 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 1:1](#) Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>), [Galatians 1:1 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 1:20](#) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup> and seated [Him] at His right hand in the heavenly [places], [Ephesians 1:20 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 1:18](#) And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, that in all things He may have the preeminence. [Colossians 1:18 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 2:12](#) buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with [Him] through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [Colossians 2:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 1:10](#) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, [even] Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. [1 Thessalonians 1:10 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 2:8](#) Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead<sup>3498</sup> according to my gospel, [2 Timothy 2:8 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 13:20](#) Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, [Hebrews 13:20 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:3](#) Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, [1 Peter 1:3 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:21](#) who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead<sup>3498</sup> and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. [1 Peter 1:21 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:18](#) "I [am] He who lives, and was dead<sup>3498</sup>, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. [Revelation 1:18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 2:8](#) "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead<sup>3498</sup>, and came to life: [Revelation 2:8 NKJV](#)

All the texts in the section above refer to Jesus' resurrection.

[Luke 16:31](#) "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead<sup>3498</sup>.' " [Luke 16:31 NKJV](#)

This one is about parable of the rich man and Lazarus which we discussed under the word [G599](#).

[John 5:21](#) "For as the Father raises the dead<sup>3498</sup> and gives life to [them], even so the Son gives life to whom He will. [John 5:21 NKJV](#)

[John 5:25](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead<sup>3498</sup> will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. [John 5:25 NKJV](#)

In these two in John that we just read Jesus is talking about the resurrection at the end of the world. I come to this conclusion by reading on through verse 29.

[Acts 23:6](#) But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men [and] brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup> I am being judged!" [Acts 23:6 NKJV](#)

[Acts 24:21](#) "unless [it is] for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup> I am being judged by you this day.' " [Acts 24:21 NKJV](#)

[Acts 26:8](#) "Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead<sup>3498</sup>? [Acts 26:8 NKJV](#)

[Romans 4:17](#) (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed-God, who gives life to the dead<sup>3498</sup> and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; [Romans 4:17 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:13](#) But if there is no resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>, then Christ is not risen. [1 Corinthians 15:13 NKJV](#)



[1 Corinthians 15:15](#) Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead<sup>3498</sup> do not rise. <sup>16</sup> For if [the] dead<sup>3498</sup> do not rise, then Christ is not risen. [1 Corinthians 15:15-16 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:21](#) For since by man [came] death, by Man also [came] the resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [1 Corinthians 15:21 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:29](#) Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead<sup>3498</sup>, if the dead<sup>3498</sup> do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? [1 Corinthians 15:29 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:32](#) If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage [is it] to me? If [the] dead<sup>3498</sup> do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" [1 Corinthians 15:32 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 1:9](#) Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead<sup>3498</sup>, [2 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Philippians 3:11](#) if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [Philippians 3:11 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead<sup>3498</sup> in Christ will rise first. [1 Thessalonians 4:16 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 6:2](#) of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>, and of eternal judgment. [Hebrews 6:2 NKJV](#)

From the block to text's above, we can see that the Apostle Paul was a firm believer in the resurrection of the dead. As I have said before, he believed this would happen at one time, at the second coming of Christ [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#).

[Romans 11:15](#) For if their being cast away [is] the reconciling of the world, what [will] their acceptance [be] but life from the dead<sup>3498</sup>? [Romans 11:15 NKJV](#)

This verse really needs the context of the chapter to understand what Paul is talking about. First we need to realize that God had chosen the Israelite nation to be a light to the rest of the world. I think Paul is saying: since the Jewish leaders had rejected Him, the good news of salvation through Jesus was spread to the Gentiles, "reconciliation of the world," by Paul and a few others. But how much better it could be if the entire Jewish nation would accept Jesus and fulfill God's plan. It would mean salvation and eventual resurrection from the dead for many in the world.

[1 Corinthians 15:35](#) But someone will say, "How are the dead<sup>3498</sup> raised up? And with what body do they come?" [1 Corinthians 15:35 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:42](#) So also [is] the resurrection of the dead<sup>3498</sup>. [The body] is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. [1 Corinthians 15:42 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:52](#) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead<sup>3498</sup> will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [1 Corinthians 15:52 NKJV](#)

Paul tells us that at the time of the resurrection, our bodies will be changed from mortal to immortal.

[Ephesians 5:14](#) Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, And Christ will give you light." [Ephesians 5:14 NKJV](#)

In this one, I believe that Paul is speaking figuratively about rising from the dead, equating sleep to darkness and sin, being awake to living in Christ.

[Hebrews 11:19](#) concluding that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead<sup>3498</sup>, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. [Hebrews 11:19 NKJV](#)

In Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, Paul talks about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac at God's command, believing that God could raise him back to life.

[Hebrews 11:35](#) Women received their dead<sup>3498</sup> raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. [Hebrews 11:35 NKJV](#)

In the same chapter he mentions women receiving their dead back to life, could be a specific reference to the children brought back to life through Elijah [[1 Kings 17:17-24](#)] and Elisha [[2 Kings 4:32-37](#)].

[Revelation 14:13](#) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] the dead<sup>3498</sup> who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." [Revelation 14:13 NKJV](#)

The righteous dead are at rest, not in heaven.

[Revelation 20:5](#) But the rest of the dead<sup>3498</sup> did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection. [Revelation 20:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead<sup>3498</sup>, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead<sup>3498</sup> were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead<sup>3498</sup> who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead<sup>3498</sup> who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [Revelation 20:12-13 NKJV](#)

John in Revelation specifically mentions two resurrections. Those who were taken to heaven to reign with Christ for a thousand years, and the wicked who will be resurrected at the end of the thousand years to be judged with Satan and his angels.

**G3499** was used three times, two of which referred to Abraham as being so old when Isaac was born that he was as good as dead. The third reference is about being symbolically dead to temptations and evil. So nothing about life after death here.

**G4430** is all about dead bodies.

**G4880** is only used three times in the KJV.

[Mark 14:31](#) But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die<sup>4880</sup> with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise. [Mark 14:31 NKJV](#)

The first one is Peter's boast to Jesus that he would die before denying Him.

[2 Corinthians 7:3](#) I do not say [this] to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die<sup>4880</sup> together and to live together. [2 Corinthians 7:3 NKJV](#)

The second one, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians is talking about how close he feels to them. I take it to mean how families gather together at the death of a loved one. The statement about living together could be a reference to living together as family and friends or living together in heaven after the resurrection.

[2 Timothy 2:11](#) [This is] a faithful saying: For if we died<sup>4880</sup> with [Him], We shall also live with [Him]. [2 Timothy 2:11 NKJV](#)

The last one mentions that if we die with Him [Jesus], we will live with Him. As we said before, Paul believed in the resurrection of the righteous when Jesus comes back to take us to heaven.

**G5053** is used 12 times in the KJV, mostly as die or died.

[Matthew 9:18](#) While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died<sup>5053</sup>, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." [Matthew 9:18 NKJV](#)

In the first one of interest, a synagogue official asked Jesus to bring his daughter back to life.

[Mark 9:44](#) "where 'Their worm does not die<sup>5053</sup>, And the fire is not quenched.' [Mark 9:44 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:46](#) "where 'Their worm does not die<sup>5053</sup>, And the fire is not quenched.' [Mark 9:46 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:48](#) "where 'Their worm does not die<sup>5053</sup>, And the fire is not quenched.' [Mark 9:48 NKJV](#)

These statements are ones that many people use as evidence that hell is a place of everlasting torture by fire. That is really another whole topic of its own, so we will not try to cover it fully here. Essentially Jesus is telling the people if your hand, foot or eyes cause you to sin, it would be better for you to cut them off than to end up in hell. These verses don't really mention the point of death and hence don't really say anything about when in relationship to death people would go to heaven or hell. These verses were actually drawn into this discussion because of the mention of the worm that does not die. So look for the rest of the discussion on these verses in the topic on [hell](#).

[John 11:39](#) Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead<sup>5053</sup>, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been [dead] four days." [John 11:39 NKJV](#)

The next verse is about the death of Lazarus, whom Jesus brought back to life after he had been dead four days. There is no mention of where his spirit was or what it was doing during those four days. In fact one might ask: if Lazarus' spirit was in heaven, in paradise, why would Jesus bring him back to this sinful earth?

[Acts 2:29](#) "Men [and] brethren, let [me] speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead<sup>5053</sup> and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [Acts 2:29 NKJV](#)

Next we have David who is undoubtedly one of the greatest men in Jewish history, not up in heaven looking down on us, but still in his grave.

Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">die</a> "			
<a href="#">H1478</a>	גָּוַעַ	gava`	<b>die</b> , give up the ghost, dead, perish, dead
<a href="#">H4191</a>	מוּתַ	muwth	<b>die</b> , dead, slay, death, surely, kill, dead man, dead body, in no wise, misc
<a href="#">H4194</a>	מָוַתַ	maveth	death, <b>die</b> , dead, deadly, slay

<a href="#">H8546</a>	תמוּתָה	temuwthah	die, death
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[H1478](#) has already been covered under the words “ghost” and “dead.”

[H4191](#) has already been covered under the word “dead.”

[H4194](#) has already been covered under the word “dead.”

[H8546](#) occurs only twice in the KJV and neither instance mentions anything about life after death.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">die</a> "			
<a href="#">G599</a>	ἀποθνήσκω	apothnēskō	die, be dead, be at the point of death, perish, lie a dying, be slain, vr dead
<a href="#">G684</a>	ἀπόλεια	apōleia	perdition, destruction, waste, damnable, to die, perish, pernicious
<a href="#">G2348</a>	θνήσκω	thnēskō	be dead, die, dead man, dead
<a href="#">G4880</a>	συναποθνήσκω	synapothnēskō	die with, be dead with
<a href="#">G5053</a>	τελευταίω	teleutaō	die, be dead, decrease

[G599](#) has already been covered under the word “dead.”

[G684](#) is most frequently translated destruction and was not used in any mention of life after death.

[G2348](#) has already been covered under the word “dead.”

[G4880](#) has already been covered under the word “dead.”

[G5053](#) has already been covered under the word “dead.”

Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">death</a> "			
<a href="#">H4191</a>	מוּת	muwth	die, dead, slay, death, surely, kill, dead man, dead body, in no wise, misc
<a href="#">H4192</a>	מוּת (Ps 48:14)	muwth	death, Muthlabben
<a href="#">H4193</a>	מוּת (Aramaic)	mowth	death
<a href="#">H4194</a>	מוּתָה	maveth	death, die, dead, deadly, slay
<a href="#">H4463</a>	מוּמוּת	mamowth	death
<a href="#">H6757</a>	צֶלְמוֹת	tsalmaveth	shadow of death
<a href="#">H7523</a>	רָצַח	ratsach	slayer, murderer, kill, murder, slain, manslayer, killing, slayer, slayeth, death
<a href="#">H8546</a>	תמוּתָה	temuwthah	die, death

[H4191](#) has already been covered under the word “dead” and “die.”

[H4192](#) only occurs once as “death” in the KJV and makes no mention of what happens after.

[H4193](#) only occurs once as “death” in the KJV and makes no mention of what happens after.

[H4194](#) has already been covered under the word “dead” and “die.”

[H4463](#) only occurs twice the KJV, once as deadly and once as death. The first goes on to describe what will happen to the body after dying from deadly diseases. The other makes no mention of what happens after death.

[Jeremiah 16:4](#) "They shall die gruesome deaths<sup>[4463](#)</sup>; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, [but] they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth." [Jeremiah 16:4 NKJV](#)

Here through the prophet Jeremiah, God is getting very graphic about what will happen to the Israelites because they had forsaken Him. This verse doesn't say anything about their spirit or soul, but it does say that their dead bodies will be eaten by birds and beasts and will then become dung on the surface of the earth. A much more graphic way of saying they would return to dust.

[H6757](#) occurs 18 times in 17 verses the KJV every time as “shadow of death.” It didn't say anything about what follows the shadow of death.

[H7523](#) occurs 47 times in 40 verses the KJV, mostly as “murderer” and “slayer.”

[H8546](#) is just used a couple times in Psalms, speaking of releasing people doomed to die.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">death</a> "			
<a href="#">G336</a>	ἀναίρεσις	anairesis	<b>death</b>
<a href="#">G337</a>	ἀναιρέω	anaireō	kill, slay, put to <b>death</b> , take up, do, take away
<a href="#">G520</a>	ἀπάγω	apagō	lead away, lead, put to <b>death</b> , bring, take away, carry away
<a href="#">G599</a>	ἀποθνήσκω	apothnēskō	die, be dead, be at the point of <b>death</b> , perish, lie a dying, be slain, vr dead
<a href="#">G615</a>	ἀποκτείνω	apokteinō	kill, slay, put to <b>death</b>
<a href="#">G1935</a>	ἐπιθανάτιος	epithanatos	appoint to <b>death</b>
<a href="#">G2079</a>	ἐσχάτως	eschatōs	lie at the point of <b>death</b>
<a href="#">G2288</a>	θάνατος	thanatos	<b>death</b> , deadly
<a href="#">G2289</a>	θανατόω	thanatoō	put to <b>death</b> , cause to be put to <b>death</b> , kill, become dead, mortify
<a href="#">G5054</a>	τελευτή	teleutē	<b>death</b>

[G336](#) is used just twice in the KJV both having to do with putting Stephen to death.

[G337](#) is used 23 times in 22 verses in the KJV, mostly in the context of putting to death as in murdering someone or plotting to murder someone.

[G520](#) is mostly used as leading, taking or carrying away mostly in the context of death.

[G599](#) has already been covered under the word “dead” and “die.”

**G615** is mostly used as kill but also as slay or put to death in the KJV.

[Matthew 10:28](#) "And do not fear those who kill<sup>615</sup> the body but cannot kill<sup>615</sup> the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [Matthew 10:28 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:4](#) "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill<sup>615</sup> the body, and after that have no more that they can do. <sup>5</sup> "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed<sup>615</sup>, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! [Luke 12:4-5 NKJV](#)

In these verses, I believe the first two references are about the first death, from which we will be resurrected. Destroying the body and soul I believe to refer to the second death of the wicked from which there is no resurrection.

[Matthew 16:21](#) From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed<sup>615</sup>, and be raised the third day. [Matthew 16:21 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:23](#) "and they will kill<sup>615</sup> Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful. [Matthew 17:23 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:31](#) And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed<sup>615</sup>, and after three days rise again. [Mark 8:31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:34](#) "and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill<sup>615</sup> Him. And the third day He will rise again." [Mark 10:34 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:33](#) "They will scourge [Him] and kill<sup>615</sup> Him. And the third day He will rise again." [Luke 18:33 NKJV](#)

[Acts 3:15](#) "and killed<sup>615</sup> the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. [Acts 3:15 NKJV](#)

In the previous six verses, are found references to the resurrection of Jesus.

[Revelation 6:11](#) Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both [the number of] their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed<sup>615</sup> as they [were], was completed. [Revelation 6:11 NKJV](#)

One must really read the larger context of this one to understand why it is included here. It actually seems contradictory to what most of the bible teaches about the state of the dead. Let's see what it says in the previous two verses.

[Revelation 6:9](#) When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" [Revelation 6:9-10 NKJV](#)

What these verses are saying is that when John saw the fifth seal being opened, he saw under the altar in heaven, souls of those who had been slain because they had been faithful to God. And he said they cried out with a loud voice ... Now we previously discussed the soul returning to God at death, to await reunification with the body at the resurrection. This is the first instance I have come across of a soul, which has parted from the body, saying anything. It almost seems like they were resting unconsciously, then all of a sudden cried out, then were given a robe and told to go back to sleep. I

don't know exactly what a soul is and in what form it is preserved, but perhaps under the altar in heaven is where God stores the unconscious souls of the dead. If these were good people, and conscious, why would they be kept under the altar? That could seem like keeping them in a cage, which would seem like a punishment to me. Maybe they did really cry out or maybe what John saw in vision was just symbolic. In either case, I don't think this is really the picture people would have of their loved ones in heaven looking down on them. Finally, let's take a look at another verse that speaks of someone's blood, or possibly soul, crying out to God for justice.

[Genesis 4:10](#) And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.

[Genesis 4:10 NKJV](#)

I don't believe Abel's blood was literally crying out from the grave. I think it was symbolic, or a figure of speech and I think the same applies to the text in question in Revelation.

[G1935](#) is used just once as "condemned to death."

[G2079](#) is used just once to describe someone as being "at the point of death."

[G2288](#) is used 119 times in 106 verses in the KJV almost exclusively as "death." Many of the references are predictions of Jesus' death, or people condemning Him to death. Some of them are followed up with predictions of His resurrection on the third day.

[Matthew 16:28](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death<sup>2288</sup> till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." [Matthew 16:28 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:1](#) And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death<sup>2288</sup> till they see the kingdom of God present with power." [Mark 9:1 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:27](#) "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death<sup>2288</sup> till they see the kingdom of God." [Luke 9:27 NKJV](#)

This same statement by Jesus, in different gospels, was not long before He was glorified in the presence of Moses and Elijah on the mountain (see [Matthew 17:1-5](#)). I think in this instance, this is what Jesus meant by the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

[John 5:24](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death<sup>2288</sup> into life. [John 5:24 NKJV](#)

[John 8:51](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death<sup>2288</sup>." <sup>52</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death<sup>2288</sup>.' [John 8:51-52 NKJV](#)

These statements of Jesus on the surface seem contradictory to His statements to Adam and Eve, that if they sinned they would surely die. Well, the question I ask myself is: is this referring to the first death which has sometimes been called a sleep, or the second death from which there is no resurrection. I would think that since all of the disciples whom we would assume kept His word died, He must have been referring to the second death. In fact the next two verses re-enforce this idea.

[John 11:4](#) When Jesus heard [that], He said, "This sickness is not unto death<sup>2288</sup>, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." [John 11:4 NKJV](#)

[John 11:13](#) However, Jesus spoke of his death<sup>2288</sup>, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. [John 11:13-14 NKJV](#)

As we were stating above, Jesus really didn't think of the first death as death but as sleep. He said that Lazarus' sickness wouldn't end in death, it ended in sleep as He called it, but when His disciples seemed confused, He clarified Himself.

[Acts 2:24](#) "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death<sup>2288</sup>, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. [Acts 2:24 NKJV](#)

In fact since Jesus was so consistent in referring to the first death as sleep, when He predicted that He would be put to death, was that telling us something about the type of death He was going to suffer? In this statement made by Peter in Acts, is He saying that even the second death had no power to hold Jesus?

[1 Corinthians 15:52](#) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death<sup>2288</sup> is swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup> "O Death<sup>2288</sup>, where [is] your sting? O Hades, where [is] your victory?" [1 Corinthians 15:52-55 NKJV](#)

Here Paul is talking about the physical change we will experience when Jesus comes the second time. Both the people who are resurrected and those who are still alive at the time will be made immortal.

[2 Corinthians 1:9](#) Yes, we had the sentence of death<sup>2288</sup> in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death<sup>2288</sup>, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver [us], [2 Corinthians 1:9-10 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 1:10](#) but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, [who] has abolished death<sup>2288</sup> and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, [2 Timothy 1:10 NKJV](#)

As I have stated before, Paul believed in the resurrection.

[Hebrews 11:5](#) By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death<sup>2288</sup>, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [Hebrews 11:5 NKJV](#)

Enoch is one of the few exceptions to the sentence of death for all sinners. I believe that Enoch had such a close relationship with God that the next step was for him to be transformed and taken to heaven as we will be when Jesus comes.

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death<sup>2288</sup> has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NKJV](#)

This verse tells us what will happen to those who come up in the first resurrection. They will go to heaven and reign with Him for 1000 years.

**G2289** is used in the context of killing or putting to death. In the same vein, it is used in the context of symbolically putting to death our sinful natures.

**G5054** is used only once, referring to the sojourn of Joseph, Marry and Jesus in Egypt until the death of Herod.



<b>Old Testament (Hebrew) for "<u>hell</u>"</b>			
<a href="#">H7585</a>	שְׁאוֹל	she'owl	grave, <b>hell</b> , pit

[H7585](#) is used interchangeably as hell or the grave in the KJV.

[1 Samuel 2:6](#) "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave<sup>7585</sup> and brings up. [1 Samuel 2:6 NKJV](#)

This is part of Hannah's prayer when she left her son Samuel to serve at the Temple. She is praising God and mentions His power to take as well as to give life.

[Job 7:9](#) [As] the cloud disappears and vanishes away, So he who goes down to the grave<sup>7585</sup> does not come up.

<sup>10</sup> He shall never return to his house, Nor shall his place know him anymore. [Job 7:9-10 NKJV](#)

Job says, when someone goes down to the grave, they don't come back up.

[Psalm 16:10](#) For You will not leave my soul in Sheol<sup>7585</sup>, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. [Psalm 16:10 NKJV](#)

The Psalmist, presumably David says to God, You will not leave me in the grave or hell, just like You won't leave Jesus in the grave.

[Psalm 30:3](#) O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave<sup>7585</sup>; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. [Psalm 30:3 NKJV](#)

In this instance, David is not saying he came up from the literal grave or hell, but that God protected him from dying.

[Psalm 31:17](#) Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for I have called upon You; Let the wicked be ashamed; Let them be silent in the grave<sup>7585</sup>. [Psalm 31:17 NKJV](#)

There is silence in the grave or hell.

[Psalm 49:15](#) But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave<sup>7585</sup>, For He shall receive me. Selah [Psalm 49:15 NKJV](#)

The Psalmist, says that God will not leave his soul in the grave, but he doesn't say it will happen immediately.

[Psalm 86:13](#) For great [is] Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol<sup>7585</sup>. [Psalm 86:13 NKJV](#)

I believe this is David who had many close shave's with death. He doesn't appear to be speaking about what will happen after he dies. I think, as in Psalm 30:3 above, he is probably referring to being delivered from very near death.

[Ecclesiastes 9:10](#) Whatever your hand finds to do, do [it] with your might; for [there is] no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave<sup>7585</sup> where you are going. [Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV](#)

Here Solomon is pretty clear that there is no consciousness in the grave.

[Isaiah 14:9](#) "Hell<sup>7585</sup> from beneath is excited about you, To meet [you] at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations. [Isaiah 14:9 NKJV](#)

This sounds like Isaiah is talking about the third coming of Jesus when the wicked will be resurrected. So, if we don't find enough support for the idea that the wicked are sent immediately to torture in hell when they die, we can probably assume Isaiah meant the grave in this case.

[Isaiah 14:15](#) Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol<sup>7585</sup>, To the lowest depths of the Pit. [Isaiah 14:15 NKJV](#)

Isaiah is talking about what happened to Lucifer after he was kicked out of heaven, as opposed to what he was seeking which was to be above God.

[Isaiah 38:18](#) For Sheol<sup>7585</sup> cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth. [Isaiah 38:18 NKJV](#)

Here Isaiah, going along with my assertion that there is no consciousness in death, says the dead cannot praise God.

[Jonah 2:2](#) And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol<sup>7585</sup> I cried, [And] You heard my voice. [Jonah 2:2 NKJV](#)

Jonah is referring to the belly of the fish as Sheol as he relates his experience.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">hell</a> "			
<a href="#">G86</a>	ᾅδης	hadēs	hell, grave
<a href="#">G1067</a>	γέεννα	geenna	hell, hell fire
<a href="#">G5020</a>	ταρταρόω	tartaroō	cast down to hell

[G86](#) is used mostly as Hades in the NKJV.

[Luke 16:23](#) "And being in torments in Hades<sup>86</sup>, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. [Luke 16:23 NKJV](#)

We already discussed this verse under [G599](#).

[Acts 2:27](#) For You will not leave my soul in Hades<sup>86</sup>, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. [Acts 2:27 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:31](#) "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades<sup>86</sup>, nor did His flesh see corruption. [Acts 2:31 NKJV](#)

We already discussed this verse under [H5315](#). It is also a quote of [Psalm 16:10](#) which we covered under [H5315](#). In verse 31, Peter goes on to say what we said for our explanation of [Psalm 16:10](#).

[Revelation 1:18](#) "I [am] He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades<sup>86</sup> and of Death. [Revelation 1:18 NKJV](#)

Here, John is quoting what Jesus is saying to him.

[Revelation 20:13](#) The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades<sup>86</sup> delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [Revelation 20:13 NKJV](#)

This was already discussed under [G3498](#) for the word “dead.”

[Revelation 20:14](#) Then Death and Hades<sup>86</sup> were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [Revelation 20:14 NKJV](#)

Here again we have the actual mention of the phrase “second death,” which has been seen before. This occurs when Jesus comes back to earth after spending 1000 years in heaven with those who came up in the first resurrection.

[G1067](#) is used mostly as hell and casting into it, but no direct mention was made of going directly there upon death.

[G5020](#) is used once as “casting down to hell.”

[2 Peter 2:4](#) For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast [them] down to hell<sup>5020</sup> and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; [2 Peter 2:4 NKJV](#)

In this chapter, Peter begins by talking about false prophets who lead people astray. Then he mentions God’s judgment on the fallen angels, casting them into hell. Well, I believe those angels are here around us tempting us to do wrong and wreaking havoc wherever allowed. So is this world considered hell by Peter? I suppose our fallen world could possibly be considered a pit of darkness compared to heaven where they were kicked out of. Or is Peter referring to their future judgment?

## Conclusion

The conclusions I drew from this search are the following.

- Upon death the unconscious spirit goes back to God for preservation
- There is no consciousness in death
- There is a resurrection of the righteous from death at the time when Jesus comes to take us to heaven
- There is a separate resurrection of the wicked a thousand years after the righteous are raised
- Some were taken to heaven ahead of the resurrections

## Upon death the unconscious spirit goes back to God for preservation

My first assertion is that when we die our spirit goes back to God who gave it.

[Ecclesiastes 12:7](#) Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. [Ecclesiastes 12:7 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:46](#) And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last. [Luke 23:46 NKJV](#)

[Acts 7:59](#) And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on [God] and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [Acts 7:59 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:55](#) Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given [something] to eat. [Luke 8:55 NKJV](#)

This is not a conscious spirit, but the essence of what makes a human being a unique individual. It is also associated with the breath that I believe God breathed into man that made him alive. I believe the essence, the thoughts, the memory, or the character of each individual is stored in heaven when a person dies and will be re-united with the body at the resurrection.

## There is no consciousness in death

The next assertion is that Jesus considers our first death a sleep.

[Job 14:10](#) But man dies and is laid away; Indeed he breathes his last And where [is] he? <sup>11</sup> [As] water disappears from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dries up, <sup>12</sup> So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens [are] no more, They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep. <sup>13</sup> "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> If a man dies, shall he live [again]? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes. <sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. [Job 14:10-15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 6:5](#) For in death [there is] no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? [Psalm 6:5 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 115:17](#) The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence. [Psalm 115:17 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:3](#) This [is] an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing [happens] to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness [is] in their hearts while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead. <sup>4</sup> But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. <sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun. [Ecclesiastes 9:3-6 NKJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:10](#) Whatever your hand finds to do, do [it] with your might; for [there is] no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. [Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV](#)

[John 11:11](#) These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." [John 11:11 NKJV](#)

[John 11:13](#) However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. [John 11:13-14 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:36](#) "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; [Acts 13:36 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 14:13](#) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." [Revelation 14:13 NKJV](#)

The verses we just read support make it clear that there is no consciousness in death or sleep.

## There is a resurrection of the righteous

[Daniel 12:2](#) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame [and] everlasting contempt. [Daniel 12:2 NKJV](#)

[John 5:28](#) "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup> "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. [John 5:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Acts 24:15](#) "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of [the] dead, both of [the] just and [the] unjust. [Acts 24:15 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:42](#) So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. [The body] is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. [1 Corinthians 15:42 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:52](#) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [1 Corinthians 15:52 NKJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13](#) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NKJV](#)

There is a resurrection of the righteous which will happen at the time of Christ's second coming to earth. Their unconscious spirits which had gone to heaven at death are now installed into their new physical bodies. Now, even with new bodies, they are the same people they were before death minus any trace of sin. Most of these verses mention resurrections for both the righteous and the wicked. The verse in [Revelation 20:6](#) however mentions the blessed will come up from the grave in the first resurrection. This strongly implies that there will be a second one.

### **There is a resurrection of the wicked**

As we mentioned above, most of the verses quoted refer to resurrection for both the righteous and the wicked.

[Revelation 20:5](#) But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection. [Revelation 20:5 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:12-15 NKJV](#)

These next two verses add some detail which clarifies the picture of the two resurrections. The first resurrection mentioned in [Revelation 20:6](#) is for the righteous who will be taken to heaven for 1000 years. [Revelation 20:5](#) doesn't call it the second resurrection, but it says the wicked will not come to life until the end of the 1000 years. It is not obvious in every text, that there are two separate resurrections. However, in Revelation, it seems quite clear that there will be 1000 years between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. So can we reconcile the texts that seem to portray both groups being resurrected at the same time? If you believe Jesus' statement below is in reference to His second coming, it is conceivable that the group of people responsible for His crucifixion and death were resurrected at His second coming to fulfill His statement made to Caiaphas at their mock trial of Him.

[Matthew 26:64](#) Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." [Matthew 26:64 NKJV](#)

After this resurrection takes place, the wicked and Satan will be sentenced and destroyed, thus putting an end to sin and death.

### Some were taken to heaven ahead of time

[2 Kings 2:11](#) Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire [appeared] with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. [2 Kings 2:11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:3](#) And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. [Matthew 17:3 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:4](#) And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. [Mark 9:4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:30](#) And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, [Luke 9:30 NKJV](#)

[Jude 1:9](#) Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" [Jude 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 5:24](#) And Enoch walked with God; and he [was] not, for God took him. [Genesis 5:24 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 11:5](#) By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [Hebrews 11:5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV](#)

The Bible mentions three special individuals, [Enoch](#), [Elijah](#) and [Moses](#), who were taken to heaven ahead of time. Enoch and Elijah did not even have to experience death. Moses was resurrected after death and taken to heaven. Then there was a group of unnamed people who were resurrected at the time of Christ's death whom He took with Him when He went back to heaven.

### Text's quoted in support of consciousness after death

To claim there are no Bible verses that portray immediate life after death would simply not be true. But if we believe the Bible to be God's word and consistent with itself, we must be able to understand and explain the true intent and meaning of them.

[Luke 16:19](#) "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup> "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' <sup>25</sup> "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. <sup>26</sup> 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' <sup>27</sup> "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, <sup>28</sup> 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup> "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' <sup>30</sup> "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead,

they will repent.' <sup>31</sup> "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' " [Luke 16:19-31 NKJV](#)

The first one that we just read, the story of the rich man and Lazarus, is probably the Bible passage quoted most often to support the idea that people go directly to heaven or hell when they die. I believe this story to be a parable which doesn't really tell us whether it was something that actually happened or not, but we can see from [Luke 16:31](#) that Jesus had a main point to draw from this parable. If they don't believe Moses and the prophets, then they would not believe even if someone came back from the dead to warn them. The doubters were asking Jesus for a sign, a miracle, possibly even the resurrection of someone from the dead to convince them of who He was. This story and His conclusion were in response to this. In order to make His main point, His parable involved some people who were conscious after death. In this chapter on what happens after death, I have already shown a lot of evidence that [there is no consciousness in death](#), [there is a resurrection for both the righteous](#) and [the wicked](#) when Jesus comes back. There are also many other details in the story which would not make sense if it were a true story of two real individuals. The following questions are partially obtained from a small booklet devoted entirely to this topic.<sup>539</sup>

- Why is Lazarus resting in Abraham's bosom? Does everyone rest in his bosom?
- How could someone in hell simply talk to people in heaven? If such were the case, how would anyone in heaven have any peace or enjoyment, if people from hell could be pestering them for eternity? What if a friend or family member kept calling out to you from hell?
- We know that people's bodies decay after they die. So how would Lazarus have a finger and the rich man a tongue if they were spirits in heaven and hell?

Based on the conclusions that I have drawn, I believe that taking this story literally would be inconsistent with what the Bible teaches. Hence, it must be simply a story that Jesus made up or borrowed to make a point. A point which would shortly be proven true when he literally brought Lazarus back to life. In fact, instead of believing, the Pharisees plotted to kill the very man brought to life in order to silence him. Do you think Jesus specifically named the poor man Lazarus because He knew he would be bringing a real life Lazarus back to life?

Let's look at another one that people quote to support the idea of life after death.

[Revelation 6:9](#) When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. <sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" <sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both [the number of] their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they [were], was completed.

[Revelation 6:9-11 NKJV](#)

One must really read the larger context of this one to understand why it is included here. It actually seems contradictory to what most of the bible teaches about the state of the dead. What I believe these verses are saying is that when John saw the fifth seal being opened, he saw under the altar in heaven, souls of those who had been slain because they had been faithful to God. And he said they cried out with a loud voice ... Now we previously discussed the soul returning to God at death, to await reunification with the body at the resurrection. This is the first instance I have come across of a soul, which has parted from the body, saying anything. It almost seems like they were resting unconsciously, then all of a sudden cried out, then were given a robe and told to go back to sleep. I don't know exactly what a soul is and in what form it is preserved, but perhaps under the altar in heaven is where God stores the unconscious souls of the dead. If

<sup>539</sup> Crews, Dennis, [The Rich Man and Lazarus](#), Amazing Facts, Roseville CA, 2009, p11-12. [\[online pdf\]](#)

these were good people, and conscious, why would they be kept under the altar? That could seem like keeping them in a cage, which would seem like a punishment to me. I think the answer lies in another verse that speaks of someone's blood, or possibly soul, crying out to God for justice.

[Genesis 4:10](#) And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.

[Genesis 4:10 NKJV](#)

I don't believe Abel's blood was literally crying out from the grave. I think it was symbolic, or a figure of speech and I think the same applies to the text in question in Revelation.

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What do you believe?

- What do you believe happens to a person after death?
- Do you think the Bible is clear or contradicts itself on this topic?
- Does the Bible say anything about reincarnation?



# Appendix B – Prophetic time & Daniel's 70-week Prophecy

I believe that one of the primary purposes of the prophecies given to us in the Bible is to give it credibility. If we believe that the Bible is the Word of God to us, and that it contained predictions of events that actually happened, then we can have faith that God knows and cares about our future. At this point in time, I believe that most Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, but that is a subject which is much debated. My reason for this belief is that when the prophecies are studied, and the key to unlocking them is discovered, a picture begins to emerge which looks a lot like the history of our world.

I believe the majority of prophecies in the Bible are found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Daniel, through dreams and visions he received or interpreted, gives us a picture of world history which stretches from his time to the end of the world. If we can find consistency in one of the more obvious prophecies in Daniel, we will hopefully have some of the tools necessary to pursue an understanding of other Bible prophecies and hopefully even some of Daniel's more difficult ones.

## Seventy-week prophecy

For me, the key to unlocking this understanding is the 70-week prophecy in Daniel

[Daniel 9:24](#) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. <sup>25</sup> "Know therefore and understand, [That] from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, [There shall be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. <sup>26</sup> "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it [shall be] with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. <sup>27</sup> Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate." [Daniel 9:24-27 NKJV](#)

It seems fairly obvious that this prophecy is talking about the coming of the Messiah. So, the natural questions are:

1. What and when is the starting event?
2. What and when is the ending event?
3. What is the literal duration of the 70 weeks?

The answer to the first question is stated pretty clearly, "from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." The when is not quite as straightforward. There were actually three notable events involving the Jews, building and a Medo-Persian king.

1. Somewhere around 538-536 BC at the end of the seventy years of captivity, Cyrus decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.<sup>540 541 542 543 544 545</sup>
2. In 457 BC, the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, Ezra carried a decree from the King providing supplies for the temple services and commanding that Jewish law or government be re-established. Bypassing the challenges in arriving at this date for now, here are some references from admittedly religious sources.<sup>546 547</sup>  
548 549 550
3. In 445 BC, the 20th year of Artaxerxes I, Nehemiah travelled to Jerusalem with letters from the king to supply material for the completion of the work begun in 457 BC.<sup>551 552</sup>

The second question concerning the ending event is really not so much about the end as it is about the end of all the subdivisions of the 70 weeks.

- 7 weeks – The verse says it will be built again with plaza and moat, but according to [Nehemiah 6:15](#), the wall was completed in 52 days. So I really don't know exactly what major event marked the end of the first 49 years. Some say that was when the full government was re-established. In a footnote, Maxwell said "Unfortunately, historical records from Palestine around the year 408 are too scanty for this concept to be verified."<sup>553</sup>
- 62 weeks – Messiah will be cut off *after* this
- 1/2 week – Messiah will put an end to sacrifices and grain offerings
- 1/2 week – to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*

Since the Bible doesn't conveniently give us dates, scholars have attempted to correlate historical references to statements in the Bible to arrive at dates for the birth, death and baptism in the life of Jesus. As will be seen, there are differences of opinion but generally accepted ranges on these proposed dates.<sup>554</sup> A couple common approaches to dating the start of Christ's ministry are:

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<sup>540</sup> [Ezra 1:1-4](#)

<sup>541</sup> Abbott, Jacob. *Cyrus the Great*. New York and London, Harper Brothers Publishers, 1901, p 222.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=gOU9AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>542</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538\\_BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538_BC)

<sup>543</sup> Guy, Joseph. *Guy's General School Question Book*. London, Baldwin and Cradock, 1829, p 9.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=mvgIAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>544</sup> Tyler, Moses Coit. *Library of Universal History - Volume II*. New York and Chicago, Union Book Company, 1899, p 382.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=uMw6AQAAMAAJ&pg=PR382>

<sup>545</sup> Clare, Israel Smith. *Illustrated Universal History: Being a clear and concise history of all nations*. J. C. McCurdy & Co. Philadelphia, PA; Cincinnati, OH; Chicago, IL, St. Louis, MO, 1881, p 25, 34. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA25>,

<http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA34>

<sup>546</sup> [Ezra 7:13-28](#)

<sup>547</sup> Rollin and other authentic sources. *Ancient History - History of the Persians*. London, Religious Tract Society, 1842, p 74.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=\\_opCAAAIAAJ&pg=PA74](http://books.google.com/books?id=_opCAAAIAAJ&pg=PA74)

<sup>548</sup> Nicoll, W. Robert; Smith, G. A., *The Expositor*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1906, p 9.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=B6cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>549</sup> Power, Francis Armstrong. *The Book of Texts of Ancient and Modern History, &c*. London, Sampson, Low, Marston & Co. 1879, p 230. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iYkBAAAQAAJ&pg=PA230>

<sup>550</sup> <http://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/prophecy/when-did-seventy-weeks-daniel-924-begin>

<sup>551</sup> [Nehemiah 2:1-8](#)

<sup>552</sup> Nicoll. p9. <https://books.google.com/books?id=B6cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>553</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol1 – The Message of Daniel for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1981, p218.

<sup>554</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology\\_of\\_Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Jesus)

- [Luke 3:1-3](#) tells us that in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, John the Baptist began preaching. However there are two possible dates for the start of the Tiberius' reign. 11 or 12, when he became co-regent<sup>555</sup> with Augustus, or 14 when Augustus died.<sup>557</sup> This would place the start of the ministry of John in the year 26/27 or 29, with the baptism marking the start of Jesus' ministry presumably shortly after. Those who don't choose the co-regent option and wish to harmonize this statement with the following forty-six year dating approach, claim the 15th year of Tiberius, 781/2 from the founding of Rome, or 27/28 AD as the end of John the Baptist's ministry.<sup>558 559</sup>
- Another popular method for dating the ministry of Christ is from the statement, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" [John 2:20](#) The thinking is that the Temple had been in under some form of construction since Herod began building it forty-six years ago. Multiple sources place this statement during the first Passover of Christ's ministry in the year 781 from the founding of Rome, or 27 AD give or take a year.<sup>560 561 562 563</sup>

The book of John clearly mentions three Passovers in the adult life of Jesus from which we conclude that His ministry was at least two years. [[2:23](#), [6:4](#), [11:55](#)] Some propose the feast of the Jews in [John 5:1](#), was also a Passover, which would make His ministry at least 3 years.

There are of course ranges in the dates proposed for all of the following events. I have proposed a specific set of dates (except for the birth of Jesus) for the following events with references:

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<sup>555</sup> "Rome," *The Encyclopædia Britannica - Eleventh Edition*. New York, The Encyclopædia Britannica Company, 1911, p 648.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=1i4qAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA648>

<sup>556</sup> Gilman, Daniel Coit. *The New International Encyclopædia*. New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, p 485.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=eNM7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA485>

<sup>557</sup> Morris, Robert. *The twelve Caesars (Julius to Domitian)*. La Grange, Kentucky, Published for the author, 1877, p 13.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=mf4VAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA13>

<sup>558</sup> Didon, Henry. *Jesus Christ, Our Savior's Person, Mission and Spirit*. New York, D Appleton & Company, 1891, p 409.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=ZHRCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA409>

<sup>559</sup> Pressensé, Edmond De. *Jesus Christ: His Life, Times, and Work*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1871, p 223.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=l7k0AQAAIAAJ&pg=PA223>

<sup>560</sup> Didon. p 409. <http://books.google.com/books?id=ZHRCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA409>

<sup>561</sup> Pressensé. p 223. <http://books.google.com/books?id=l7k0AQAAIAAJ&pg=PA223>

<sup>562</sup> Hill, William Bancroft. *The Life of Christ*. New York, Fleming H. Revell, Company, 1917, p 55.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=FFNCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA55>

<sup>563</sup> Gilman. p 485. <http://books.google.com/books?id=eNM7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA485>

- 6-4 BC. Birth of Jesus<sup>564 565 566 567</sup>
- 27 Baptism of Jesus (Fall)<sup>568 569 570 571</sup>
- 31 Crucifixion of Jesus (Passover/Spring)<sup>572 573</sup>
- 34 Stoning of the deacon Stephen, and end of probation for the Jewish Nation (Fall)<sup>574 575 576</sup>

If we choose 457 BC, we can create the following timeline showing the prophetic week and the year. The fall/spring distinctions are needed to account for the half years. I would like to point out that the exact year for the birth of Jesus is not critical, because the prophecy doesn't have any subdivision terminating on that event. It should however be consistent with the statement that Jesus was about thirty years of age when He began His ministry [[Luke 3:23](#)]. The year 4 BC is considered the latest because it is generally accepted to be the year that Herod the Great died.

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<sup>564</sup> Benson, Christopher. *The Chronology of our Saviours Life or An Inquiry into the True Time of the Birth, Baptism, and Crucifixion, of Jesus Christ*. Cambridge, University Press, 1810, p116. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA116>

<sup>565</sup> Wieseler, Karl. *A Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Cambridge, Deighton, Bell & Co. 1864, p125. <https://books.google.com/books?id=OEVVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA114>

<sup>566</sup> G. F. P. *Sunday-School Lessons on the Life of Jesus*. Boston, Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 1881, p6. <https://books.google.com/books?id=qNwPAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA6>

<sup>567</sup> Bond. p12. <https://books.google.com/books?id=F3mcB6GnOtlC&pg=PR12>

<sup>568</sup> Benson. p188. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA188>

<sup>569</sup> Pinnock, W. H., *An Analysis of Ecclesiastical History from the Birth of Christ to the Council of Nice, A.D. 325.*, Cambridge, Hall & Son, 1852, p16. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA16>

<sup>570</sup> Hales, William. *New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy - Vol 1*. London, C. J. G. & F. Rivington, 1830, p 97. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA97>

<sup>571</sup> Fallows, Samuel. *The Popular and critical Bible encyclopedia*. Chicago, The Howard-Severance Company, 1911, p424. <http://books.google.com/books?id=LLNUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA424>

<sup>572</sup> Pinnock. p29. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA29>

<sup>573</sup> Hales. p 98. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA98>

<sup>574</sup> Pinnock. p45. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA45>

<sup>575</sup> Shimeall, R. C., *The Age of the World*. New York, Swords, Stanford & Co. 1843, p 238.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=zN83AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA238>

<sup>576</sup> Hales. p 99. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA99>

Week	Year/Event
0	457 BC Artaxerxes' decree
≈	
	6-4 BC Jesus was born
	1 BC to 1 skipped year 0
69	27 Jesus was baptized
Mid wk	31 Jesus was crucified
70	34 Stephen stoned/gospel to gentiles

## Day for a year conclusion

While there are variations for the dates proposed, if we put them all together in the timeline above, they interlock like pieces of a puzzle. If we are willing to accept this timeline as fulfillment of this prophecy, then the inescapable conclusion is that a day in prophecy can and in many cases will be interpreted as a literal year. This conclusion should not be too surprising given the fact that often time prophecies are composed of symbols that represent something else literally. The following bible verses also give credence to the idea of a day representing a year:

[Numbers 14:34](#) "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, [namely] forty years, and you shall know My rejection. [Numbers 14:34 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 4:6](#) "And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year. [Ezekiel 4:6 NKJV](#)

## Time, times, half-time

One other prophetic time unit that needs to be addressed are the terms "time" and "times." These are used several times in Daniel and Revelation. Probably the most straight forward explanation comes from the book of Daniel, where he tells Nebuchadnezzar that he will lose his mind and his kingdom for seven times which was well accepted to mean seven years.

[Daniel 4:25](#) They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. [Daniel 4:25 NKJV](#)

It is not my preferred practice to draw major conclusions from a single verse, but as we discuss days in a month in the next section, we will see how everything fits together like a puzzle.

## Days in a month and days in a year

Now, if we should find ourselves having to convert from prophetic years or months to days, it would be necessary to know how many days are counted in a month and how many days are counted in a year. Obviously we know that a solar year is approximately 365.25 days, but that doesn't mean in prophetic symbols that the same number of days should be used to represent a year. In fact, for the sake of using symbols it might make more sense to use more symbolic numbers. For example, 360 days in a year, like 360 degrees in a circle. 12 months of 30 days each would also multiply out to 360 days in a year. Can we find any basis for these numbers in the Bible? Let's take a look at the Genesis story of the flood.

[Genesis 7:11](#) In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. [Genesis 7:11 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 7:24](#) And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. [Genesis 7:24 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 8:4](#) Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. [Genesis 8:4 NKJV](#)

From these three verses we have a span of 5 months and presumably the same span given as 150 days. Some simple math will reveal that in this case dividing 150 days by 5 months yields 30 days/month. Let's take a look at another.

[Revelation 11:1](#) Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot [for] **forty-two months**. <sup>3</sup> "And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth." [Revelation 11:1-3 NKJV](#)

This prophecy in Revelation seem to equate a 42 month period with 1260 days. Dividing 1260 days by 42 months gives us 30 days/month which seems to support the use of uniform 30 day months in prophetic time.

[Revelation 12:13](#) Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male [Child]. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for **a time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> [see footnote] [Revelation 12:13-18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" <sup>5</sup> And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for **forty-two months**. <sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It was granted to him to make war with

the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. <sup>8</sup> All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. <sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear. <sup>10</sup> He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. [Revelation 13:1-10 NKJV](#)

These verses we just read from Revelation seem to equate the "time, times and half a time," which I previously determined to be 3.5 years, to the 42 months which I also previously determined to be equivalent to 1260. If we divide 1260 days by 3.5 years, we get 360 days/year.

## Conclusion and Summary

I believe that based on these examples, not to mention the nice math of using the round numbers 30 and 360 rather than dealing with the fractions that would be involved with using lunar months or solar years, that prophetic time should be calculated in this way:

- The conversion from prophetic time to real time should be used if the prophecy is given in terms of symbols that represent something else
- 1 day in prophetic time is 1 year in real time
- 1 month in prophetic time is 30 days in prophetic time and 30 years in real time
- 1 year in prophetic time is 360 days in prophetic time and 360 years in real time
- 1 "time" is 1 year of prophetic time and 360 years in real time
- 1 "times" is 2 years of prophetic time and 720 years in real time
- 1 "half time" is 1/2 a year of prophetic time and 180 years in real time

## Appendix C – The age of the world

There has been much speculation about the age of the world and the universe. According to Wikipedia, secular science teaches the following:

- The universe is about 13.7 billion years old<sup>577</sup>
- The earth was formed about 4.57 billion years ago<sup>578</sup>
- Life began somewhere between 3.5 and 2.5 billion years ago<sup>579</sup>

Among Christian viewpoints, Young Earth Creationists (YEC), believe based on the biblical account in Genesis that life on earth began 5700-10000 years ago.<sup>580</sup> Some interesting numbers or beliefs from the YEC wiki page are:

- The earth and the universe were created by the God of the Bible in six literal days
- They believe the Bible is historically accurate, and a factually inerrant record of natural history
- The YEC view was the dominant view during the 1500-1800's
  - During this time James Ussher, an Archbishop who lived from 1582-1656, after extensive research published a creation date as the week preceding Sunday October 23, 4004 BC.<sup>581 582</sup>
  - Among the many proposed dates, Ussher's became most prominent, probably because it was published with the King James Bible
- Support for the YEC viewpoint declined after the 1800's with the rise of the scientific revolution
- YEC views had a revival with fundamentalist Christians in the 1900's
- Depending on the poll, 40-50% of people in the United States identify with the YEC viewpoint, but the number drops to only 22% among people with post graduate degrees
- A 2008 Gallup poll came up with the following statistics:
  - 36% of U.S. adults agreed with the statement that "human beings developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process."
  - 14% believed that "Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God had no part in this process."
  - 44% of US adults agreed with the statement "God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so."

My beliefs are mostly in line with YEC views. I do not believe that God had to create the entire universe at the same time He made our world to be consistent with the Genesis account. I feel that simply creating our own solar system or maybe our local cluster could have sufficed for creating sun moon and stars on the fourth day.

Now let's begin to discuss how one arrives at the figure of approximately 4000 BC for the creation of our world.

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<sup>577</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Big\\_Bang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Big_Bang)

<sup>578</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Earth)

<sup>579</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenesis>

<sup>580</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young\\_Earth\\_creationism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Earth_creationism)

<sup>581</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Ussher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Ussher)

<sup>582</sup> [http://creation.com/images/pdfs/other/timeline\\_of\\_the\\_bible.pdf](http://creation.com/images/pdfs/other/timeline_of_the_bible.pdf)



- 1656 years from Adam to the flood
  - [Genesis 5](#) gives us a very clear genealogy from Adam down to Noah's birth which covers 1056 years (see [The Antediluvian World](#))
  - [Genesis 7:6](#) tells us that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came
- 222 years from the start of the flood to the birth of Terah, father of Abraham
  - [Genesis 8](#) tells us that Noah and his family came out of the ark in the 601<sup>st</sup> year of his life
  - [Genesis 11:10](#) gives us a time based genealogy from the second year after the flood, through 8 generations from the flood to the birth of Terah the father of Abraham. (see [Decreasing lifespan after the flood](#))
- 70 or 130 years: There is some debate about whether Abraham was born when Terah was 70 or 130 (see [Decreasing lifespan after the flood](#))
  - [Genesis 11:27](#) tells us that Terah didn't start having children until he was 70. Was Abraham the first born?
  - [Genesis 11:32-12:4](#) tells us that Terah died in Haran at 205 years of age, then Abraham left Haran at the age of 75 which would have made Terah 130 when Abraham was born
- 290 years from the birth of Abraham to the start of the Israelites sojourn in Egypt (See [Decreasing lifespan after the flood](#))
  - [Genesis 21:5](#) Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born
  - [Genesis 25:26](#) Isaac was 60 years old when Esau & Jacob were born
  - [Genesis 47:9](#) Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt
- 215-430 years: There is some debate about how long the children of Israel were in Egypt (see [The length of the sojourn in Egypt](#))
  - [Genesis 15:13](#) prediction about his descendants mistreatment in Egypt for 400 years and four generations
  - [Exodus 12:40-41](#) says 430 years
  - [Exodus 6:16-20](#) names only the four generations with life span but not ages at birth as the earlier genealogies did
    - Levi 137 years, and in [The children of Israel enslaved, birth of Moses](#), I estimate Levi was 43 when he went to Egypt, meaning he lived there for 92 years
    - Kohath 133 years
    - Amram 137 years
    - Moses 80 years at the Exodus
  - [Acts 7:6](#) enslaved and mistreated for 400 years
  - [Galatians 3:17](#) 430 years from the covenant to Abraham to the ten commandments which are considered to have been given the year of the Exodus
- 479 years: [1 Kings 6:1](#) tells us that the fourth year of Solomon's reign was the 480<sup>th</sup> year after the Exodus
- 37 years: [2 Chronicles 9:30](#) tells us that Solomon reigned 40 years, so 40 minus the three above gives 37
- 345 years: The books of Kings and Chronicles gives us a fairly good idea of the duration of time from the end of Solomon's reign to the captivity of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to Babylon. Just adding up the length of reigns given in the Bible, one would arrive at 387. But Edwin Thiele showed that there must have been some overlapping reigns and in addition, you have to decide whether the transition year is counted for both king's reigns or not.<sup>583</sup> (see also [The divided kingdom](#))

<sup>583</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Mysterious\\_Numbers\\_of\\_the\\_Hebrew\\_Kings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mysterious_Numbers_of_the_Hebrew_Kings)

- 70 years in Babylon: [Jeremiah 25:11,12](#); [29:10-14](#); [2 Chronicles 36:20-23](#); [Daniel 9:2](#); [Ezra 1:1](#)
- 538 years before Christ, according to multiple historical sources was when the Jews were released by Cyrus the Great and commissioned to rebuild the Jewish temple.<sup>584 585 586</sup>

Adding these numbers up, we get 3922-4197 years before Christ. It is not the purpose of this article to debate the 215 vs. 430 year sojourn in Egypt, nor the age of Terah at the birth of Abraham. The precise timeline of the Jewish kings has been a subject of intense study and research by many people. Edwin Thiele,<sup>587</sup> a Seventh-day Adventist, missionary, archaeologist, and scholar wrote a book titled, "[The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings](#)," on this topic.<sup>588</sup> In spite of these questions, if the pre and post flood chronologies are accepted at face value, and the days of creation are taken to be literal 24 hour days, it is pretty easy to arrive at the 6000 year age of the world since creation, which is what I believe.

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What do you believe?

1. Do you believe that the Bible is a historically accurate book?
2. Do you think it's possible to be a scientist and believe in a 6000 year old earth?
3. How do you think the flood could have affected secular science's views on the age of the earth?

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<sup>584</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_in\\_Jerusalem#Second\\_Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem#Second_Temple)

<sup>585</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/530s\\_BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/530s_BC)

<sup>586</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Jewish\\_history#Biblical\\_period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Jewish_history#Biblical_period)

<sup>587</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin\\_R.\\_Thiele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_R._Thiele)

<sup>588</sup> [http://www.auss.info/auss\\_publication\\_file.php?pub\\_id=840&journal=1&type=pdf](http://www.auss.info/auss_publication_file.php?pub_id=840&journal=1&type=pdf), [copy on <http://btib.org/1992-1-03.pdf>]

# Appendix D – Who is Michael the Archangel

Michael as a name for an angel or spirit being is only used five times in the Bible.

[Daniel 10:13](#) "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, **Michael**, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. [Daniel 10:13 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 10:21](#) "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except **Michael** your prince. [Daniel 10:21 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 12:1](#) "At that time **Michael** shall stand up, The great prince who stands [watch] over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, [Even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. [Daniel 12:1 NKJV](#)

[Jude 1:9](#) Yet **Michael** the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" [Jude 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:7](#) And war broke out in heaven: **Michael** and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. [Revelation 12:7-8 NKJV](#)

The first thing to note is that this being is only referred to as the archangel in the book of Jude.

## Old Testament

Let's start by looking at the three references in Daniel in a broader context.

[Daniel 10:1](#) In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message [was] true, but the appointed time [was] long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. <sup>2</sup> In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. <sup>3</sup> I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

<sup>4</sup> Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that [is], the Tigris, <sup>5</sup> I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist [was] girded with gold of Uphaz! <sup>6</sup> His body [was] like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

<sup>7</sup> And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. <sup>8</sup> Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. <sup>9</sup> Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

<sup>10</sup> Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and [on] the palms of my hands. <sup>11</sup> And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

<sup>12</sup> Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. <sup>13</sup> "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, **Michael**, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. <sup>14</sup> "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision [refers] to [many] days yet [to come]."

<sup>15</sup> When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. <sup>16</sup> And suddenly, [one] having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. <sup>17</sup> "For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

<sup>18</sup> Then again, [the one] having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. <sup>19</sup> And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace [be] to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

<sup>20</sup> Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. <sup>21</sup> "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except **Michael** your prince. [Daniel 10:1-21 NKJV](#))

The broader context is that the whole latter half of the book of Daniel is about the dreams and visions he received about future events. This is the last one, but interestingly he does not describe the contents of the vision as he did for the previous ones he recorded in chapters 7-9. In fact the only telling of the vision will be the interpretation of it given by the angel, presumably Gabriel who also appeared to him in ([8:16](#), [9:21](#)), recorded in chapters 11-12. For this one, he only says that he had a vision, and understood that it was true and that it contained great conflict. I'm not sure why it says that he understood the message in the NKJV, because he had been fasting and mourning for three weeks trying to understand it. The NLT translates it a little different:

[Daniel 10:1](#) In the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) had another vision. He understood that the vision concerned events certain to happen in the future—times of war and great hardship. [Daniel 10:1 NLT](#)

The NLT combined the last two phrases to say that he understood the vision to be about future events, of war and hardship.

Getting back to the broader context, Daniel 10-12 is all about his last vision, how he struggled to understand it, and how an angel finally came to him to explain it. The problem is that the explanation given by the angel, is in great need of further explanation, but that is a topic for another study. Since, chapters 10-12 are all related in this way, it is very clear that the three references to Michael in Daniel are all about the same being. So Michael is referred to as:

- [10:13](#) - One of the chief princes<sup>589</sup>

English	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Meaning
one	אֶחָד	'echad	one
of the chief	רִאשׁוֹן	ri'shown	first, former, foremost, chief

<sup>589</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/dan/10/13/p0/t\\_conc\\_860013](http://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/dan/10/13/p0/t_conc_860013)

Princes	שָׂר	sar	prince, ruler, leader, chief, chieftain, official, captain
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- [10:21](#) - Your prince<sup>590</sup>

English	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Meaning
your prince	שָׂר	sar	prince, ruler, leader, chief, chieftain, official, captain

- [12:1](#) - The great prince<sup>591</sup>

English	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Meaning
the great	גָּדוֹל	gadowl	great, large, older, important, God Himself
Prince	שָׂר	sar	prince, ruler, leader, chief, chieftain, official, captain

So, Daniel could have intended, *foremost chief*, or *captain*, or even *great God Himself, ruler and captain*. In any case, Michael seemed to be one who was more powerful than even the angel Gabriel.

## New Testament

Now let's take a look at the New Testament references to Michael.

[Jude 1:9](#) Yet **Michael** the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" [Jude 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 12:7](#) And war broke out in heaven: **Michael** and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. [Revelation 12:7-8 NKJV](#)

In his book, Jude introduces himself as the brother of James, but doesn't clarify which. He begins the book by talking about some people that have crept into the fellowship of the church, who it seems have some inappropriate sensual practices, reject the authority of the church, revile angels, and even deny Jesus (probably denying that He is God). He goes on to say that these people will be punished, giving examples of others who have received judgment from God. Who do they think they are, even Michael the archangel didn't rail against Satan when he went to resurrect Moses. The way this verse is written it appears that it was either common knowledge at the time, or he was quoting from another source. I say this because rather than elaborating on it or trying to substantiate it, he is using the circumstances of this incident it to make another point. Now that we've looked at the context, let's look at the linguistics. The word archangel is translated from the Greek word ἀρχάγγελος, är-khä'n-ge-los.<sup>592</sup> It is only used in one other place in the Bible:

[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an **archangel**, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [1 Thessalonians 4:16 NKJV](#)

Archangel has the meaning, chief of the angels.<sup>593</sup> Notice that it is not defined as chief angel, but chief of the angels. Let's see if we can find another verse in the Bible that identifies who the commander of the angels is.

[Joshua 5:13](#) And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "[Are] You for us or for our adversaries?" <sup>14</sup> So He said, "No, but [as] Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

<sup>590</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/dan/10/21/p0/t\\_conc\\_860021](http://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/dan/10/21/p0/t_conc_860021)

<sup>591</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/dan/12/1/p0/t\\_conc\\_862001](http://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/dan/12/1/p0/t_conc_862001)

<sup>592</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/jde/1/9/p0>

<sup>593</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G743&t=NKJV>

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" <sup>15</sup> Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand [is] holy." And Joshua did so. [Joshua 5:13-15 NKJV](#)

How do we know that this wasn't an angel that appeared to Joshua? Well, there are a couple reasons. First, when Joshua bowed down to the ground, the angel didn't tell him not to bow down to him. Then the being told Joshua to remove his sandals from his feet because he was standing on holy ground. Let's see what God said to Moses when He appeared to Him in the burning bush.

[Exodus 3:1](#) Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush [was] not consumed. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." <sup>4</sup> So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand [is] holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Moreover He said, "I [am] the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. [Exodus 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

Now this is really relevant to this discussion especially because it begins in verse 2 by saying the angel of the LORD appeared to Moses, but then He tells Moses to remove his sandals because he's standing on holy ground. Then He goes on to tell Moses that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Let's see what happened when John bowed down to an angel that appeared to him.

[Revelation 19:10](#) And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that]! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." [Revelation 19:10 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:8](#) Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that]. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." [Revelation 22:8-9 NKJV](#)

So, from these two verses in Revelation, we can see that angels who appeared to humans have been known to tell them not to bow down to them.

## Conclusion

Let summarize the main points that that we have examined.

- Daniel saw someone in vision named Michael who was referred to as chief prince, which could also have been translated, *foremost chief*, or *captain*, or even *great God Himself*, *ruler and captain*
- Michael the archangel resurrected Moses (an angel does not have the power to give life)
- The Lord Himself, whom I believe to be Jesus at His second coming, shouts with the voice of the archangel, and resurrects the dead in Christ
- The only two verses that use the word translated to archangel say "the archangel" and not "an archangel," implying that there is only one
- The meaning of the Greek word for archangel is chief of the angels

- Revelation says, Michel and his angels, again implying that he is chief over the angels
- The being that appeared to Joshua:
  - Called Himself captain of the LORD's hosts (army, presumably angels)
  - Said Joshua was standing on holy ground (he could not be an angel). When God (clearly identified) spoke to Moses from the burning bush, he also said Moses was standing on holy ground.
  - Referred to the LORD's hosts, (presumably referring to God the Father) so this wasn't God the Father talking to Joshua

Considering these points, I don't see any way that Michael could be an angel. And with the Godly inferences, I am led to the inescapable conclusion that Michael is another of the numerous names for God the Son.

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What do you believe?

- When the authors of the Bible wrote about Michael, do you think they knew they were talking about God?
- When Jude wrote of Michael the archangel, he spoke of it as if it was common knowledge. Where do you think that common knowledge came from, considering that it was not included in the Bible?
- When people had visions, do you think they could always tell if they were seeing Jesus or an angel?

# Appendix I – Who were the Nicolaitans

So, who were these Nicolaitans that the church in Ephesus hated, but some in the church of Pergamum embraced? In the writings of the early fathers, they were often associated with Cerinthians (the followers of Cerinthus) as Gnostical sects who were both considered heretics by the early Christian Church. The basis for these Gnostical beliefs existed in the East before the time of Christ and the Christian Church. No doubt some of the new converts attempted to merge their former beliefs with the new teachings of the Christian Church. According to Young, the common thread among these Gnostics, was based on an attempt to explain the existence of evil in the world, which they considered inconsistent with a perfect, all-wise, loving God. They believed that the world was not created by the supreme God, but by a being of inferior rank, lacking in benevolence and wisdom, whom they called Demiurgus. This being they considered identical with the Jewish God of the Old Testament. Between Demiurgus and the Supreme Deity, they placed an order of beings, among whom was Christ, distinct from Jesus whom they believed a mere man. They believed that Christ united with Jesus at His baptism, giving Him a divine character until He died when Christ departed from Him.<sup>594</sup> Wikipedia emphasized a different aspect of Gnosis, which is the knowledge or insight into humanity's real nature as Divine. They considered the most important part of the process of salvation to be the personal knowledge, in contrast to the simple faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.<sup>595</sup>

Others have added to or even focused more on sexual immorality, possibly practiced in love feasts, as errors of the Nicolaitans. It is easy to find religious leaders throughout history who have justified their sexual promiscuity on the grounds of religious practice. This has taken the form of polygamy in more than one major religion. It has been argued that Jude who wrote to warn his readers against perversions that were creeping into the church, was referring to the Nicolaitans, though they were not specifically named. In this context, he wrote of the immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah [[Jude 1:7](#)] as well as rushing headlong in to the error of Balaam [[Jude 1:11](#)], who used Moabite temple prostitutes to seduce the Israelites into sin [[Numbers 25](#); [Numbers 31:16](#)]. Some have used John's mention of both Balaam and the Nicolaitans in the message to the church of Pergamum, to associate sexual immorality with the Nicolaitans [[Revelation 2:14-15](#)]. There is also division on whether the Nicolaitans were followers of the deacon Nicolas [[Acts 6:5](#)].<sup>596 597</sup>

There does not appear to be enough evidence in the Bible itself to prove or disprove most of these suppositions, but clearly the deeds of these Nicolaitans were significant enough to mention. Taking a reverse approach to the application of the Church of Ephesus to the apostolic age, could lead one to believe that actual reproofs in the New Testament to the churches of the time could possibly lead to the answer. I have already mentioned Jude which was at least half dedicated to warnings against men who were turning God's grace into licentiousness, and like Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh [[Jude](#)]. Paul reproved the Corinthians for not removing from their fellowship one who committed gross immorality, not even seen among the Gentiles [[1 Corinthians 5:1](#)]. Peter gave a warning about false prophets that sounded very similar to the warning of Jude [[2 Peter 2](#)]. At the beginning of his Gospel, John made it clear that Jesus was God, was in the beginning with God, and created all things [[John 1](#)]. Later, John

<sup>594</sup> Young. p342. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA342>

<sup>595</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosis>

<sup>596</sup> Young. p419. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA419>

<sup>597</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaitism>



essentially warned his readers that anyone who taught something different about the nature of Jesus Christ should be considered a false prophet [[1 John 4:1](#)].

I think it was probably likely that the Nicolaitans were guilty of all of the above, but especially the false teachings on the nature of God, and the sexually immoral practices.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the Nicolaitans were followers of the deacon Nicolas?
- Do you see the teaching of seeking inner divinity in other religions?
- How could someone think that sexually promiscuous practices are part of the teachings of Jesus Christ?