

# *Between the Lines*

*(of the Bible)*

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This began as an exercise to write down some of the things I have come to believe about the Bible. As you will see, many of my statements are prefaced with the words “I believe.” What I came to realize is that the Bible is a very complex book, with many treasures that can be discovered if you will only take the time to study it in depth. Very often, the best explanation for certain parts of the Bible can be found in other part of the book itself. For anyone who has ever read the Bible in depth and not simply jumped from one popular Bible story to another, they would most likely have ended up with many questions. In some cases these questions are answered by other parts of the Bible and in other cases, I believe you have to read between the lines.

Please understand that all Bible quotes are generally indented and have the reference as well as version or translation. Paragraphs with the regular margins are my own comments and beliefs and should not be treated with the same weight as the Bible quotes. There are other historical and archaeological facts and figures as well as opinions and speculation of others which are all included with references. Since I didn't want my readers to have to go out and buy books to read my references, most of them are web pages and out of copyright books which are available with the click of a mouse if you are reading online.

This document is currently a work in progress. As such, you may find parts of this document in an unfinished state. If you find grammatical or other errors or have any comments in general, I would be happy to receive your feedback in email.

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# God

Does God really exist? Why should we care about whether God exists? Religious beliefs have probably always existed and been taught throughout the history of our earth, and for the most part they each have some notion of one or more superior beings. In this discussion, I will only focus on what I believe the Bible tells us about God. I know it would be impossible to exhaustively cover this topic but that will not keep me from starting. Let list a few of what I consider key texts in the Bible.

## God created all things

[Ezekiel 28:14](#) "You [were] the anointed cherub who covers;

I established you;

You were on the holy mountain of God;

You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

<sup>15</sup> You [were] perfect in your ways from the day you were created,

Till iniquity was found in you. [Ezekiel 28:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 1:1](#) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [Genesis 1:1 NKJV](#)

[John 1:1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

<sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. [John 1:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 4:11](#) "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 4:11 NKJV](#)

[Job 12:10](#) In whose hand [is] the life of every living thing,

And the breath of all mankind? [Job 12:10 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 1:16](#) For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

[Colossians 1:16 NKJV](#)

[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. [Job 1:6 NKJV](#)

I believe God created Angels, and our world. I also believe based on Job that it is possible that He created people on other worlds as well. I think God created all living beings so that He could interact with them and have relationships with them.

## God doesn't change

[Malachi 3:6](#) "For I [am] the LORD, I do not change;

Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. [Malachi 3:6 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 13:8](#) Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, today, and forever. [Hebrews 13:8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:18](#) "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. [Matthew 5:18 NKJV](#)

The Bible clearly tells us that God doesn't change. However, on reading the Old Testament, many see only a picture of a vengeful and jealous God, one who destroyed the world with a flood, and rained down fire on cities like Sodom and Gomorrah, and commanded the Israelites to destroy entire nations. Does the perceived difference between the God of the Old and New Testaments then present a problem for us? We will not be able to totally reconcile this discrepancy right here and now, but maybe we can plant some seeds that can grow into an understanding of this perplexing question.

- Is it possible that the world had become so wicked and so technologically advanced before the flood that they were in danger of destroying all life?
- Recapping the story of Sodom and Gomorrah; recall that the men of the city intended to rape and probably kill the angels, whom they thought were strangers in their city [[Genesis 19:4-11](#)]. This was probably their normal practice, rather than an isolated incident. What if the entire population was that evil? By process of deduction, there were less than ten righteous people in the entire city [[Genesis 18:23-33](#)], and the Angels removed them before the city was destroyed [[Genesis 19:15-17](#)].
- Before we get too hung up on the idea of God ordering the destruction of entire nations, or ethnic cleansing as some detractors like to call it, it may help to realize that life on this earth is a minute portion of what God has planned for us. Undoubtedly, there were many who deserved the death sentence, but were there some that didn't? If there were people who were underserving of destruction, God would know, and eternity in heaven would far outweigh their few lost years on this sinful earth.

For me, what it boils down to is this. If you believe that God is united in purpose, and that God never changes, then there must have been some very extreme circumstances for some of these instances in the Old Testament, things that God could know seeing from the beginning to the end. I think there must also have been misrepresentations and mischaracterizations of God by the people of Old Testament times.

## God is omniscient

Next there are three characteristics that are often attributed to God, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Let see what the Bible has to say about them.

Omniscience is defined as knowing everything.

[1 Kings 8:39](#) "then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), [1 Kings 8:39 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 139:1](#) For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, You have searched me and known [me].

<sup>2</sup> You know my sitting down and my rising up;

You understand my thought afar off.

<sup>3</sup> You comprehend my path and my lying down,

And are acquainted with all my ways.



<sup>4</sup> For [there is] not a word on my tongue,  
[But] behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. [Psalm 139:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 147:5](#) Great [is] our Lord, and mighty in power;  
His understanding [is] infinite. [Psalm 147:5 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 40:28](#) Have you not known?  
Have you not heard?  
The everlasting God, the LORD,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth,  
Neither faints nor is weary.  
His understanding is unsearchable. [Isaiah 40:28 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 10:12](#) He has made the earth by His power,  
He has established the world by His wisdom,  
And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. [Jeremiah 10:12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:30](#) "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [Matthew 10:30 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:20](#) Where [is] the wise? Where [is] the scribe? Where [is] the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? [1 Corinthians 1:20 NKJV](#)

[1 John 3:20](#) For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. [1 John 3:20 NKJV](#)

## God is omnipresent

Omnipresent means to be present everywhere at the same time. That is different from being in everything which is known as pantheism. Some of the following verses were obtained from a list compiled at <http://www.openbible.info/topics/omnipresence>.

[Deuteronomy 31:6](#) "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He [is] the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." [Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV](#)

[Job 34:21](#) "For His eyes [are] on the ways of man,  
And He sees all his steps. [Job 34:21 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 139:7](#) Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend into heaven, You [are] there;  
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You [are there].

<sup>9</sup> [If] I take the wings of the morning,  
[And] dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

<sup>10</sup> Even there Your hand shall lead me,  
And Your right hand shall hold me. [Psalm 139:7-10 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:3](#) The eyes of the LORD [are] in every place,  
Keeping watch on the evil and the good. [Proverbs 15:3 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 43:2](#) When you pass through the waters, I [will be] with you;  
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,  
Nor shall the flame scorch you. [Isaiah 43:2 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 23:24](#) Can anyone hide himself in secret places,  
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;  
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD. [Jeremiah 23:24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:20](#) "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." [Mathew 18:20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 28:19](#) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen. [Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Romans 8:38](#) For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 8:38-39 NKJV](#)

I do not believe this to mean that God is everywhere and in everything. I believe He can be any and everywhere at the same time. I also believe that Jesus gave up omnipresence when He took on human form. That is why He said it is better for Him to leave and to send the Holy Spirit.

[John 16:7](#) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. [John 16:7 NKJV](#)

## God is omnipotent

Omnipotence means that God has power to do anything. Some of the following verses were from a list compiled at <http://www.openbible.info/topics/omnipotence>.

[Genesis 1:1](#) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [Genesis 1:1 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 14:31](#) Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses. [Exodus 14:31 NKJV](#)

[Job 42:2](#) "I know that You can do everything,  
And that no purpose [of Yours] can be withheld from You. [Job 42:2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 40:28](#) Have you not known?  
Have you not heard?  
The everlasting God, the LORD,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth,  
Neither faints nor is weary.  
His understanding is unsearchable. [Isaiah 40:28 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 44:24](#) Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,  
And He who formed you from the womb:  
"I [am] the LORD, who makes all [things],  
Who stretches out the heavens all alone,  
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; [Isaiah 44:24 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 10:12](#) He has made the earth by His power,  
He has established the world by His wisdom,  
And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. [Jeremiah 10:12 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 32:27](#) "Behold, I [am] the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? [Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 4:35](#) All the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing;  
He does according to His will in the army of heaven  
And [among] the inhabitants of the earth.  
No one can restrain His hand  
Or say to Him, "What have You done?" [Daniel 4:35 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:26](#) But Jesus looked at [them] and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." [Matthew 19:26 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:27](#) But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men [it is] impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." [Mark 10:27 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:37](#) "For with God nothing will be impossible." [Luke 1:37 NKJV](#)

[Romans 1:20](#) For since the creation of the world His invisible [attributes] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, [Romans 1:20 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 1:19](#) and what [is] the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated [Him] at His right hand in the heavenly [places], <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. [Ephesians 1:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 1:3](#) who being the brightness of [His] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [Hebrews 1:3 NKJV](#)

I believe that God is omnipotent, meaning that He has the power to do anything he wishes.

## God gave us His law

[Exodus 34:28](#) So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. [Exodus 34:28 NKJV](#)

I believe the Ten Commandments found in [Exodus 20:1-17](#) were given to Moses directly from God, and are applicable for all people, not just Jews.

## God died for our sins

[Daniel 9:25](#) "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; ... [Daniel 9:25 NKJV](#)

I believe the coming of the Messiah to our world to live and die for us was predicted in Bible prophecies.

[Matthew 1:21](#) "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." [Matthew 1:21 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 2:22](#) "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; [1 Peter 2:22 NKJV](#)

[1 John 3:5](#) And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. [1 John 3:5 NKJV](#)

I believe when our world rebelled, God put a pre-existing plan in motion, to allow us to choose Him and eventually be saved from sin. I believe that plan involved Jesus living a sinless life on this earth, and then dying to pay the penalty for our sins.

## God will save us and take us back to heaven

[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 4:13](#) 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](#)

I believe God will return to earth and take His followers back to heaven.

## God will create a new earth

[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. [Revelation 21:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:3](#) 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. [Revelation 21:3 NKJV](#)

I believe we will return to this earth where God will re-create it as He originally made it, free of sin, and He will live with us.

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What do you believe?

- This is a very abridged list of some of the characteristics of God. Can you name some others?

- Do you believe that God has always existed? If so, how is that possible? If not, why?
- What do you think it means for God to dwell with us in the new earth?

# Sin and the Battle between Good and Evil

I believe that understanding the origin of sin and the battle between good and evil is essential to any thorough study of the Bible. Battles between good and evil are in front of us everywhere, a fundamental component of all governments are laws and those who enforce them. More visible to most of us are police vs. law breakers. Wars are usually depicted as good vs. evil. On the school ground, there are teachers and principals vs. all manner of school ground trouble makers. Even before school age there are parents and older siblings vs. bullies. Without doubt, the most popular movies, books and TV shows depict epic battles between good and evil where good eventually triumphs over evil.

Most of us are familiar with the concept of a being called Satan or the Devil. Where did he come from? Let's look at a few bible verses that talk about this subject.

[Ezekiel 28:14](#) "You [were] the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. <sup>15</sup> You [were] perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. [Ezekiel 28:14-15 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. <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. [Revelation 12:7-9 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

I believe the Bible paints a picture of a mighty angel whose name was Lucifer, the beloved leader of all the angels in heaven at the time. These angels were created by God and apparently given the ability to think and choose. Lucifer became jealous of God and wanted to be His equal, perhaps thinking he could do better, or knew better than God. The result was sin and rebellion in heaven resulting in Lucifer and the angels who sided with him being thrown out. After being cast out of heaven, Lucifer became known by many names, including Satan, the serpent, the devil and the dragon mentioned in the verses above.

I believe that Satan through the serpent deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden leading to the infestation of our world with sin. This topic is expanded upon in greater detail in [Adam and Eve's sin](#), but let's just look at a few verses that describe His interaction with humanity.

[1 Peter 5:8](#) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. [1 Peter 5:8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:28](#) When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed [men], coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. [Matthew 8:28 NKJV](#)

[Job 2:6](#) And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he [is] in your hand, but spare his life." <sup>7</sup> 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 2:6-7 NKJV](#)

I believe that throughout the entire history of our world, since Adam and Eve sinned, Satan has been deceiving and tempting people to sin, and generally wreaking as much havoc as he can. But I think that there are boundaries that God has setup that limit Satan's freedom to do anything he likes. For example, what prevents him from just killing everyone who does not follow him, or why doesn't he just completely take control of everyone, the way he does with some who are possessed by demons.

[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](#)

[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](#)

Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's deception, which resulted in our world becoming sinful and giving Satan certain rights here on earth. But God didn't abandon us and leave us completely under Satan's control. His influence is also present in our world, allowing us to use our free will to choose which side we will be on. In the end, the Bible is clear that good will triumph over evil. Satan and sin will be finally destroyed, and the battle between good and evil will be over and those who choose God's side will again be able to live as He intended, without the existence of evil.

---

What do you believe?

- If God knows the future, and He made Lucifer, is He responsible for creating evil?
- Why does God believe so strongly in freedom of choice, that He gave it to Adam and Eve, knowing what the result would be if they chose Satan?
- Why did God allow Lucifer to continue to exist and spread sin to our world?

# Creation

Story: [Genesis 1-2](#)

## First Day

[Genesis 1:1](#) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw the light, that [it was] good; and God divided the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. [Genesis 1:1-5 NKJV](#)

I believe that God created the earth in six literal days. The KJV says in the second verse of Genesis 1, that the earth was without form ([תֹהוּ, tōhû](#))<sup>1</sup> and void ([בֹהוּ, bōhû](#))<sup>2</sup>. The two Hebrew words have the following applicable definitions: formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness; and emptiness, void, waste. I believe that God has the power to create matter where none existed before, or in terms of our current theories of physics, to convert energy to matter. So, God first created the earth as a sphere covered with water. In [verse 3](#) God said "let there be light." Now this is a bit puzzling, that it says God created light before He created the Sun. Maybe it wasn't really light that God created on that first day because after all, in [Revelation 21:23](#) it says "the city had no need of the sun, ... for the glory of God illuminated it ..." I believe the glory of God illuminated one side of the earth and the opposite side was dark, so He started the earth rotating so that the dark side would eventually come into the light. So, in essence what God really created the first day was a rotating planet and the concept of light and dark, day and night, morning and evening.

## Second Day

[Genesis 1:6](#) Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament; and it was so. <sup>8</sup> And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. [Genesis 1:6-8 NKJV](#)

On the second day God divided the waters above from the waters below with the sky or air in between. Now, we know that there is water below the sky but what is meant by water above the sky. Is it simply the clouds that carry rain? I think it was more than that but let's save that for later.

## Third Day

[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

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8414/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h922/kjv/wlc/0-1/>



[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. [Genesis 1:9-13 NKJV](#)

On the third day, God altered the contour of the land so that it was higher in some places and lower in others, which caused the waters to be gathered together into lakes and seas in the lower elevations, and the higher became dry land. He then caused grass, trees and all kinds of plants to sprout up out of the earth and grow. I believe that in the Garden of Eden, these plants grew so fast you could have watched them grow to maturity before the day was over. Every plant had the capacity for reproduction through seeds.

## Fourth Day

[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; <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 1:14-19 NKJV](#)

On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon and stars. Taken very literally, God created the sun, and set our earth in orbit around it. Just like the rotation of the earth set the duration of the day, the earth's orbit around the sun, with a tilt of its axis, made seasons as well as the duration of the year. Likewise, the orbit of the moon, gave us the concept of dividing the year into months. I'm not really sure how many stars would have been created at this time, perhaps it was just the other planets in our solar system, or everything in the Milky Way galaxy.

## Fifth Day

[Genesis 1:20](#) Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." <sup>21</sup> So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that [it was] good. <sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. [Genesis 1:20-23 NKJV](#)

On the fifth day, God created the creatures that live in the water and the birds that fly in the air. Every one of these creatures was made in two forms, a male and a female which together had the ability to reproduce young of their own kind. They were to multiply and populate the waters and the sky.

## Sixth Day

[Genesis 1:24](#) Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, [each] according to its kind"; and it was so. <sup>25</sup> And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that [it was] good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth

and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

<sup>29</sup> And God said, "See, I have given you every herb [that] yields seed which [is] on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. <sup>30</sup> "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. <sup>31</sup> Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed [it was] very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. [Genesis 1:24-31 NKJV](#)

On the sixth day, God created the creatures that live on land. Now an interesting thing that I never really noticed before is that God said, "let the earth produce every sort of animal." C. S. Lewis very colorfully describes what this may have looked like in his book, "The Magician's Nephew," from the series "The Chronicles of Narnia." My point being that God didn't say let there be animals, but He said, let the earth produce animals. So, like man, the animals were also made from the ground. All these creatures, from the largest to the smallest were made in two forms, a male and a female which together had the ability to reproduce young of their own kind. They also were to multiply and populate the earth.

On the sixth day also, God created man in His own image. What does it mean to be created in God's image? God was not restricted to a physical form, so it couldn't have been His physical image that we were patterned after. I believe that one way we were made in His image was that we were given the ability to create life. But in addition to that I think He gave us the ability to have creative thoughts and perhaps most important of all, the ability to have a relationship with Him.

## Seventh Day

[Genesis 2:1](#) Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

<sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. [Genesis 2:1-3 NKJV](#)

On the seventh day God rested from His creative work and He blessed the seventh day and made it Holy. I don't know if God actually needed any rest after expending all that energy, but He probably knew we needed it, so He concluded His creation with one last cycle, the weekly cycle which ended with a special day of rest.

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What do you believe?

- When you read in Genesis that God created the world, who do you understand that to mean?
- Do you believe that God created every bit of matter in the universe, or just the matter surrounding the life He created?
- Some people believe the days of creation were symbolic and took place over a long period of time. What do you believe?

# Adam and Eve's sin

Story: [Genesis 3](#)

I believe that when God first created the world, everything about it was good and perfect, but unfortunately it didn't remain that way for long. The reason I believe that it didn't last for long was because Adam and Eve were told to be fruitful and multiple, meaning to have children. Now we know that it takes about nine months of pregnancy before a child is born and no child was born in Eden.

[Genesis 2:16](#) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;  
<sup>17</sup> "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." [Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV](#)

## Deceived by the Serpent

I believe Satan was only allowed to tempt Adam and Eve at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. I don't think God allowed him to follow them around harassing them and tempting them all the time. The reason I think this is, that is the only rule we are told they were given. They were not given any reasons, so it was a test of who they would believe.

[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.

[Genesis 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

Satan tempted Eve by leading her to believe that God was not fair and was withholding something from her. I find it interesting that Satan or the devil is actually not described as working through the serpent. It reads as if the serpent and the devil were one and the same. In fact it is interesting to note that in the Old Testament, the name Satan is only mentioned three times outside of the book of Job. The serpent enticed Eve by the same desire that was Satan's downfall, which was to be like God. Through that, he offered one thing that was true which she unfortunately didn't really understand, that she would know about evil. The other thing he said, that she would not die, was a direct contradiction of what God said forcing her to have to decide whether she would believe the serpent or God.

## Shame and Nakedness

[Genesis 3:7](#) 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." [Genesis 3:7-13 NKJV](#)

I believe that probably immediately after they sinned, they felt something that they had never felt before, which was guilt. What they didn't realize was that was part of what the serpent promised them in the knowledge of evil. They also were feeling a physical change, which made them feel shame at their nakedness.

## Pain and Death

[Genesis 3:16](#) 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 3:16-19 NKJV](#)

Another aspect of the physical change was that their bodies would now feel pain and discomfort. Child birth would now be a very painful experience for women. Both men and women would get tired or exhausted from physical labor. Not only were they changed, but the world was changed as well, now their environment was no longer perfect and comfortable to them. Even the plants were affected, so that there would be bad ones, like weeds and thistles, and even bad features such as thorns on the good ones. The man especially, would have to work hard in order to cultivate the plants they would need for food, just to survive. I believe the animals were also affected in similar ways. As it became difficult to survive, the stronger animals started to kill and eat the weaker ones, and even became a danger to people. All these changes took place at a genetic level, so that plants, animals and humans, would reproduce these effects of sin in their offspring.

[Genesis 3:21](#) Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. [Genesis 3:21 NKJV](#)

Adam and Eve now experienced death for the first time as God showed them how they could kill an animal and use its skin to cover their nakedness and protect them.

[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" —<sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> 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 3:22-24 NKJV](#)

I believe that somehow, eating the fruit of this special tree played a part in regenerating their bodies so that they would never grow old and die even before sin, otherwise why would they have needed it? I believe that even after they sinned, this special tree would still perform its function, so they were prevented from eating its fruit anymore, thus causing them to eventually grow old and die. I am not saying that sin wasn't a factor in the body growing old and dying, but it does say that even after sin, continually eating of the fruit from the tree of life would perpetuate the life indefinitely.

[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. [Job 1:6 NKJV](#)

I believe that after our world sinned, Satan was allowed back in heaven periodically, as a representative of our world in place of Adam.

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What do you believe?

- Is freedom of choice really worth all the pain and evil that resulted from its misuse?
- How is it that the action of Adam and Eve in disobeying God, caused not only the physical changes in themselves but also in all the animals and plants?
- Do you believe Adam and Eve died only because they sinned, or because they couldn't eat from the tree of life anymore?

# The Effects of sin and God's plan to save us

Story: [Genesis 3:7 – 4:16](#)

[Genesis 4:6](#) So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire [is] for you, but you should rule over it."

<sup>8</sup> Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. [Genesis 4:6-8 NKJV](#)

[Romans 7:15](#) For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. <sup>16</sup> If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that [it is] good. <sup>17</sup> But now, [it is] no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but [how] to perform what is good I do not find. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I will [to do], I do not do; but the evil I will not [to do], that I practice. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I will not [to do], it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

<sup>21</sup> I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. [Romans 7:15-21 NKJV](#)

[Romans 3:23](#) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [Romans 3:23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:12](#) Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned-- [Romans 5:12 NKJV](#)

In the chapter on Adam and Eve's sin, it was mentioned that they felt a physical change after they sinned. I believe their mind and bodies were altered somehow so that they were now predisposed to do wrong. Ever since that time, every human born on this earth inherited this predisposition, also known as a sinful nature.

[Genesis 3:17](#) 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 3:17-19 NKJV](#)

I believe that not only were Adam and Eve physically changed by their sin, the whole planet, including plants and animals were changed as well. In a similar way that man's sinful nature made it easier and natural for him to sin, so with the plants, undesirable ones would grow easier and stronger and the desirable plants would have to be painstakingly cared for and protected to get them to thrive. Animals undoubtedly did not eat each in the world before sin, but ever since, it has been survival of the fittest and the food chain which includes all creatures including man.

[Genesis 6:5](#) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every intent of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup> So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of

the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

[Genesis 6:5-7 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 6:11](#) The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup> So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. [Genesis 6:11-12 NKJV](#)

Man became so wicked that God had to destroy most of the world. But I do not believe that it was just wickedness that required their destruction. I have no scriptural grounds for this belief, but I think the humans before the flood were dabbling with things that would not fit into God's plans for us after sin. Possible examples are, human cloning, genetically engineered or enhanced humans, animal/human hybrids. In support of this thinking is the existence of dinosaur skeletons, giant creatures, that many believe God did not create and hence were not saved from the flood. It is also possible that humans were developing the means to travel to other planets, and I do not think God intended for sin to spread to other worlds in this manner.

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

[Romans 6:23](#) For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:8](#) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [Romans 5:8 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:16](#) And the gift [is] not like [that which came] through the one who sinned. For the judgment [which came] from one [offense resulted] in condemnation, but the free gift [which came] from many offenses [resulted] in justification. [Romans 5:16 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](#)

But God did not abandon us to sin and Satan's control. He loved us so much that God came to earth to die for us so that we could be saved from sin. In fact, there is no sin that is so bad that God will not forgive us for, if we will only ask. In fact, God is willing to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, treating us as if we had never sinned, if we will only ask. Finally, there is nothing we can do to earn eternal life or God's forgiveness for our sins, it is freely offered to all who will ask for and accept it.

[Romans 6:6](#) knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin. [Romans 6:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:17](#) For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) [Romans 5:17 NKJV](#)

Because of our sinful nature, I believe it is impossible for us to live without sinning through our own willpower. Without God, the only way for us to stop sinning is to die. But God has provided a way for us to get out from under the power of sin. We need to spiritually let our sinful nature die and then be resurrected with our will surrendered to God. This means that instead of letting sin control us, we ask God to be in control of us. So, instead of trying to not sin, we need to focus on our relationship with God which helps us to keep our will surrendered to Him. We need to continually

surrender our will to God because he never uses His power in our lives without our consent and we can take control of our life back from Him at any time.

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What do you believe?

- Why were the earth, plants and animals all physically affected by man's sin?
- Why do you think God took such drastic measures in destroying the entire world with the flood except for those in the ark?
- What does it mean to you to submit your will to someone else?
- Have you ever heard of people being possessed by demons?



# What happens after death

In the topic: [Adam and Eve's Sin](#), death was listed as the first effect of sin. God warned Adam and Eve not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, including a consequence for disobedience.

[Genesis 2:16](#) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;  
<sup>17</sup> "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." [Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV](#)

But Satan contradicted God by telling Eve:

[Genesis 3:4](#) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [Genesis 3:4 NKJV](#)

So, who do we choose to believe today, God or Satan? Obviously, we all know that people die, but many people today believe that when they die, they immediately pass on into the afterlife, or another life. Are these beliefs the result of Satan's original lie to Eve in the Garden of Eden? Let's see what the Bible has to say about this subject. The following summary is based on a more comprehensive word search in the Bible which you can see in [Appendix A – Death word search](#), in this document.

## 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 KJV](#) 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 Biblical 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>3</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>3</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?

# Hell

So what and where is hell, and do bad people go there when they die? In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated to hell in the KJV is [לִשְׁׁוֹל, šə'ôl](#)<sup>4</sup>. In the KJV, this Hebrew word is translated as grave and hell 31 times each and once as pit. So how was the translator to determine what the author really intended when they used this word? It seems the NASB avoided making this call by simply translating the word as sheole in almost all cases. Let's take a look at the 31 instances where the KJV translated this word as hell.

## Old Testament use of Sheole

[Deuteronomy 32:22](#) For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest **hell**[[H7585](#)], and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. [Deuteronomy 32:22 KJV](#)

[2 Samuel 22:6](#) The sorrows of **hell**[[H7585](#)] compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; [2 Samuel 22:6 KJV](#)

[Job 11:8](#) [It is] as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than **hell**[[H7585](#)]; what canst thou know? [Job 11:8 KJV](#)

[Job 26:6](#) **Hell**[[H7585](#)] is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. [Job 26:6 KJV](#)

[Psalm 9:17](#) The wicked shall be turned into **hell**[[H7585](#)], [and] all the nations that forget God. [Psalm 9:17 KJV](#)

[Psalm 16:10](#) For thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell**[[H7585](#)]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [Psalm 16:10 KJV](#)

[Psalm 18:5](#) The sorrows of **hell**[[H7585](#)] compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; [Psalm 18:5 KJV](#)

[Psalm 55:15](#) Let death seize upon them, [and] let them go down quick into **hell**[[H7585](#)]: for wickedness [is] in their dwellings, [and] among them. [Psalm 55:15 KJV](#)

[Psalm 86:13](#) For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest **hell**[[H7585](#)]. [Psalm 86:13 KJV](#)

[Psalm 116:3](#) The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of **hell**[[H7585](#)] gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. [Psalm 116:3 KJV](#)

[Psalm 139:8](#) If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in **hell**[[H7585](#)], behold, thou *art there*. [Psalm 139:8 KJV](#)

[Proverbs 5:5](#) Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on **hell**[[H7585](#)]. [Proverbs 5:5 KJV](#)

[Proverbs 7:27](#) Her house is the way to **hell**[[H7585](#)], going down to the chambers of death. [Proverbs 7:27 KJV](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7585/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

[Proverbs 9:18](#) But he knoweth not that the dead [are] there; [and that] her guests [are] in the depths of **hell**[[H7585](#)].

[Proverbs 9:18 KJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:11](#) **Hell**[[H7585](#)] and destruction *are* before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? [Proverbs 15:11 KJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:24](#) The way of life *is* above to the wise, that he may depart from **hell**[[H7585](#)] beneath. [Proverbs 15:24 KJV](#)

[Proverbs 23:14](#) Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from **hell**[[H7585](#)]. [Proverbs 23:14 KJV](#)

[Proverbs 27:20](#) **Hell**[[H7585](#)] [H7585](#) and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied. [Proverbs 27:20 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 5:14](#) Therefore **hell**[[H7585](#)] hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. [Isaiah 5:14 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 14:9](#) **Hell**[[H7585](#)] from beneath is moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. [Isaiah 14:9 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 14:15](#) Yet thou shalt be brought down to **hell**[[H7585](#)], to the sides of the pit. [Isaiah 14:15 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 28:15](#) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with **hell**[[H7585](#)] are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: [Isaiah 28:15 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 28:18](#) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with **hell**[[H7585](#)] shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. [Isaiah 28:18 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 57:9](#) And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase *thyself even* unto **hell**[[H7585](#)]. [Isaiah 57:9 KJV](#)

[Ezekiel 31:16](#) I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to **hell**[[H7585](#)] with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. <sup>17</sup> They also went down into **hell**[[H7585](#)] with him unto [them that be] slain with the sword; and [they that were] his arm, [that] dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen. [Ezekiel 31:16-17 KJV](#)

[Ezekiel 32:21](#) The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of **hell**[[H7585](#)] with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword. [Ezekiel 32:21 KJV](#)

[Ezekiel 32:27](#) And they shall not lie with the mighty [that are] fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to **hell**[[H7585](#)] with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though [they were] the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. [Ezekiel 32:27 KJV](#)

[Amos 9:2](#) Though they dig into **hell**[[H7585](#)], thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: [Amos 9:2 KJV](#)

[Jonah 2:2](#) And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of **hell**[[H7585](#)] cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice. [Jonah 2:2 KJV](#)



[Habakkuk 2:5](#) Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, *he is* a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as **hell**[\[H7585\]](#), and *is* as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: [Habakkuk 2:5 KJV](#)

From these texts I assembled ideas the authors of the Old Testament had of hell.

1. It was some place deep in the earth
2. It was a place that the wicked ended up at
3. It was a place associated with sorrow and death
4. It was a place they wished their enemies would end up at
5. When in great depression or danger, the author might refer to themselves as being in hell
6. Interestingly in the Old Testament, we don't really find any concept of burning in hell. The only verse that mentioned fire in conjunction with hell was the one in [Deuteronomy 32:22](#) which spoke of God's anger burning the earth all the way down to hell. It didn't speak of God's anger burning things in hell.
7. There was no theme of consciousness in hell
8. Hell would give up its dead at the time of the resurrection [Isaiah 14:9](#).

For the most part then, the concept of the grave could apply to all the Old Testament references of hell in the KJV.

## New Testament

### Hades

In the New Testament, there are three Greek words that are translated to hell in the KJV. The first one [ᾅδης, hadēs](#)<sup>5</sup>, was used eleven times in pretty much the same way as the Hebrew word [הַאֵדֶם, ḥ'āḏēm](#)<sup>6</sup>. There did not appear to be any concept of burning or consciousness in hades.

### Geenna

It is the second one, the Greek word [γέεννα, geenna](#)<sup>7</sup>, which includes the concept of fire and punishment. This word was translated as hell nine times and hell fire three times in the KJV.

[Matthew 5:22](#) But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell[\[G1067\]](#) fire. [Matthew 5:22 KJV](#)

[Matthew 5:30](#) And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell[\[G1067\]](#). [Matthew 5:30 KJV](#)

[Matthew 10:28](#) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell[\[G1067\]](#). [Matthew 10:28 KJV](#)

[Mark 9:43](#) And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell[\[G1067\]](#), into the fire that never shall be quenched: [Mark 9:43 KJV](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g86/kjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7585/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1067/kjv/tr/0-1/>

These four verses are a sampling of the uses of the Greek word *geenna*. In none of these cases does it imply that a person would immediately end up there when they die. The troubling one is from Jesus' statement in Mark which speaks of the fire that never shall be quenched. There are two observations that I will make about this one. 1) The way this same statement by Jesus is recorded by [Matthew 5:30](#) does not include this additional description of hell. 2) It does not say the body is kept alive, leading to eternal torture. Clearly, there was a concept of eternal hell fire by some of the New Testament authors.

### Tartaroo

The third Greek word translated as hell is [ταρταρόω, tartaroo](#)<sup>8</sup>, which actually occurs only once.

[2 Peter 2:4](#) For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell [[G5020](#)], and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; [2 Peter 2:4 KJV](#)

This verse is from a chapter in 2 Peter where he starts out by speaking of some contemporary false prophets and the punishment they will receive. He says if God did not spare angels who sinned, or the people who died in the flood, He will not spare these false prophets. So, what is this hell that evil angels were cast down to? If speaking of their being cast down in past tense, then it would seem that the hell they have been cast down to is the earth because that is where we understand them to be. If Peter is talking about the future, then it could be referring to the 1000 years that Satan is chained on earth between the two resurrections, awaiting judgment (see [Revelation 20:1-3](#)).

### Do people go straight to heaven or hell when they die?

An extensive summary of this is available in the chapter [What happens after death](#). The full study on the same topic is in [Appendix A](#). But let's look at a few verses to see what conclusions we can draw.

[Matthew 13:24](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup> "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. <sup>26</sup> "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup> "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' <sup>28</sup> "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> '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 13:24-30 NKJV](#)

Jesus then explains the parable.

[Matthew 13:36](#) Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." <sup>37</sup> He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked [one]. <sup>39</sup> "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup> "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. <sup>41</sup> "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5020/kjv/tr/0-1/>

and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! [Matthew 13:36-43 NKJV](#)

In this parable, I believe Jesus clearly describes how and when He would separate those who would be saved and lost. Jesus said this would be done at the end of the age.

Let's see what else Jesus said about this topic.

[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](#)

[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](#)

[Revelation 22:12](#) "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to give to every one according to his work. [Revelation 22:12 NKJV](#)

Jesus is pretty clear about it when He says judgment and punishment are reserved for the harvest, or the end of the world, or His return. It is then that both the good and evil who are in their tombs, will hear His voice and are resurrected for judgment. Does the Old Testament teach the same thing?

[Job 21:30](#) For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;  
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath. [Job 21:30 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](#)

So, statements from both Daniel and Job in the Old Testament are also consistent with Jesus' statements.

## Where is hell?

[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.

<sup>21:1</sup> 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. [Revelation 20:11-21:1 NKJV](#)

I believe that hell is not so much a place as an event. At the second coming of Christ, the righteous who were living and resurrected, were taken to heaven for 1000 years. [[1 Thessalonians 4:13-17](#), [Revelation 20:6](#)] At the end of the 1000 years, Christ and the righteous will return to earth when the wicked will be resurrected to join Satan and his angels for judgment. [[Revelation 20:5](#), [Revelation 20:12-13](#)] This is really not so much judgment as it is a sentencing. I believe the sentence will be carried out on the surface of this earth. After all sinners and the effects of sin are consumed, the fire will go out and then God will create a new earth.

## Is there everlasting torture in hell?

Before we look into the verses on everlasting torture, let's lay the groundwork for what the Bible says about sinners and death.

[Genesis 2:16](#) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." [Genesis 2:16,17 NKJV](#)

[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. [Genesis 3:1-4 NKJV](#)

[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" —<sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> 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 3:22-24 NKJV](#)

Man sinned and become mortal. One could possibly even make the argument from Genesis 3:22 that sinless man needed to eat from the tree of life to remain immortal. Death does not automatically lead to immortality, but unconsciousness as discussed on the chapter on [What happens after death](#). Let's look over in the New Testament.

[Romans 6:23](#) For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:50](#) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> 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 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 15:50-57 NKJV](#)

The New Testament also tells us that as a result of sin we are mortal. In Romans we read that death is the natural result of sin and eternal life is a gift for those who accept Jesus. If eternal life is a gift, it must be something we do not already possess. Flesh and blood is perishable or mortal but when God comes back, those who will be saved will be changed, they will be given immortality. From this we can infer that if the wicked would live forever in torture and punishment, they would also have to be given immortality, because they do not naturally possess it.

So where does the concept of everlasting torture in hell come from? There are plenty of verses that seem to convey this idea and I will look at them. But, before I go on, I will state that since I believe the Bible is God's word to us, then it is true and consistent. Therefore, if one verse says the wages of sin is death and another says eternal punishment, there

must be an explanation or an interpretation that leaves the Bible consistent with itself. Let's take a look at a few of these texts.

[Matthew 25:41](#) "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." [Matthew 25:41-46 NKJV](#)

Sounds pretty cut and dry doesn't it, but is it? Here's another verse that uses the phrase "eternal fire":

[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](#)

The statement in Jude about Sodom and Gomorrah, which were literally destroyed by God with fire and brimstone, was believed to be a historical fact. It was documented in [Genesis 19](#). So, if this was an actual event in from the past, then clearly the expression "eternal fire," was a figure of speech and not a literal description. What about "eternal punishment?" In Matthew, the Greek word used is [κόλασις, kolasis](#)<sup>9</sup>, which has the following meanings: correction, punishment, penalty. Then if you believed the penalty is death and not eternal life, it could be interpreted eternal death.

[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." [Revelation 14:9-11 NKJV](#)

Those who receive the mark of the beast will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. If this is referring to a place thought of as hell, why are the angels and the Lamb present? Will the angels and the Lamb (Jesus) be supervising in hell for eternity? This is partly a question about the location of hell, but it may have some bearing on the duration of the fire, if Jesus and the angels are there.

[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!**" [Revelation 19:1-3 NKJV](#)

Here we have the expression, "smoke rises up forever and ever." Regarding this statement, I would say that smoke could theoretically rise forever and ever without the source of the smoke going forever and ever. I would also add that smoke

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2851/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

goes up from something that is being consumed in fire. If you put a rock or something else that is not consumed into a fire, there is no smoke from it. Let's continue looking at some more verses.

[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](#)

Here we have the expression "tormented day and night forever and ever." But a few verses later, it seems to say that the second death and the lake of fire are the same thing. Remember, at the beginning of this discussion, I mentioned the wages of sin being death. Now let's look at the word forever. A couple uses of the word show us that it can also mean for the remainder of one's life, or even something that might just seem like forever in Jonah's case. Certainly, if one were burning in flames, it might seem like it lasts forever.

[1 Samuel 1:22](#) But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "[Not] until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever." [1 Samuel 1:22 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 1:28](#) "Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there. [1 Samuel 1:28 NKJV](#)

In Samuel, it is said that he would work in the sanctuary forever. But a few verses later, it says as long as he lives.

[Jonah 2:6](#) I went down to the moorings of the mountains;  
The earth with its bars [closed] behind me forever;  
Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God. [Jonah 2:6 NKJV](#)

As I said, in Jonah's case, his three days in the belly of the fish felt like forever.

Next, let's look at the idea of unquenchable fire.

[Isaiah 66:24](#) "And they shall go forth and look  
Upon the corpses 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](#)

[Mark 9:48](#) "where

'Their worm does not die,  
And the fire is not quenched.' [Mark 9:48 NKJV](#)

In the old testament, the word quenched, is translated<sup>10</sup> from the Hebrew word [כָּבַד, kābā](#)<sup>11</sup> which means "to quench, put out, be put out, be quenched, be extinguished." So, it doesn't say it will never go out, it just means it cannot be put out.

In Mark, it would seem that Jesus is quoting from Isaiah in this conversation with His disciples. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated to worm is [תוֹלַעַ, Tōlā](#)<sup>12</sup>. [It is a little funny that one of the primary uses of this word in the Old Testament is the name of Issachar's first born son. Names often carry meaning which I believe derives from a notable person who bore that name. Perhaps this son of Issachar was not a good person and hence afterward, his name became associated with the worm, and eventually was used interchangeably.] In addition to the proper name, the definition in the Old Testament is essentially the same as the Greek word translated to worm in Mark, [σκόληξ, skōlēx](#)<sup>13</sup>, which is defined as that which preys on dead bodies and contributes to decomposition. Since the worm was a contributor to the process of decomposition and the returning of the body to dust, its mention here would seem to indicate death. Certainly, the worm and decomposition are not associated with living bodies.

[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."

[Revelation21:8 NKJV](#)

Here again, this text in the next to the last chapter of the Bible associates the lake of fire and brimstone with the second death. Can the second death include the meaning of eternal life in torture?

Here is what I believe about this subject:

- The wages of sin is death.
- All have sinned and hence all are mortal and under a death sentence.
- Immortality is a gift from God for those who accept it.
- Those who do not accept it should receive their default sentence of death.
- If God were to torture someone in hell for eternity, I believe He would have to give them immortality.
- I do NOT believe it makes any sense whatsoever to sin for a finite time and then suffer for an infinite time.
- I believe that our modern translations of the Bible have been colored by their beliefs.
- It is easy to see how some people can believe in the doctrine of eternal punishment if you only look at those verses. But you can prove or believe many incorrect things by doing only looking at a single verse.
- I believe you must study the entire Bible and when it doesn't seem consistent with itself, then dig a little deeper to discover the true meaning.
- You should also always pray for the Holy Spirit to be your guide and your interpreter.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think God enjoys making the wicked suffer?
- Do you think hell exists somewhere right now?

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/isa/66/24/p0/t\\_conc\\_745024](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/isa/66/24/p0/t_conc_745024)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3518/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8439/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4663/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

- If so, where do you think it is?



# The Antediluvian world

Story: [Genesis 4:17 – 7:6](#)

Antediluvian is a big word that means pre-deluge or before the flood. Relatively little is mentioned from this period of time in the Bible. In fact, only the whole period is covered in only seven chapters in Genesis.

[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"—<sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> 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 3:22-24 NKJV](#)

The Bible tells us that God did not remove the tree of life from the Garden of Eden immediately after sin. It was left with an angel guarding it quite possibly until the flood. Maybe it was left as a reminder of what we had lost as a result of sin. Maybe it was left to give Adam some credibility when he told his descendants about their origins.

## Cain murders Abel

[Genesis 4:3](#) And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

<sup>6</sup> So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire [is] for you, but you should rule over it."

<sup>8</sup> Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> "So now you [are] cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." [Genesis 4:3-12 NKJV](#)

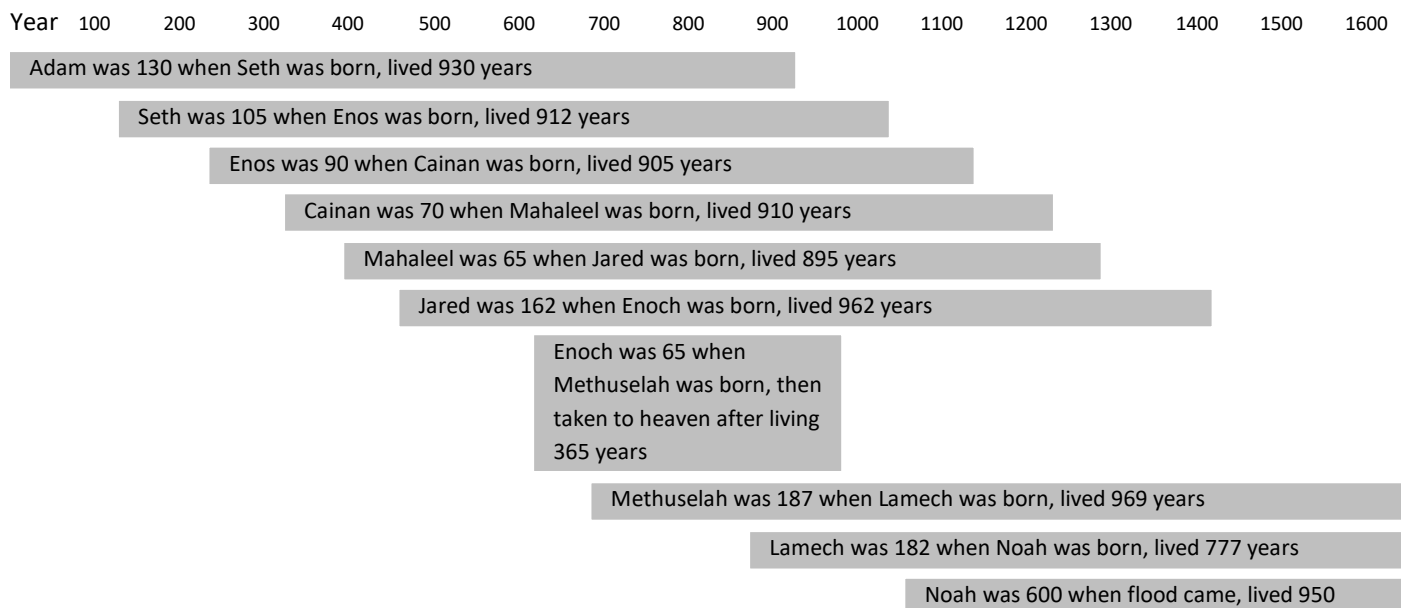
Cain was the first human being ever born but in his short recorded history, we immediately see the effects of man's sinful nature. I doubt that Cain actually pre-meditated the murder of his brother. After all, no human being had ever been killed. I believe Cain got angry and hit Abel, not really knowing the effect it would have. They had killed animals for sacrifices and clothing before, so Cain knew death when he saw it.

After the well-known story of Cain's murder of his brother Abel, and his punishment, we are told the names of a few of Cain's descendants. [Genesis 4:16-24](#) gives a very brief history of Cain's family. Cain had a son he named Enoch, who had a son named Irad, who had a son named Mehujael, who had a son named Methusael, who had a son named Lamech.

Next, we have the first recorded instance of a man, Lamech, who had two wives. I believe there are the only three women, aside from Eve, whose names we are given from before the flood. They are Lamech's two wives Adah and Zillah, and Zillah's daughter Naamah. Adah's son Jabal is said to be the first of those who lived in tents and domesticated cattle. His brother Jubal was the first musician. Their stepbrother Tubalcain, taught others to work with brass and iron, which probably makes him the first blacksmith. One might ask why it was that Cain's descendants were the first for all these things, but it was probably that Cain was the oldest and as a result, he and his family were probably the first at many things.

## Lifespan before the flood

In Genesis 5 we are given the name, birth year and life spans for the direct line of descendants from Adam to Noah. The following chart should help to visualize the individual life spans of those living before the flood. For example, Adam overlapped Methuselah for over 200 years, who died within a year of the flood. I think it is also interesting to note that with the exception of Lamech, the life span did not decrease over the centuries before the flood.



## Enoch taken to heaven

[Genesis 5:23](#) And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: <sup>24</sup> And Enoch walked with God: and he [was] not; for God took him. [Genesis 5:23-24 NKJV](#)

In spite of all the wickedness, Enoch stood apart from everyone else because of his relationship with God. In fact, he had such a close relationship and was in such harmony with God that he was taken to heaven and did not die. I believe Enoch was the first and is an example of those who will be taken without dying when Jesus comes to take us to take us to heaven. It is easy to read about the wickedness before the flood and ask where God was. How did He let it get so bad? I believe the story of Enoch must have helped the people of the time to understand and remember that God had a plan to save us from sin.

## Giants

[Genesis 6:4](#) There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore [children] to them. Those [were] the mighty men who [were] of old, men of renown. [Genesis 6:4 NKJV](#)

Who are these sons of God that had children with the daughters of men that were known as giants or heroes and famous warriors of ancient times? Why are these people specifically mentioned in the Bible? Were they bigger, taller, stronger than normal? Some teach that these sons of God refer to the people at the time who still believed in God, intermarrying with those who had become wicked. But why would this union produce extraordinary offspring. Some people and religions teach that the sons of God here refer to fallen angels or extraterrestrials. But I have a hard time believing that God would allow this to happen even if it were physically possible. I actually haven't formed a firm belief about this verse yet, but I am of the opinion that these people were much bigger than usual.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think people lived so long before the flood?
- Do you think people were bigger then as well?
- What do you believe about the Giants? If the people before the flood were giants compared to us, how big would they have been to be referred to as giants?

# Enoch

Story: [Genesis 5:18-24](#)

Enoch is named in the sixth generation from Adam in the genealogy given in Genesis. Mention of him in the Bible is very brief, but there is much tradition and mythology as well as writings credited to him. Enoch is best known as someone who walked with God and was taken to heaven without dying. Let's start by examining the only verses in the Bible that mention Enoch.

[Genesis 5:18](#) Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. <sup>19</sup> After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup> So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.

<sup>21</sup> Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. <sup>24</sup> And Enoch walked with God; and he [was] not, for God took him. [Genesis 5:18-24 NKJV](#)

This first passage probably gives us the most information of any of the Enoch references in the Bible. I think we can safely assume he was married. His first son, Methuselah is probably most famous for being the oldest man to die, at the age of 969. Interestingly his father was still alive and in heaven at the time. From preceding verses, we know that Adam was alive for most of Enoch's life on this earth. Enoch was also father to other sons and daughters.

[1 Chronicles 1:3](#) Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, [1 Chronicles 1:3 NKJV](#)

[Luke 3:37](#) [the son] of Methuselah, [the son] of Enoch, [the son] of Jared, [the son] of Mahalalel, [the son] of Cainan, [Luke 3:37 NKJV](#)

These two verses just read simply mention his name in the genealogy.

[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](#)

The mention by Paul in Hebrews confirms that Enoch was taken to heaven without dying.

[Jude 1:14](#) Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, <sup>15</sup> "to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." [Jude 1:14-15 NKJV](#)

Here is where it gets a little more interesting. It appears that this passage in Jude was a quote from the first of the three books of Enoch, 1 Enoch 1:9<sup>14</sup>. From this passage we infer that Enoch prophesied future events. It should be noted that the books of Enoch are not part of the biblical canon, but are regarded as canonical only by the Ethiopian Orthodox

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<sup>14</sup> Shodde, George H (translation, introduction and notes). *The Book of Enoch*. Andover, Warren F Draper, 1882, p62. <http://books.google.com/books?id=NAk3AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA62>

Church, and the Eritrean Orthodox Church.<sup>15</sup> In fact, in the books of Enoch, are written dreams or visions in which Enoch foresaw the destruction of the world by flood, as well as many other historical events.<sup>16</sup> Some credit Enoch with the invention of writing, and arithmetic as well as being a teacher of astronomy.<sup>17</sup> If Enoch truly did have the ability to write the things he knew, the fact that he could have spoken face to face with Adam and possibly God, could have made his writings a potential source for the later writing of the creation story in the book of Genesis.

The following excerpt from the book “Patriarchs and Prophets” by Ellen White sounds like it echoes a lot of what is read from the books of Enoch.

Enoch was a man of strong and highly cultivated mind and extensive knowledge; he was honored with special revelations from God; yet being in constant communion with Heaven, with a sense of the divine greatness and perfection ever before him, he was one of the humblest of men. The closer the connection with God, the deeper was the sense of his own weakness and imperfection.

Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them, and spent much time in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer. Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul; he lived in the very atmosphere of heaven.

Through holy angels God revealed to Enoch His purpose to destroy the world by a flood, and He also opened more fully to him the plan of redemption. By the spirit of prophecy He carried him down through the generations that should live after the Flood, and showed him the great events connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.

Enoch had been troubled in regard to the dead. It had seemed to him that the righteous and the wicked would go to the dust together, and that this would be their end. He could not see the life of the just beyond the grave. In prophetic vision he was instructed concerning the death of Christ, and was shown His coming in glory, attended by all the holy angels, to ransom His people from the grave. He also saw the corrupt state of the world when Christ should appear the second time—that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation, denying the only God and the Lord Jesus Christ, trampling upon the law, and despising the atonement. He saw the righteous crowned with glory and honor, and the wicked banished from the presence of the Lord, and destroyed by fire. [White. \*Patriarchs and Prophets\*. p85-86](#)<sup>18</sup>

In the book *Daniel and Revelation*, Uriah Smith argues that the four beasts or creatures that surround the throne of God are human beings, redeemed from among men. He says that their beastly descriptions depict their character strengths.<sup>19</sup> If this is true, I would like to believe that Enoch is one of these four.

<sup>15</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Enoch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch)

<sup>16</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Enoch#Content\\_5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch#Content_5)

<sup>17</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch\\_\(ancestor\\_of\\_Noah\)#The\\_Books\\_of\\_Enoch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_(ancestor_of_Noah)#The_Books_of_Enoch)

<sup>18</sup> White, Ellen Gould. *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Mountain View, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913, pp85-86.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=pp&lang=en&pagenumber=85;>

[http://books.google.com/books?id=m\\_8xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA85](http://books.google.com/books?id=m_8xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA85)

<sup>19</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>

I believe one of the reasons the story of Enoch is included in the Bible is to give us hope and an example of the salvation awaiting those who will be taken to heaven without dying.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think that among all the people that lived before the flood, that Enoch was the only one taken to heaven without dying?
- Do you think it is possible that the books of Enoch were actually written by him?
- Do you think these books were available to the writer of Genesis?

# The flood

Story: [Genesis 7:6 – 8:14](#)

[Genesis 6:5](#) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every intent of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup> So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

[Genesis 6:5-7 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 6:17](#) "And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which [is] the breath of life; everything that [is] on the earth shall die. [Genesis 6:17 NKJV](#)

Wickedness is a natural result of sin and if God had made a decision to let sin run its course on our planet, why did He find it necessary to intervene in this case? Was the wickedness really so much worse at that time? As I mentioned briefly in [The Effects of Sin](#), I think that it was more than just wickedness. I believe that because man was made in the image of God, and he had so many years to accumulate knowledge, that they could have been very technologically advanced. I believe that humans before the flood were dabbling with things that would not fit into God's plans for us after sin. Possible examples are human cloning, genetically engineered or enhanced humans, animal/human hybrids. In support of this thinking is the existence of dinosaur skeletons, giant creatures, that many believe God did not create and hence were not saved from the flood. It is also possible that humans were developing the means to travel to other planets, and I do not think God intended for sin to spread to other worlds in this manner. Perhaps people before the flood had developed a means as we have today to actually destroy all life on the planet.

Many ancient cultures have myths or legends about a flood, with variations that can easily be accounted for by oral tradition. There is also geological evidence in support of a flood. But it is not my intent here to prove that a worldwide flood actually occurred. This is simply a discussion about what the Bible says and my beliefs on the subject.

[Genesis 6:13](#) And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. <sup>14</sup> "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. <sup>15</sup> "And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark [shall be] three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. <sup>16</sup> "You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it [with] lower, second, and third [decks]. [Genesis 6:13-16 NKJV](#)

Some translations give the dimensions of the ark as 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. I am not willing to say that I know the exact dimensions of the ark in today's units of measurement. When you think about the size proposed in feet, it doesn't really seem that large compared to today's ocean liners, nor might it seem large enough to hold samples of all living creatures. Noah was to take a male and a female of each unique creature on the ark with him. But I do not believe it was necessary to save every variation of animal we know today to preserve all unique animal life.

[Genesis 7:13](#) On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark—<sup>14</sup> they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort.

<sup>15</sup> And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which [is] the breath of life. <sup>16</sup> So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in. [Genesis 7:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 7:2](#) "You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that [are] unclean, a male and his female; [Genesis 7:2 NKJV](#)

When the ark was ready, I believe that there was some sort of miraculous parade of animals that made their way on to the ark. The reason I believe this is that I don't think it would have been possible for Noah to find and capture every single animal that needed to be preserved. I also find it interesting that before there were Jews or Jewish laws, we have mention of clean animals. Of these they were to take seven, possibly seven male female pairs. I think there were a couple reasons. One that will be clearly seen is for sacrifices. The other I think will be for eating.

Out of all the people living on the earth at the time, it's hard to believe that only Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives were the only people willing to board the ark. I believe the ark was big enough so that any who chose could have joined Noah and his family on board. But the people at that time were so wicked, that there was not a single person outside Noah's immediate family that believed.

[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. <sup>12</sup> And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. [Genesis 7:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 7:18](#) The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. <sup>19</sup> And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. <sup>20</sup> The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. <sup>21</sup> And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. <sup>22</sup> All in whose nostrils [was] the breath of the spirit of life, all that [was] on the dry [land], died. <sup>23</sup> So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who [were] with him in the ark remained [alive]. <sup>24</sup> And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. [Genesis 7:18-24 NKJV](#)

In most parts of the world today, we are used to the idea of rain. I believe that rain was not a part of life before the flood.

[Genesis 2:6](#) but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. [Genesis 2:6 NKJV](#)

The Bible says the flood waters came from two places, the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky. I believe there may have been a protective envelope of water surrounding our atmosphere. This would have kept all parts of the globe more uniform in temperature and possibly have provided more protections against radiation from the sun. I believe this water fell down like torrents of rain for forty days. This along with the water coming up from the ground was enough to cover the highest mountain peak.

[Genesis 8:3](#) And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. <sup>4</sup> Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup> And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth [month], on the first [day] of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. [Genesis 8:3-5 NKJV](#)



[Genesis 8:13](#) And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first [month], the first [day] of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. <sup>14</sup> And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. <sup>15</sup> Then God spoke to Noah, saying, <sup>16</sup> "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. <sup>17</sup> "Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that [is] with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." [Genesis 8:13-17 NKJV](#)

Five months to the day, which are also told is 150 days, after it started raining, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. So, it rained for forty day, the ark was afloat for 150 days and Noah was in the ark for one year and ten days. He entered the ark on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of his 600<sup>th</sup> year and came out on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of his 601<sup>st</sup> year. I believe that the surface of our planet was drastically changed by the flood. I do not think that 70 percent of our world was covered with water before the flood. I also do not believe there were the extremes in temperature that we currently have.

[Genesis 9:11](#) "Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." [Genesis 9:11 NKJV](#)

At the end of the story, God promised that He would never again destroy all life on earth with a flood.

Throughout the history of this world, I think that there have always been those who believed in the true God, and were willing to tell others about Him. In this case, it was down to one family and no one else was willing to believe. In the end, when God takes His true followers to heaven, many will not believe and will ultimately die. As it was before the flood, everyone will have the choice to be saved if they will believe and follow God. As for the reason He destroyed the world by flood, we will never know until we are able to ask Him ourselves, but based on His love for the people He created, I believe there was a good reason?

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think God destroyed the world?
- Why do you think He used a flood?
- How do you think the landscape was changed after the flood?

# After the flood

Story: [Genesis 8:15 – 11:32](#)

I'm sure that life after the flood was very challenging. After the fountains of the deep had broken through the crust of the earth and the inevitable shifting of soil by the surging flood waters, there is no telling what plant seeds had settled on the top of the ground where the ark had landed. But there had to have been some vegetation otherwise the plant eating animals would not have survived. And if there were carnivorous animals at that time, there must have been guardian angels for some of the animals lower on the food chain to preserve them from extinction.

[Genesis 9:3](#) "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

<sup>4</sup> "But you shall not eat flesh with its life, [that is], its blood. [Genesis 9:3-4 NKJV](#)

At this time God actually gave man permission to eat animals. I would guess that some before the flood had probably already done this but this is the first direction from God allowing or suggesting it. Naturally, their selection of animals to eat would have been the clean ones which God had bought onto the ark by sevens. This was probably one of the ways He directed them which animal were better suited to be eaten. He also strictly forbade them from eating the blood which interestingly was reiterated in the command He gave to Moses and the Jews many years later.

## Tower of Babel

[Genesis 11:1](#) Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. <sup>2</sup> And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. <sup>3</sup> Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake [them] thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. <sup>4</sup> And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top [is] in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

<sup>5</sup> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD said, "Indeed the people [are] one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. <sup>7</sup> "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." <sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. [Genesis 11:1-9 NKJV](#)

In these 9 verses of the Bible, we have an explanation for the existence of different languages in the world. After the flood, when the people did not disperse and spread around the world, I believe they began to not believe in God or at least to disregard Him. I think partly because they were still living so long, and so many generations could collaborate together, there was a lot of potential for accomplishment, but also for great wickedness. I think God saw the potential for pre-flood problems to happen again, so He decided to nip it in the bud and disperse the people. By doing so, He essentially destroyed their ability to collaborate on a big scale and dispersed their accumulated knowledge. We are not told how many languages God invented at that time, but it worked, and when the people could no longer communicate, they split off into groups who could understand one another and spread throughout the world.

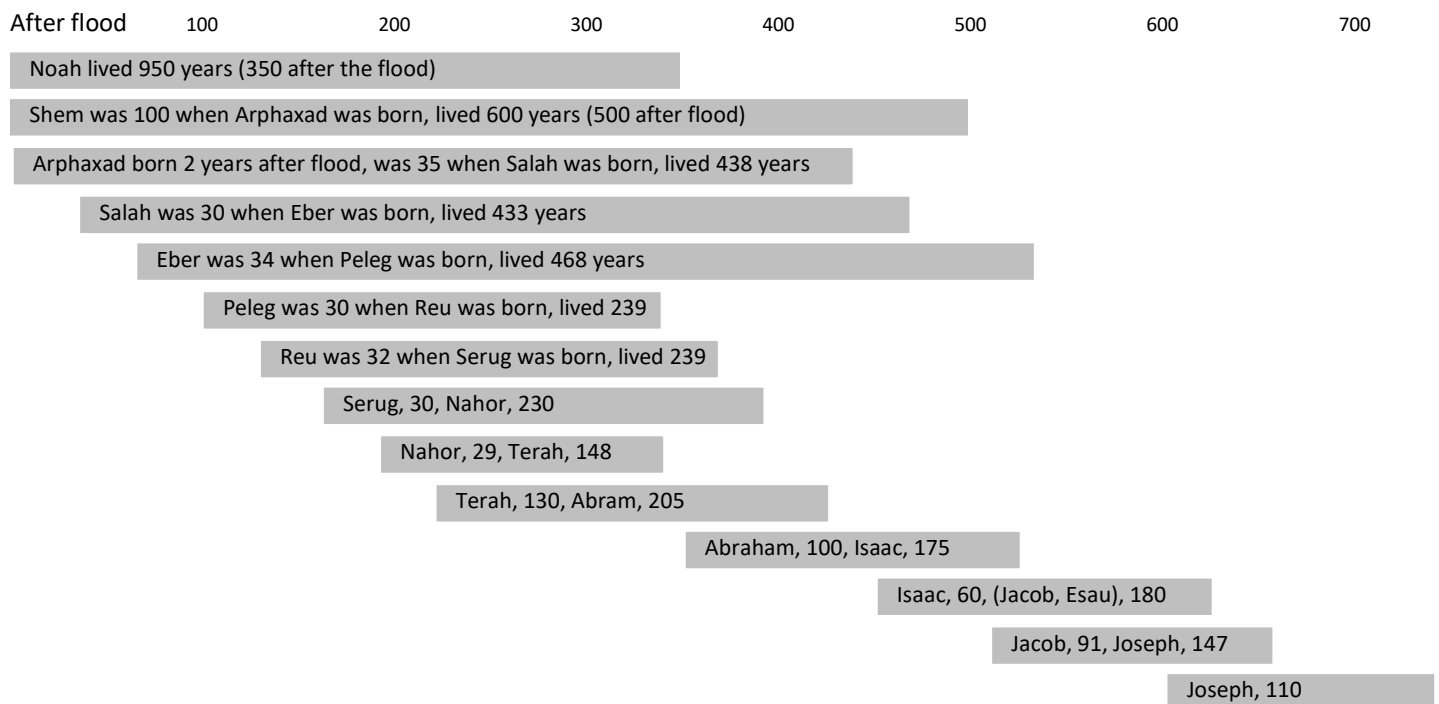
We don't know exactly when this took place, but we have a clue, that it was in the second or third century after the flood and during the lifetime of Peleg (see [timeline below](#)).

[1 Chronicles 1:19](#) To Eber were born two sons: the name of one [was] Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name [was] Joktan. [1 Chronicles 1:19 NKJV](#)

## Decreasing lifespan after the flood

[Genesis 6:3](#) And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he [is] indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." [Genesis 6:3 NKJV](#)

The second half of chapter 11 gives us the genealogy, including births and life span, for the generations up to Abram who later became Abraham. For the sake of interest, I added a few more generations in Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. In [The Antediluvian world](#), I discussed the long-life spans of those living before the flood. However, after the flood we see a very dramatic decrease, which can be illustrated by the following timeline given in years after the flood. In contemplating the cause of the dramatic decrease after the flood, I wondered if there was something physically different before and after the flood. After all we saw that there was no gradual decline in life span from Adam to Noah. If there was a water barrier surrounding our atmosphere as I proposed in my discussion on [The Flood](#), which came down as part of the flood waters, perhaps that was is one of the factors accounting for the change? We know from our scientific knowledge that prolonged exposure to solar or cosmic radiation reduces life expectancy. Perhaps God also altered the magnetic field of our world, which in addition to our atmosphere provides much of the shielding to cosmic radiation. It is just speculation on my part, but perhaps these were factors in reducing life expectancy to 120 years.



Everything is pretty clear cut until we get to the birth of Terah's sons, because they are all listed together. But since Abram is listed first, we could assume he was born when Terah was 70. But there is another alternative if we assume that Abram didn't leave Haran until after Terah died, which you would have to do if you took the events of [Genesis 11:32-12:1](#) chronologically. [Genesis 11:32](#) said that Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran. Then presumably, shortly after that in [Genesis 12:1-4](#), God tells Abram to leave Haran and that he was 75 years old when he left. To back this up,

Stephen said, in [Acts 7:4](#), that Abraham left Haran after his father died. If you subtracted 75 from 205, that would make Terah 130 when Abram was born. At this point I choose to believe the latter, that Terah was 130 when Abram was born and that Abram left Haran at 75 years of age after his father died. Now we need to jump forward, then work our way back. In [Genesis 41:46](#), we read that Joseph was 30 years old when he was taken out of prison, and the seven years of plenty began. In [Genesis 45:6](#), we learn that two years of famine had passed when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, which would have made him 39 years old at the time. Assuming that Jacob and the family moved to Egypt, the same year, [Genesis 47:9](#) tells us that Jacob was 130 years old at that time. So, if Joseph was 39 at when Jacob was 130 years old, that would have made Jacob 91 when Joseph was born. From [Genesis 30:25-26](#), we deduce that Joseph was born right at the end of the second seven years of labor, to pay for Rachel. That would mean that all of Jacob's sons except for Benjamin were born during those second seven years of labor.

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What do you believe?

- What do you think caused the dramatic decrease in life span?
- Abraham was the great great great great great great great grandson of Shem yet they could have spoken face to face for many years. Do you think Abram (Abraham) learned about God directly from Shem?
- Did you realize Jacob was so old when he got married?

# Job

Story: [Job](#)

[Job 1:1](#) There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name [was] Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. <sup>2</sup> And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. <sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> And his sons would go and feast [in their] houses, each on his [appointed] day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. [Job 1:1-4 NKJV](#)

The story and the book of Job in the Bible is interesting, in that we don't know exactly when Job lived or who his ancestors or descendants were. We also do not know who the author of the book was. We can however make some guesses as to who he was descended from and how long he lived. First, the land of Uz was probably named after the person who originally settled there. There are three people mentioned in the Bible that are named Uz.

1. Shem had a grandson named Uz [[Genesis 10:22-23](#)].
2. Abraham had a nephew from his brother Nahor named Uz [[Genesis 22:20-21](#)].
3. Seir, whose land Esau moved to, had a grandson named Uz [[Genesis 36:20-21](#), [Genesis 36:28](#)].

The other clue we have about the location of Uz is that it was considered the east. But east of what? In the Bible, things were typically oriented relative to the land where Israel settled.

In our timeline of the patriarchs [after the flood](#), we can see that the age at the birth of the son was generally around 30-35 years. So, if Job was thirty at the birth of his first child and they had another one each year, he would have been at least 40 years old when the 10th child was born. Since no grandchildren are mentioned from the first children, but they had their own homes, let us assume the oldest was 30 and the youngest 20, which would make Job at least 60 at the time of the story. I will return to this topic of Job's age, and where he lived when I wrap up this chapter, so let's move on with the story.

[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](#)

There are several things to consider in addition to the obvious topic of the conversation in these verses we just read.

1. Who are these sons of God?
2. How often did they present themselves before the LORD?
3. Why was Satan among them?

We could speculate that these are representatives of the human race from earth along with Satan presenting themselves before the LORD. But [John 1:18](#) says that "No one has seen God at any time," which would kind of rule out regular representatives from the human race appearing before God. Perhaps this was a convention of angels, after all Satan was once an angel in heaven? But isn't heaven home base for all the good angels? To me, the explanation that makes the most sense is that these sons of God are beings created by God, inhabiting other worlds. Perhaps because our world listened to Satan and sinned, he represented us at these gatherings in heaven.

I think it is worth mentioning at this point that outside of the book of Job, the name Satan only occurs in two other places in the Old Testament. 1) In [1 Chronicles 21:1](#) Satan tempted David to number Israel. 2) In [Zechariah 3](#), Satan is making accusations against one Joshua the High Priest before the LORD. I wonder whether the people in Old Testament times really had much of a concept of the battle between good and evil in the universe.

Returning to the main topic of the book, the main characters of this story are God, Satan and Job. It's kind of neat to think that we can make God really proud of us. Unfortunately, this ended up costing Job the lives of his children and everything he owned. You can read about what Satan did to him in [Job 1:13-22](#). Unfortunately for Job, the story continues.

[Job 2:1](#) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. <sup>2</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>3</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? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

<sup>4</sup> So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. <sup>5</sup> "But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

<sup>6</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he [is] in your hand, but spare his life." <sup>7</sup> 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 2:1-7 NKJV](#)

Now not only has Job lost everything he owns but now he is suffering great physical pain.

[Job 2:9](#) Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

<sup>10</sup> But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

<sup>11</sup> Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place--Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. <sup>12</sup> And when they raised their eyes

from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. <sup>13</sup> So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that [his] grief was very great. [Job 2:9-13 NKJV](#)

The next 39 chapters of the book cover the dialog between Job and his friends. They try to convince him that his condition is God's punishment for some secret sins he has committed, but Job maintains his innocence. From reading these verses it seems that even Job thinks both good and bad come from God. I will leave you to read the next 39 chapters and proceed with my conclusion of the book.

[Job 42:7](#) And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me [what is] right, as My servant Job [has]. [Job 42:7 NKJV](#)

[Job 42:10](#) And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. <sup>11</sup> Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

<sup>12</sup> Now the LORD blessed the latter [days] of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. <sup>13</sup> He also had seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup> And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. <sup>15</sup> In all the land were found no women [so] beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

<sup>16</sup> After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren [for] four generations. <sup>17</sup> So Job died, old and full of days. [Job 42:10-17 NKJV](#)

Even though these verses still claim the adversity came from the LORD, I believe the primary lesson to be learned from this story is that the bad things that happen to people are generally not the result of God's arbitrary punishment for their sins. Yes, we will be punished for our sins in the end if we don't repent, but pain and misery in this life are the result of sin, Satan, and the consequences of our own choices and the choices of others around us. This book shows me that God is intimately aware of what is happening here on earth. It also paints a picture of a God who proudly looked down on Job as a father might on a good and successful son.

With the concluding words at the end of the book, we can go back and try to fill in some of the remaining blanks. If Job had 10 more children, we can add that to the minimum of 60 years of age we asserted when the calamity befell him. Then he lived an additional 140 years and saw his grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren. I believe this means Job lived at least 210 years, and possibly a few more. Now let's go back and look at the possible founder of the land of Uz, knowing the approximate life spans people lived at those times. Again, referring to my [timeline of the patriarchs after the flood](#), we can see that Shem's grandson, Salah, lived 433 years, Abraham and his son's generation lived 175-180 years, and Esau's brother Jacob lived 147 years. Based on the matter of fact way it was called the land of Uz, Job could have easily been a couple generations from Uz, so looking at the second generation after Salah, we see that Peleg lived 239 years which puts us in the right ballpark. Going a couple generations later on either of the other options is not going to work because they are already too young. So, I would say that if Job was a descendant of one of the three Uz's and not just an immigrant to the land, he would probably have to be Shem's grandson.

What do you believe?

1. Who do you think the "sons of God" were who were mentioned at the beginning of the book?
2. Do you think other people have suffered similar to the way Job did because God boasted to Satan about them?
3. Why do you think the people in the story thought that God was the source of the bad things that happen to them?



# Abram and the promise

Story: [Genesis 12:1 – 14:24](#)

Abram whose name was changed by God to Abraham is the first person we know a lot about in the Bible. In a way, Abram ushers in a new era in the Bible, one in which God seems to become more directly involved in the affairs of men. He chooses Abram and his descendants for a special purpose, that being to preserve and disseminate a knowledge of Him on the earth. Let's take a look at some verses that tell us what God asked of Abraham, and how he was greatly blessed as a result of his obedience.

## Abram's obedience and blessings

The following excerpts have been assembled to show that Abram was called by God to be the father of His new chosen nation. They will also show that Abram was obedient to God's call and that he was a wealthy and respected man. I believe Abram had a choice in whether he would follow God or not, but I would like to look at this calling as happening because he was faithful to God. I would also like to believe that Abram was wealthy, not just because of God's blessings but because of good choices.

[Genesis 12:1](#) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." <sup>4</sup> So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram [was] seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. [Genesis 12:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 13:2](#) Abram [was] very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. [Genesis 13:2 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 13:14](#) And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; <sup>15</sup> "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. <sup>16</sup> "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, [then] your descendants also could be numbered. [Genesis 13:14-16 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 15:5](#) Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." [Genesis 15:5 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. <sup>2</sup> "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." <sup>3</sup> Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: <sup>4</sup> "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. <sup>5</sup> "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. <sup>6</sup> "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup> "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. <sup>8</sup> "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

<sup>9</sup> And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. [Genesis 17:1-9 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 23:5](#) And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, <sup>6</sup> "Hear us, my lord: You [are] a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead." [Genesis 23:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 24:35](#) "The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. [Genesis 24:35 NKJV](#)

Abram is the first person since Noah, prior to the flood, where we have a record of God directly talking to someone. Now we know from our timeline in [After the flood](#) that Abram was born two years after Noah died, but overlapped Shem by 150 years. I believe that Abram probably sat at the feet of Shem and learned from him about God and the history our world, which Shem could have learned from Methuselah who could have learned directly from Adam. I believe it was God's purpose to have a nation that would be faithful to Him, whom He would in turn greatly bless, so that the entire world would take notice of them and come to a knowledge of God through them. God spoke to Abraham over and over again reminding him that his descendants would become a multitude of nations who would fill the land. But I believe God's blessings to Abraham and his descendants were contingent on them remaining faithful to Him. With the exception of a few recorded mistakes, it appears that Abraham was faithful to God and was able to be blessed and used by Him.

## Abram's mistakes

Abraham was not perfect, and he had lapses in his trust in God.

[Genesis 12:10](#) Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine [was] severe in the land. <sup>11</sup> And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you [are] a woman of beautiful countenance. <sup>12</sup> "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This [is] his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. <sup>13</sup> "Please say you [are] my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." [Genesis 12:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 16:4](#) So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. [Genesis 16:4 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 20:2](#) Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She [is] my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. [Genesis 20:2 NKJV](#)

Instead of trusting God to protect him, twice he told people that His wife was his sister because he was afraid people would kill him so they could have her. He was right about them desiring his wife, but God intervened in both cases actually speaking to the king or ruler, threatening them with death if she was not returned to her husband. In the instance of Abraham having a child with Hagar, this was also another case of lack of trust on the part of Abram and his wife. God had promised him over and over that he would have many descendants, but in their wavering faith, when he and Sarai remained childless, they tried to help God by having a child with another woman. Unfortunately, this act not only resulted in strife in his immediate family but continues even today in the continual conflict between Israelis and Arabs. But in spite of his mistakes, Abraham's heart remained right with God and so he continued to be blessed.

## Abram's bravery

[Genesis 14:14](#) Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained [servants] who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which [is] north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. [Genesis 14:14-16 NKJV](#)

Abram and his household were brave and capable warriors. I believe they benefited from God's protection and possibly even intervention, but even with that, they showed their faith by their willingness to go into battle against staggering odds.

## The promise

On the surface, the promise to Abram seemed to be all about giving him wealth and countless descendants. But why would God do that? Why would He play favorites among the races of humankind? In reality, I believe it was for the benefit of all mankind as is stated in the following verse.

[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](#)

Abram and his descendants would be blessed, if they obeyed, but ultimately all nations SHALL be blessed by the sacrifice of Jesus. So even though the promise seemed to be about wealth and posterity, which are things that appeal to most human beings, the promise was ultimately about the Messiah and the salvation of the human race.

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What do you believe?

- What do think God's purpose was in choosing Abram and do you think it was accomplished?
- Do you think Abram's entire household, meaning all his servants, shared his beliefs?
- Do you think Abram's servants were happy to be part of his household?

# Abraham and the promise of a son

Story: [Genesis 15:1 – 25:10](#)

## Abraham meets God shrouded in human form

[Genesis 18:1](#) Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw [them], he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, <sup>3</sup> and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. <sup>4</sup> "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup> "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."

<sup>6</sup> So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead [it] and make cakes." <sup>7</sup> And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave [it] to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup> So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set [it] before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

<sup>9</sup> Then they said to him, "Where [is] Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent."

<sup>10</sup> And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which [was] behind him.) <sup>11</sup> Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; [and] Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. <sup>12</sup> Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear [a child], since I am old?'

<sup>14</sup> "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

<sup>15</sup> But Sarah denied [it], saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

[Genesis 18:1-15 NKJV](#)

I don't think Abraham knew initially who his guests were. I think it was his custom to treat all strangers who passed by his tent this way. I should mention that this was quite a contrast to how the Sodomites treated guests. I believe these visitors were Jesus himself and two angels. God had been promising Abraham and Sarah that they would have descendants for about 25 years now, but this time He appeared to them in person, and He actually gave them a time frame.

[Genesis 18:16](#) Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. <sup>17</sup> And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, <sup>18</sup> "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? <sup>19</sup> "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." <sup>20</sup> And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,

<sup>21</sup> "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

<sup>22</sup> Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup> "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare [it] for the fifty righteous that were in it? <sup>25</sup> "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

<sup>26</sup> So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

<sup>27</sup> Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who [am but] dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: <sup>28</sup> "Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for [lack of] five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy [it]." [Genesis 18:16-28 NKJV](#)

Next, we have this unique story where it appears that Abraham is bargaining with God. He actually kept at it until he had bargained God all the way down to sparing Sodom if only ten righteous people could be found in the entire city. I think that by this time, he probably knew that he was talking to God. I think he was probably in agreement with God about the wickedness of Sodom and the surrounding cities, but he was concerned about the collateral damage if God were to destroy entire cities. Perhaps Abraham felt the need to have this conversation with God because he didn't have the picture of God that we have of Him being willing to suffer and die on the cross to save us from sin.

## The promised son is born

[Genesis 21:1](#) And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. <sup>2</sup> For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac. <sup>4</sup> Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup> Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. [Genesis 21:1-5 NKJV](#)

Finally, the promised child arrived when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. If you read further in the same chapter, you would see the unfortunate conflict that arose between Abraham's first born and his mother, and Sarah and the promised son. This resulted in Hagar and Ishmael being banished from the household.

## Abraham's test

[Genesis 22:1](#) Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

<sup>2</sup> Then He said, "Take now your son, your only [son] Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." [Genesis 22:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 22:10](#) And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

<sup>11</sup> But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

<sup>12</sup> And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only [son], from Me." [Genesis 22:10-12 NKJV](#)

As Abraham neared the end of his life, he was to pass through the most difficult trial of his entire life. God spoke to Abraham again and this time He told him to sacrifice his son, his promised son, his beloved son. How could God ask someone to do this? At the time, I believe there were human sacrifices to Idols, but this would have been a practice that Abraham would have abhorred. What was he to do? Would he obey the command of God no matter the cost? It would have been so easy for Abraham to rationalize that God could not have asked him to kill his promised son, or that it was not really God that asked him to do this terrible thing. In the end, Abraham passed the test and in doing so, I believe he got a glimpse of what God would go through in sacrificing His son to save us from sin.

[Genesis 23:1](#) Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; [these were] the years of the life of Sarah. <sup>2</sup> So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that [is], Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. [Genesis 23:1-2 NKJV](#)

When Sarah died, Abraham was 147 years of age, and their son Isaac would have been 37 years old since he was born when his mom was 90.

[Genesis 25:1](#) Abraham again took a wife, and her name [was] Keturah. <sup>2</sup> And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. [Genesis 25:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 25:5](#) And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> This [is] the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full [of years], and was gathered to his people. [Genesis 25:5-8 NKJV](#)

How long it was after Sarah died, we are not told, but Abraham married another wife who bore 6 more sons to him. Unfortunately, some or probably most of the sons of Abraham were the fathers of nations who became hostile towards the descendants of Isaac.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think God destroyed Sodom? See what happened during the Angels visit there. [Genesis 19:1-10](#)
- Do you think any of Abraham's other sons maintained their belief in their father's God?
- How do you think things could have been different if the Jews as a nation had stayed faithful to God?

# Jacob and Esau

Story: [Genesis 25:19 – 28:22](#)

Jacob, whose name was later changed by God to Israel was literally the father of the Israelites, now known as the Jews.

[Genesis 25:19](#) This [is] the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. <sup>20</sup> Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

<sup>21</sup> Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she [was] barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. <sup>22</sup> But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If [all is] well, why [am I like] this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> And the LORD said to her: "Two nations [are] in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; [One] people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

<sup>24</sup> So when her days were fulfilled [for her] to give birth, indeed [there were] twins in her womb. <sup>25</sup> And the first came out red. [He was] like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. <sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac [was] sixty years old when she bore them. [Genesis 25:19-26 NKJV](#)

Interestingly, like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah also had trouble having children. They tried and prayed for 20 years before they were able to have children.

[Genesis 25:27](#) So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. <sup>28</sup> And Isaac loved Esau because he ate [of his] game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup> Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he [was] weary. <sup>30</sup> And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red [stew], for I [am] weary." Therefore his name was called Edom.

<sup>31</sup> But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

<sup>32</sup> And Esau said, "Look, I [am] about to die; so what [is] this birthright to me?"

<sup>33</sup> Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. <sup>34</sup> And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised [his] birthright. [Genesis 25:27-34 NKJV](#)

It is stated that the twins were very different from each other. I believe that Esau who was the older was boisterous, daring, adventurous, self-gratifying and lived only for the moment. On the other hand, I believe Jacob was calm, quiet, a homebody, and lived for the future. Now in that time and culture, the birthright was something that was given to the firstborn son. It required the firstborn son to follow the father as the leader of the household. There were advantages in

that the leader of the household gained a larger portion of the family wealth, but there were also great responsibilities such as being the priest and spiritual leader of the family. Esau cared for none of this except the wealth.<sup>20</sup>

## Jacob and Rebekah deceive Isaac

[Genesis 27:1](#) Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am."

<sup>2</sup> Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. <sup>3</sup> "Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. <sup>4</sup> "And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring [it] to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

<sup>5</sup> Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring [it]. <sup>6</sup> So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, <sup>7</sup> 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' <sup>8</sup> "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. <sup>9</sup> "Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. <sup>10</sup> "Then you shall take [it] to your father, that he may eat [it], and that he may bless you before his death."

<sup>11</sup> And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother [is] a hairy man, and I [am] a smooth-[skinned] man. <sup>12</sup> "Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."

<sup>13</sup> But his mother said to him, "[Let] your curse [be] on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get [them] for me." <sup>14</sup> And he went and got [them] and brought [them] to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. <sup>15</sup> Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which [were] with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. <sup>16</sup> And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. <sup>17</sup> Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

<sup>18</sup> So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who [are] you, my son?"

<sup>19</sup> Jacob said to his father, "I [am] Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

<sup>20</sup> But Isaac said to his son, "How [is it] that you have found [it] so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought [it] to me."

<sup>21</sup> Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you [are] really my son Esau or not." <sup>22</sup> So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice [is] Jacob's voice, but the hands [are] the hands of Esau." <sup>23</sup> And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

<sup>24</sup> Then he said, "[Are] you really my son Esau?" He said, "I [am]."

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<sup>20</sup> White, Ellen Gould. *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Mountain View, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913, p177.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=pp&lang=en&pagenumber=177>;  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=m\\_8xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA177](http://books.google.com/books?id=m_8xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA177); <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pp/pp16.html>



<sup>25</sup> He said, "Bring [it] near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought [it] near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. <sup>26</sup> Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." <sup>27</sup> And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son [Is] like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed. <sup>28</sup> Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. <sup>29</sup> Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed [be] everyone who curses you, And blessed [be] those who bless you!" [Genesis 27:1-29 NKJV](#)

Because of what the angel had told her, Rebekah had always believed that Jacob should be the one to receive the birthright. But perhaps because he did not receive the message and because he favored Esau, Isaac was determined to give the birthright blessing to Esau. Jacob had thought the birthright was his because of his trade with Esau, so when it looked like things were not going their way, Jacob and Rebekah resorted to deception to get what they wanted.

[Genesis 27:41](#) So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob." <sup>42</sup> And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you [by intending] to kill you. [Genesis 27:41-42 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 27:46](#) And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these [who are] the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

Genesis 28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. [Genesis 27:46-28:2 NKJV](#)

Rebekah and Jacob paid a heavy price for their lack of trust in God and for their deception of Isaac. Jacob had to flee for his life and would never see his beloved mother again. From our calculations in [After the flood](#), Jacob would have been 77 years old when he left home. I don't know how old Rebekah was at the time, but we know she was married for 20 years before the twins were born, so she was probably at least 110. Isaac was 60 years old when the twins were born so at this time, he would have been 137.

## The promise repeated

[Genesis 28:10](#) Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup> So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. <sup>12</sup> Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder [was] set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

<sup>13</sup> And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I [am] the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. <sup>15</sup> "Behold, I [am] with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." [Genesis 28:10-15 NKJV](#)

I believe Jacob understood what a terrible mistake he had made and had begged for God's forgiveness. That night God appeared to him in a dream which assured him that God had forgiven him. God then gave Jacob his own version of the promise He had made to Abraham, to make him the father of a great nation that would possess the land.

What a wonderful example this is that God is willing to accept us and work with us even if we have made big mistakes. Clearly the same things we said about [the promise](#) God made to Abraham apply in the promise made to Jacob. It was through Jacob's family, that the promised Redeemer of the world would come.

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What do you believe?

- What do you think the prophecy given to Rebekah about her sons really meant?
- Do you think Isaac was wrong to insist on giving the birthright blessing to Esau even after he married Canaanite women?
- Do you think it was necessary for Isaac to give Jacob the birthright in order for God's promise to be fulfilled?

# Jacob becomes Israel

Story: [Genesis 29:1 – 25:29](#)

[Genesis 29:1](#) So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. <sup>2</sup> And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there [were] three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone [was] on the well's mouth. <sup>3</sup> Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

<sup>4</sup> And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where [are] you from?" And they said, "We [are] from Haran."

<sup>5</sup> Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him."

<sup>6</sup> So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "[He is] well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." [Genesis 29:1-6 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 29:13](#) Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. <sup>14</sup> And Laban said to him, "Surely you [are] my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

<sup>15</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you [are] my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what [should] your wages [be]?" [Genesis 29:13-15 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 29:18](#) Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

<sup>19</sup> And Laban said, "[It is] better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

[Genesis 29:18-19 NKJV](#)

I believe when Jacob met his cousin Rachel it was love with at first sight. At this time, it was obviously still acceptable and possibly even favorable to marry relatives as his father and grandfather had done. So, Laban agreed to Jacob's proposal and at the age of 77, he began seven years of labor for the woman he loved.

[Genesis 29:20](#) So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed [only] a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give [me] my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." <sup>22</sup> And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. <sup>23</sup> Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. <sup>24</sup> And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah [as] a maid. <sup>25</sup> So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it [was] Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"

<sup>26</sup> And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. <sup>27</sup> "Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."

[Genesis 29:20-27 NKJV](#)

## Jacob deceived

Sadly, Jacob was to learn the hard way what it was like to be on the receiving side of deception and unfairness. In fact, this was just the beginning of it. After working fourteen years for his two wives, Jacob would work for Laban six more years during which his wages would be changed ten times in Laban's attempts to get the better of him. During these first seven years of marriage, beginning at 84 years of age, Jacob would have eleven of his eventual twelve sons, made possible by having two wives and two concubines.

[Genesis 31:1](#) Now [Jacob] heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." <sup>2</sup> And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it [was] not [favorable] toward him as before. <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you." [Genesis 31:1-3 NKJV](#)

## Jacob returns home

At the end of 20 years, when Jacob would have been 97 years old, he had become wealthy with great flocks of sheep and goats, men and women servants, and herds of camels and donkeys. I think Jacob noticed the envy with which Laban eyed his wealth and probably feared he would try to take it by force. Then, in spite of the fact that he had never heard from his mother that it was safe to return, God told him that it was time to go back home.

[Genesis 32:3](#) Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. <sup>4</sup> And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. <sup>5</sup> "I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." ' "

<sup>6</sup> Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men [are] with him." [Genesis 32:3-6 NKJV](#)

Jacob was terrified for his family. He realized that it was his mistake that now placed his entire family at risk. At this time Jacob turned to God in prayer begging Him for forgiveness and protection. Jacob divided his camp into two groups, so that if one was attacked, the other might escape. He then sent them across the river while he stayed back to pray.

## Jacob's name changed to Israel

[Genesis 32:24](#) Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. <sup>25</sup> Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

<sup>27</sup> So He said to him, "What [is] your name?" He said, "Jacob."

<sup>28</sup> And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

<sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell [me] Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why [is] it [that] you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

<sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." [Genesis 32:24-30 NKJV](#)

With this experience and God's blessing, I believe that Jacob now went forward to meet Esau with confidence that everything would be ok.

[Genesis 33:1](#) Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. <sup>2</sup> And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. <sup>3</sup> Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

<sup>4</sup> But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. [Genesis 33:1-4 NKJV](#)

Isaac would have been 157 years old when Jacob returned, and he lived another 23 years. It appears that Jacob did not immediately move his household back home with his father, but stopped and setup camp at Succoth, Shechem, Bethel, Ephrath, and eventually Mamre where his father lived. Bethel is where he spent his first night on the run and where he had his dream of the ladder. Ephrath was later known as Bethlehem, and Mamre, later known as Hebron. It was during these years, somewhere between the age of 97 and 120 that Benjamin was born to Jacob. Unfortunately, though, his beloved Rachel died while giving birth. Isaac died at the age of 180 and his sons Jacob and Esau buried him.

[Genesis 35:23](#) the sons of Leah [were] Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; <sup>24</sup> the sons of Rachel [were] Joseph and Benjamin; <sup>25</sup> the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, [were] Dan and Naphtali; <sup>26</sup> and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, [were] Gad and Asher. These [were] the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram. [Genesis 35:23-26 NKJV](#)

So, Jacob had twelve sons who for the most part became the twelve tribes of Israel. We are only told of one daughter named Dinah. Life with these children was filled with drama. Jacob's oldest Reuben slept with his concubine Bilhah. [[Gen 35:22](#)] Dinah was raped, then his son's Simeon and Levi, slaughtered every male in the town. [[Gen 34](#)] The biggest drama surrounded his favorite son which I will cover when I discuss [Joseph, the favorite son](#).

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What do you believe?

- Did you think it was fair for Laban to ask Jacob to work another seven years to for Rachel?
- Do you think Esau intended to harm Jacob when he initially set out with his 400 men?
- Do you think Jacob wrestled with God or with an angel? Why do you think it says they could not win against him?

# Joseph, the favorite son

Story: [Genesis 37:1 – 39:20](#)

I believe that as a result of his favoritism, Jacob probably spent more time with Joseph than he did his other sons. Although Joseph was probably spoiled somewhat, I believe he received some benefit from the things his father must have taught him. I believe Joseph must have had a good sense of right and wrong which leads us to the first recorded conflict with his brothers.

[Genesis 37:2](#) This [is] the history of Jacob. Joseph, [being] seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad [was] with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. [Genesis 37:2 NKJV](#)

So, were these innocent pranks, making Joseph a tattler? Or were they serious wrongs that Joseph rightly reported to their father? We are not told, but we are told that Joseph's brothers despised him.

[Genesis 37:3](#) Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he [was] the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of [many] colors. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. [Genesis 37:3-4 NKJV](#)

Jacob's favoritism definitely made Joseph's life more difficult with his brothers. I believe that Jacob's gift of this beautiful robe could have been perceived as Jacob's intent to give the birthright to Joseph rather than to his first son. Joseph must have been somewhat oblivious to his brother feelings toward him, because amazingly, it gets worse.

[Genesis 37:5](#) Now Joseph had a dream, and he told [it] to his brothers; and they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup> So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup> "There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

<sup>8</sup> And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

<sup>9</sup> 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 37:5-10 NKJV](#)

It seems hard to believe that Joseph didn't notice his brothers' hatred of him, but the fact that he told them these dreams seems to indicate that either he didn't realize how they felt, or he was just gloating over them.

Now Jacob's livestock must have been growing in numbers because he even had to send his sons away with the flocks in search of more grazing grounds. It was the ten older brothers that were sent to care for the flocks while Joseph and

Benjamin stayed at home with their father. After not hearing from his sons for some time, Jacob began to wonder if they were ok, so he asked Joseph to go look for them. [[Genesis 37:12-17](#)]

[Genesis 37:18](#) Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup> Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! <sup>20</sup> "Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

<sup>21</sup> But Reuben heard [it], and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." <sup>22</sup> And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, [but] cast him into this pit which [is] in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

<sup>23</sup> So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph [of] his tunic, the tunic of [many] colors that [was] on him. <sup>24</sup> Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit [was] empty; [there was] no water in it.

<sup>25</sup> And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry [them] down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit [is there] if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he [is] our brother [and] our flesh." And his brothers listened. <sup>28</sup> Then Midianite traders passed by; so [the brothers] pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty [shekels] of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. [Genesis 37:18-28 NKJV](#)

I think all the brothers hated Joseph, but I don't think they were all united in their intentions. Clearly some of the brothers wanted to kill Joseph, but Reuben suggested throwing him in the pit because he intended to secretly release him. Judah suggested selling him rather than killing him. I believe that Simeon may have been one of the ones with the cruelest intentions based on his past murderous actions against the town of Shechem [[Gen 34](#)], and the fact that Joseph singled him out later on in the story [[Gen 42:24](#)]. The brothers covered up their evil deed by killing a goat and dipping Joseph's coat in it and brought it to their father. They innocently asked if it was Joseph's and let him assume the rest. [[Gen 37:31-35](#)]

[Genesis 39:1](#) Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. <sup>2</sup> The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. <sup>3</sup> And his master saw that the LORD [was] with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all [that] he had he put under his authority. <sup>5</sup> So it was, from the time [that] he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. [Genesis 39:1-5 NKJV](#)

Apparently, Joseph was much more than a spoiled brat. In his early years, I believe he had developed not only a faith and belief in God, but he had learned lessons about reliability and responsibility. Joseph also had organizational and leadership skills which he put to use. These characteristics along with God's blessings created an irresistible force for good. But just as he reached these heights, Joseph's character would be tested.

[Genesis 39:6](#) Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

<sup>8</sup> But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what [is] with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. <sup>9</sup> "[There is] no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you [are] his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

<sup>10</sup> So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her [or] to be with her.

<sup>11</sup> But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house [was] inside, <sup>12</sup> that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. <sup>13</sup> And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, <sup>14</sup> that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. <sup>15</sup> "And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

<sup>16</sup> So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. <sup>17</sup> Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; <sup>18</sup> "so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside." [Genesis 39:6-18 NKJV](#)

When Potiphar was told what had happened, he was furious and had Joseph thrown into prison. However, I do not believe Potiphar was furious with Joseph because if he had really believed his wife's story, he would have had Joseph killed immediately. I think Potiphar was probably furious with his wife because he probably suspected her unfaithfulness and had seen enough of Joseph's character to realize he would not do such a thing. Probably most importantly, he had lost his trusted personal attendant who had run his household so well and been responsible for unprecedented prosperity for him. At this turn of affairs, many would have been bitter toward God at being rewarded this way for doing the right thing, but not Joseph, as we will see in [Joseph becomes Prime Minister](#).

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Joseph was a spoiled favorite child?
- What do you think went on in Joseph's head as he was on his way to Egypt as a slave?
- Do you think there was anything Joseph could have done to defuse the situation with Potiphar's wife?



# Joseph becomes Prime Minister

Story: [Genesis 39:21 – 41:57](#)

We don't really know how long Joseph served Potiphar. From [Genesis 37:2](#), we know that Joseph was at least seventeen years old before he was sold into slavery. In [Genesis 41:46](#) we are told he was thirty years old when he was taken out of prison. And finally, from [Genesis 41:1](#), we know that Joseph was in prison more than two full years. I would guess that Joseph was in prison for three to four years.

[Genesis 39:21](#) But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup> And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who [were] in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. <sup>23</sup> The keeper of the prison did not look into anything [that was] under [Joseph's] authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made [it] prosper. [Genesis 39:21-23 NKJV](#)

In [Joseph, the favorite son](#) we saw that he was an extremely capable manager as well as a leader of people. Once the warden started warming up to him, these capabilities and characteristics again surfaced. Before long, though a prisoner himself, Joseph was responsible for the operations of the entire prison. In fact, the phrase, "The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything," is exactly what happened in his prior service to Potiphar.

Sometime later, Pharaoh's baker and his cup bearer made him angry which got them thrown in the dungeon. One day Joseph noticed that they both looked upset, so he asked them what was going on. They responded that they had each had a dream but neither knew what it meant. Joseph told them that God could reveal the meaning of their dreams, so they related their dreams to him. God immediately gave Joseph the meaning of both dreams so he told them that in three days, the cup bearer would be restored to his former position, but the baker would be executed. Joseph asked the cup bearer to try to get him released from prison when he stood before Pharaoh again, and he promised that he would. Three days later, at a party for Pharaoh's birthday, it happened exactly as Joseph had said, but the cup bearer forgot his promise. [\[Genesis 40\]](#)

[Genesis 41:1](#) Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. <sup>3</sup> Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the [other] cows on the bank of the river. <sup>4</sup> And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup> He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. <sup>6</sup> Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. <sup>7</sup> And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, [it was] a dream. [Genesis 41:1-7 NKJV](#)

Pharaoh's dreams troubled him and he wanted to know what they meant, but his wise men and counselors were not able to interpret the dreams for him. It was then that the cup bearer remembered his experience in prison and told Pharaoh about Joseph, his dream and its fulfillment. Pharaoh was desperate for answers, so he sent for Joseph. I believe that because Joseph was faithful, he was given special abilities that could be used to help the Egyptians and the world to know something about God. One of these abilities was the interpretation of dreams.

[Genesis 41:25](#) Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh [are] one; God has shown Pharaoh what He [is] about to do: <sup>26</sup> "The seven good cows [are] seven years, and the seven good heads [are] seven years; the dreams [are] one. <sup>27</sup> "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. <sup>28</sup> "This [is] the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He [is] about to do. <sup>29</sup> "Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; <sup>30</sup> "but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. <sup>31</sup> "So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it [will be] very severe. <sup>32</sup> "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing [is] established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

<sup>33</sup> "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> "Let Pharaoh do [this], and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth [of the produce] of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. <sup>35</sup> "And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. <sup>36</sup> "Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."

<sup>37</sup> So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find [such a one] as this, a man in whom [is] the Spirit of God?"

<sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, [there is] no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> "You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." [Genesis 41:25-41 NKJV](#)

Again, Joseph was lifted from what could have been the depths of despair, to a position of influence, authority and power even greater than before. In spite of the position and power, I believe Joseph remained levelheaded, faithful to God and true to his former unwavering morals and standards. I believe that the life of Joseph, is an example to us of the ways that God can use us and make Himself known through us. In Joseph's new position in Egypt, he was given a wife which it appears he loved and was happy with. I say this because the name he gave to his first born, Manasseh, meant, "God has made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father's family." [\[Genesis 41:51\]](#)

Everything happened exactly as God had revealed to Pharaoh through his dream. During those first seven years, Joseph collected 20% of the abundant harvests of the Egyptian people and it was said that the amount of grain was like the sand on the seashore. There was so much grain stored that he stopped keeping record because it was beyond measure. [\[Genesis 41:47-49\]](#)

[Genesis 41:53](#) Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. <sup>55</sup> So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." <sup>56</sup> The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. <sup>57</sup> So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy [grain], because the famine was severe in all lands. [Genesis 41:53-57 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 47:13](#) Now [there was] no bread in all the land; for the famine [was] very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. <sup>14</sup> And Joseph gathered up all the money that was

found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

<sup>15</sup> So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed."

<sup>16</sup> Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you [bread] for your livestock, if the money is gone."

<sup>17</sup> So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread [in exchange] for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread [in exchange] for all their livestock that year.

<sup>18</sup> When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. <sup>19</sup> "Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give [us] seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

<sup>20</sup> Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. <sup>21</sup> And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from [one] end of the borders of Egypt to the [other] end. <sup>22</sup> Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations [allotted to them] by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.

<sup>23</sup> Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, [here is] seed for you, and you shall sow the land. <sup>24</sup> "And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

<sup>25</sup> So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." <sup>26</sup> And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, [that] Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, [which] did not become Pharaoh's. [Genesis 47:13-26 NKJV](#)

I find it interesting, the way Joseph dealt with the Egyptian people when they ran out of money. It doesn't specifically say so, but I suppose he could have treated the surrounding nations the same way. The net effect was that all the land and livestock except for that owned by the priests, and even the people themselves, became the possession of Pharaoh. I believe Joseph was wise and compassionate in his dealing with the people of Egypt. They had all become slaves of the state, but in this case, Joseph's definition of slavery was, go live your lives and pay a flat 20% tax to the government.

In the next and final chapter on his life I will cover the intriguing story of [Joseph's family reunion](#).

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What do you believe?

- How long do you think Joseph served Potiphar, and how long do you think he was in prison?
- Do you think the prison keeper could have helped Joseph to be released from prison but didn't because he liked having him run the prison?

- Do you think there are very many countries today that do not allow individuals to own land and make them pay 20% or more in taxes? Do you think they consider themselves slaves of the state?

# Joseph's family reunion

Story: [Genesis 42:1 – 50:26](#)

The reach of the famine extended all the way to Canaan where Joseph's family lived, and after two years they had run out of food. They had been hearing news that there was food in Egypt, so Jacob sent his ten oldest sons to Egypt in hopes of buying some.

[Genesis 42:5](#) And the sons of Israel went to buy [grain] among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph [was] governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with [their] faces to the earth. <sup>7</sup> Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

<sup>8</sup> So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup> Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You [are] spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"

<sup>10</sup> And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup> "We [are] all one man's sons; we [are] honest [men]; your servants are not spies."

<sup>12</sup> But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

<sup>13</sup> And they said, "Your servants [are] twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest [is] with our father today, and one [is] no more."

<sup>14</sup> But Joseph said to them, "It [is] as I spoke to you, saying, 'You [are] spies!' <sup>15</sup> "In this [manner] you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. <sup>16</sup> "Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether [there is] any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you [are] spies!" <sup>17</sup> So he put them all together in prison three days. [Genesis 42:5-17 NKJV](#)

I do not believe Joseph was taking revenge on his brothers, although knowing he wasn't going to harm them, I can imagine that he might have had a little fun at their expense. His last impression of them was of cruel heartless men, selling their own brother into slavery, and I believe his true purpose was to know if his brothers had changed and if his younger brother was ok. I think the appearance of his brothers may have taken Joseph by surprise, so after having had some time to think about it, and realizing that their families needed food, he just kept one brother and sent the rest home with food. Joseph chose to keep Simeon, presumably because he had been the cruelest and most vocal in selling him into slavery. Being only human, it's hard to imagine Joseph not feeling at least a little sense of payback for Simeon, but the Bible doesn't give us any indication of this. So, Joseph sent his brothers on their way with food and, unbeknownst to them as they left, with their money in their sacks. I think with his true purpose was to not make his

family pay for the food, but Joseph may have had one last bit of fun with his brothers by letting them think they were being framed for not paying for their food.

[Genesis 43:1](#) Now the famine [was] severe in the land. <sup>2</sup> And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."

<sup>3</sup> But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother [is] with you.' <sup>4</sup> "If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. <sup>5</sup> "But if you will not send [him], we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother [is] with you.' " [Genesis 43:1-5 NKJV](#)

It appears that Judah had become a leader among the brothers, as well as one that Jacob might have trusted more than the others. It was with his personal assurances and guarantee for Benjamin's safe return that Jacob finally relented and agreed to let Benjamin go. Jacob instructed his sons to take double the amount of money so they could also pay for the food they got the first time. They also took as gifts for the man, balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin, pistachio and almond nuts. [\[Genesis 43:11\]](#)

When they arrived in Egypt and Joseph saw them with his little brother Benjamin, alive and well, he told his assistant to take them to his house for lunch. But when the brothers saw that they were being taken to Joseph's palace, they feared they would be made slaves because of the money in their sacks the last time. But the assistant told them not to worry because he had received their money. After Simeon was brought to them, their feet were washed and they were prepared for a feast at Joseph's palace. I'm sure the brothers were very confused, but maybe they figured it was an apology for falsely accusing them of being spies. At the feast, Joseph tested the brothers once more by treating Benjamin better than the rest of them, but they must have passed the test by not showing jealousy toward him. When all eleven brothers were finally on their way out of Egypt, they must have let out a collective sigh of relief that their mission had been accomplished successfully. They still had Benjamin and they also had Simeon back with them.

But Joseph had one more test for them. He had a special silver cup, and when the sacks were being filled with grain, he had asked his assistant to put it, into Benjamin's sack. Now he sent his assistant chasing after them with instructions to accuse them of stealing his cup and to search them. [\[Genesis 44:1-5\]](#)

[Genesis 44:6](#) So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. <sup>7</sup> And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. <sup>8</sup> "Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? <sup>9</sup> "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

<sup>10</sup> And he said, "Now also [let] it [be] according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." <sup>11</sup> Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. <sup>12</sup> So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. <sup>13</sup> Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city. [Genesis 44:6-13 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 44:18](#) Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you [are] even like Pharaoh. <sup>19</sup> "My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' <sup>20</sup> "And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of [his] old age, [who is] young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and

his father loves him.' <sup>21</sup> "Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.'  
<sup>22</sup> "And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for [if] he should leave his father, [his father] would die.'  
<sup>23</sup> "But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

<sup>24</sup> "So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup> "And our father said, 'Go back [and] buy us a little food.'  
<sup>26</sup> "But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother [is] with us.'

<sup>27</sup> "Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; <sup>28</sup> 'and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. <sup>29</sup> 'But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

<sup>30</sup> "Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad [is] not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, <sup>31</sup> "it will happen, when he sees that the lad [is] not [with us], that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. <sup>32</sup> "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him [back] to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.'  
<sup>33</sup> "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. <sup>34</sup> "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad [is] not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?" [Genesis 44:18-34 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 45:1](#) Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard [it].

<sup>3</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I [am] Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I [am] Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> "For these two years the famine [has been] in the land, and [there are] still five years in which [there will be] neither plowing nor harvesting. <sup>7</sup> "And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> "So now [it was] not you [who] sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

<sup>9</sup> "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. [Genesis 45:1-9 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 45:16](#) Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. <sup>17</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. <sup>18</sup> 'Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. <sup>19</sup> 'Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. <sup>20</sup> 'Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt [is] yours.' " [Genesis 45:16-20 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 45:24](#) So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."

<sup>25</sup> Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. <sup>26</sup> And they told him, saying, "Joseph [is] still alive, and he [is] governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup> But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. <sup>28</sup> Then Israel said, "[It is] enough. Joseph my son [is] still alive. I will go and see him before I die." [Genesis 45:24-28 NKJV](#)

On the way to Egypt, God spoke to Jacob in a vision and told him that his family would become a great nation in Egypt, but that they would come back to Canaan, the land promised to Abraham.

[Genesis 47:1](#) Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they [are] in the land of Goshen." ...

<sup>7</sup> Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. <sup>8</sup> Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old [are] you?" <sup>9</sup> And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage [are] one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." <sup>10</sup> So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. - [Genesis 47:1,7-10 NKJV](#)

In the chapter [Jacob becomes Israel](#), we learned that he was 84 years old when he started having children, and had 11 of 12 sons in the next 7 years ending with Joseph [[Genesis 30:25](#)]. If we simply add 7 to 84, we can estimate that Joseph was born when Jacob was 91 years old. Subtracting 91 from 130 would tell us that Joseph was about 39 years old when Jacob came to Egypt. The famine lasted another 5 years after his family arrived in Egypt [[Genesis 45:6](#)], so the famine actually ended when Joseph was about 44 years old. In [Genesis 50:26](#), we are told that Joseph lived to age of 110 years. This was not a particularly long life considering that his brother Levi lived to 137 years of age [[Exodus 6:16](#)], his father lived 147 years [[Genesis 47:28](#)] and his grandfather lived 180 years [[Genesis 35:28](#)]. Perhaps the stresses of running a country had taken its toll on him. I believe in recognition of his wise and benevolent leadership, Joseph probably continued as prime minister of Egypt probably as long as he lived which could have been as long as 76 years after the end of the famine. After all, if you were Pharaoh and watched how wisely Joseph ran your country without ever threatening your power or authority, wouldn't you keep him as long as you could?

Finally, although the historical dates don't seem to match up, there are some interesting parallels in ancient Egyptian history to a person named Imhotep, whose list of titles were:

- Chancellor of the King of Egypt
- Doctor
- First in line after the King of Upper Egypt
- Administrator of the Great Palace
- Hereditary nobleman
- High Priest of Heliopolis
- Builder
- Chief Carpenter
- Chief Sculptor
- and Maker of Vases in Chief



He was also associated with helping Egypt end a seven-year famine.<sup>21</sup> There are numerous articles on the internet speculating that Joseph and Imhotep were the same person. Do an internet search for “are Joseph and Imhotep the same person” or “is Joseph mentioned in Egyptian history” and you will find a lot of interesting reading. Just remember that not everything you read on the internet is fact.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Joseph felt any satisfaction in the discomfort he put his brothers through as he tested them?
- Why was Joseph willing to wait so long before revealing his identity to his brothers?
- Do you think that Pharaoh believed and worshipped the God of Joseph?

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<sup>21</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imhotep>

# The children of Israel enslaved, birth of Moses

Story: [Exodus 1:1 – 2:10](#)

[Exodus 1:1](#) Now these [are] the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob:

<sup>2</sup> Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah;

<sup>3</sup> Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin;

<sup>4</sup> Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

<sup>5</sup> All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt [already]). <sup>6</sup> And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. <sup>7</sup> But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

<sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel [are] more and mightier than we; <sup>10</sup> "come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and [so] go up out of the land." <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup> But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. [Exodus 1:1-12 NKJV](#)

The Bible doesn't tell us exactly when this change of circumstances began. It is likely that it was not merely a new king but a new dynasty that refused to acknowledge Joseph and the favors bestowed upon the Israelites. Prominent historians have placed the date of the Exodus somewhere between 1491 (Ussher) and 1446 BC (Thiele).<sup>22</sup> According to most sources the transition from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasties in Egypt was around 1550 BC.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of which duration and Exodus date you use, it appears that there would have been a dynasty change in Egypt.

From [Exodus 6:16](#), we know that Levi lived 137 years. In [Jacob becomes Israel](#), we figured that Jacob started having children at the age of 84. Being his third son with Leah we could estimate one year per child, making Jacob about 87 years old when Levi was born. If Jacob was 130 when he went to Egypt, then Levi would have been about 43 years old at that time. That would mean that the children of Israel would have been in Egypt about 92 years when Levi died.

My guess is that it was well over 100 years before this oppression started, and it must have gone on for some time because even as it continued, their population increased. So, Pharaoh resorted to murder to try to solve his problem.

[Exodus 1:15](#) Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one [was] Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; <sup>16</sup> and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see [them] on the birthstools, if it [is] a son, then you shall kill him; but if it [is] a daughter, then she shall live."

<sup>17</sup> But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. <sup>18</sup> So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?"

<sup>22</sup> [http://creationwiki.org/Exodus\\_of\\_Israel](http://creationwiki.org/Exodus_of_Israel)

<sup>23</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ancient\\_Egyptian\\_dynasties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ancient_Egyptian_dynasties)

<sup>19</sup> And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women [are] not like the Egyptian women; for they [are] lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."

<sup>20</sup> Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. <sup>21</sup> And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

<sup>22</sup> So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive." [Exodus 1:15-22 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 2:1](#) And a man of the house of Levi went and took [as wife] a daughter of Levi. <sup>2</sup> So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he [was] a beautiful [child], she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup> But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid [it] in the reeds by the river's bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

<sup>5</sup> Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. <sup>6</sup> And when she opened [it], she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

<sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

<sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give [you] your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water." [Exodus 2:1-10 NKJV](#)

How far-reaching in its results was the influence of that one Hebrew woman, and she an exile and a slave! The whole future life of Moses, the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother. There is no other work that can equal this. To a very great extent the mother holds in her own hands the destiny of her children. She is dealing with developing minds and characters, working not alone for time, but for eternity. She is sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit, either for good or for evil. She has not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the divine. Especially during their early years the responsibility rests upon her of forming the character of her children. The impressions now made upon their developing minds will remain with them all through life. Parents should direct the instruction and training of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. They are placed in our care to be trained, not as heirs to the throne of an earthly empire, but as kings unto God, to reign through unending ages. [White. Patriarchs and Prophets. p244](#)<sup>24</sup>

Apparently, this daughter of Pharaoh was not as heartless as her father. I believe she knew exactly what was going on and I think she was smart enough to figure out that she was paying the baby's own mother to nurse him for her. After

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<sup>24</sup> White, Ellen. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958. p244  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=pp&lang=en&pagenumber=244>;  
<http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pp/pp22.html>; [http://books.google.com/books?id=m\\_8xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA244](http://books.google.com/books?id=m_8xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA244)

all, who better to nurse and care for a baby, than his own mother. We are not directly told the name of this daughter of Pharaoh but there is speculation that she was Bithiah, mentioned in the genealogy of Judah from that era.

[1 Chronicles 4:18](#) (His wife Jehudijah bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.) And these were the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. [1 Chronicles 4:18 NKJV](#)

A Jewish Encyclopedic source has the following to say about Bithia:

Daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered of the tribe of Judah married (I Chron. iv. 18). In the Midrash (Lev. R. § 1) she is called the foster-mother of Moses.

Daughter of Pharaoh; identified in the Midrash with Moses' foster-mother. The name is explained as follows: God said to her, "You have called Moses your son, although he was not your son, therefore I will call you my daughter ["Bithiah" = "bat," daughter; "Yah," God], although you are not my daughter" (Lev. R. i. 3; Meg. 13a; and elsewhere).<sup>25</sup>

For more interesting reading, do an internet search for "who was the daughter of pharaoh who found moses".

The bible doesn't tell us how long Moses got to stay with his own mother Jochebed, but it must have been at least until after he was weaned. This would most likely have given her valuable time to teach him about God and about his own people. The following two verses are the only ones I could find in the Bible that tell us anything about the early life of Moses after he was found by Pharaoh's daughter. The second one seems to indicate that Moses was a smart, talented and ambitious young man as he grew to adulthood in the palace.

[Exodus 20:10](#) And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water." [Exodus 2:10 NKJV](#)

[Acts 7:22](#) "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. [Acts 7:22 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- How long do you think it was before the Egyptians turned on the Israelites?
- Why did Pharaoh's daughter want to keep Moses?
- How long do you think Moses stayed with this real mother?

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3341-bithiah>

# Moses' mid-life

Story: [Exodus 2:11 – 4:31](#)

[Exodus 2:11](#) Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. <sup>12</sup> So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?"

<sup>14</sup> Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" <sup>15</sup> 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 2:11-15 NKJV](#)

At the time of this incident we are told that Moses was about forty years of age. He had obviously been thinking about the plight of his people and had probably been trying to think of a way to help them. Whether he had misjudged his people as a whole or simply the one he had chosen to rescue, his chances of using his position in the Egyptian court to help or save his people was now gone.

[Exodus 2:16](#) Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup> Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

<sup>18</sup> When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How [is it that] you have come so soon today?"

<sup>19</sup> And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock."

<sup>20</sup> So he said to his daughters, "And where [is] he? Why [is] it [that] you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. [Exodus 2:16-21 NKJV](#)

The events of these few verses are most of what we know of Moses' next forty years of life. During these forty years, I believe Moses lived a simple life, in contrast to the life he had left behind in Egypt. So, what did Moses do during those years spent as a shepherd in Midian? Most everyone who believes in the Bible assigns the authorship of the first five books to Moses. It is possible that Moses wrote the book of Genesis during this time, however in order for this to have happened; I believe he would have needed access to some written records or needed God to somehow communicate all those details to him. I do not believe God dictated these early historical accounts to Moses at this time because he never mentions any communication with God from this time period until he was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Josephus writes of two pillars, one of stone and one of clay, on which Seth and possibly Methuselah and Noah, wrote things for posterity. However, most commentaries also say that Josephus was mistaken about the Seth who made

the pillars.<sup>26</sup> Another theory along those same lines is that there were a set of clay tablets written by men who actually experienced the events that were compiled by Moses during his forty years in Midian.<sup>27</sup> I'm sure there are many other theories about how Moses came to know all the details contained in the first few chapters of Genesis.

[Exodus 2:23](#) Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.<sup>24</sup> So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.<sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged [them]. [Exodus 2:23-25 NKJV](#)

[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.

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who [are] in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."<sup>8</sup> "So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites."<sup>9</sup> "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them."<sup>10</sup> "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." [Exodus 3:1-10 NKJV](#)

At this point in time Moses is about eighty years of age, and in contrast to when he was a prince in Egypt, feels completely unsuited to the task.

[Exodus 3:11](#) But Moses said to God, "Who [am] I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

<sup>12</sup> So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this [shall be] a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, [when] I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What [is] His name?' what shall I say to them?"

<sup>14</sup> And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup> Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of

<sup>26</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seth#In\\_Josephus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seth#In_Josephus)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.trueorigin.org/tablet.asp>

your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This [is] My name forever, and this [is] My memorial to all generations.' [Exodus 3:11-15 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 3:19](#) "But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. <sup>20</sup> "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. <sup>21</sup> "And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. [Exodus 3:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 4:1](#) Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' "

<sup>2</sup> So the LORD said to him, "What [is] that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."

<sup>3</sup> And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. <sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take [it] by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), <sup>5</sup> "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

<sup>6</sup> Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand [was] leprous, like snow. <sup>7</sup> And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his [other] flesh. <sup>8</sup> "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. <sup>9</sup> "And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour [it] on the dry [land]. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry [land]."

<sup>10</sup> Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I [am] not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I [am] slow of speech and slow of tongue." [Exodus 4:1-10 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 4:14](#) So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. <sup>15</sup> "Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. <sup>16</sup> "So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. [Exodus 4:14-16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 4:29](#) Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. <sup>30</sup> And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. <sup>31</sup> So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped. [Exodus 4:29-31 NKJV](#)

I find it interesting that Moses carried on this debate with God as a child might with a parent asking them to do something they didn't want to do. The problem is that he wasted this opportunity arguing with God rather than asking about countless things that a human being would like to ask God.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Moses did during the forty years as a shepherd to prepare him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?
- What made Moses so special that God wanted him to be the one to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?
- Why did God choose to only speak to Moses? Why couldn't God speak to Aaron and tell him what to say and do?
- Did his reluctance show a lack of faith in God to do what He said He would do, or a lack of confidence in himself?
- If God spoke verbally to you, what would you want to ask Him?



# The length of the sojourn in Egypt

So how long were the Israelites in Egypt and how long were they oppressed as slaves? The Bible doesn't directly tell us, so it has been a subject of much debate and speculation. One of the reasons it has been such a hot debate is that the length of the time in Egypt is a key piece in the puzzle of determining the biblical age of the world. The other is the seeming contradictory statements in the Bible regarding the length of the stay in Egypt.

From [Exodus 7:7](#) we know that Moses was eighty years old when he first asked Pharaoh for Israel's release and presumably still eighty when he left Egypt. Then there are several verses that reflect on the length of stay in Egypt, which presumably all end with the exodus and the receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

[Exodus 15:13](#) Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land [that is] not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. [Genesis 15:13-14 NKJV](#)

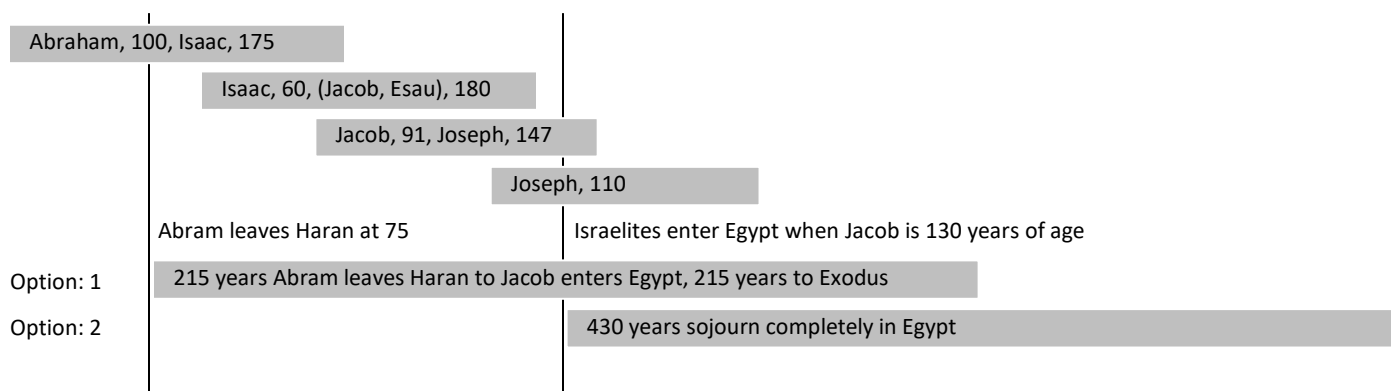
[Genesis 15:16](#) "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites [is] not yet complete." [Genesis 15:16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 12:41](#) And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years--on that very same day--it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. [Exodus 12:41 NKJV](#)

[Acts 6:6](#) "But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress [them] four hundred years. <sup>7</sup> '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 7:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 3:17](#) And this I say, [that] the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. [Galatians 3:17 NKJV](#)

There are two primary positions taken among believers on the length of the Egyptian sojourn. An explanation of the text in the grey box is: Name of person, age when son was born, son that was born, age at death. In the case of Joseph, it's just his name and age at death.



The first option and possibly more traditional, because it was adopted by the church and printed in the margin of the King James Bible at the time, is Ussher's short sojourn.<sup>28</sup> I don't have Ussher's actual reasons for his conclusion, but here are some of the points used to support this position:

1. Paul's statement in Galatians seems to indicate that the covenant with Abram started the 430 years
2. Regarding Moses' statement in [Exodus 12:41](#); The Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint, say "Egypt and Canaan" rather than just Egypt<sup>29</sup>
3. Four generations are mentioned in [Genesis 15:16](#) and named in [Exodus 6:16-20](#) do not realistically span 430 years
4. Regarding the 400 years of oppression mentioned in [Genesis 15:13](#), some supporters of this position assert that Israel's ancestor Isaac was oppressed by Ishmael and the Canaanites
5. The numbers arrived at by Ussher nicely work out to 4000 years from creation to Christ
6. Sources in support of:
  - a. [http://www.conservapedia.com/The\\_Annals\\_of\\_the\\_World](http://www.conservapedia.com/The_Annals_of_the_World)
  - b. [http://creationwiki.org/Talk:Biblical\\_chronology\\_dispute](http://creationwiki.org/Talk:Biblical_chronology_dispute)
  - c. [http://www.conservapedia.com/Egyptian\\_chronology](http://www.conservapedia.com/Egyptian_chronology)

The second option which argues the following points in support of it:

1. Moses was there at the time and clearly wrote 430 years to the day [[Exodus 12:41](#)]
2. The four generations mentioned in [Genesis 15:16](#) and [Exodus 6:16-20](#) are not father to son but non overlapping (birth to death) generations with unnamed generations between them
3. The covenant to Abram mentioned in Galatians was reiterated to Jacob on his way into Egypt
4. Regarding the 400 years of oppression mentioned in [Genesis 15:13](#), some supporters of this position assert that the Israelites were not oppressed initially, but only after a dynasty change that chose not to acknowledge Joseph's contributions
5. Some well thought out articles in support of it:
  - a. <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2012/01/05/The-Duration-of-the-Israelite-Sojourn-In-Egypt.aspx#Article>
  - b. <http://www.oldtestamentstudies.org/how-long-did-israel-sojourn-in-egypt/>

I admit that I have not done extensive historical, archaeological or linguistic research, but until further research or evidence changes my opinion, I find my beliefs more in line with the second option. Based on the length of Joseph's life and my belief that I don't think the oppression started before he died, I take [Genesis 15:13](#) as using round or approximate numbers. I believe the generations referred to in [Genesis 15:16](#) and [Exodus 6:16-20](#) are four mostly non overlapping life spans and not direct father to son. After all, ages of the fathers at the birth of the sons are not given as they are for the earlier genealogies in [Genesis 5](#) and [11](#). In [Acts](#), I believe Stephen was telling the story of Abraham and was essentially quoting God's statement to Abram in [Genesis 15](#).

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What do you believe?

- How long do you think the Israelites were in Egypt?

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<sup>28</sup> [http://creation.com/images/pdfs/other/timeline\\_of\\_the\\_bible.pdf](http://creation.com/images/pdfs/other/timeline_of_the_bible.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+12&version=NIV>

- How do you reconcile the seeming contradictions between the 400 and 430-year statements?
- How long do you think the Israelites lived in peace and prosperity in Egypt?

# The ten plagues

Story: [Exodus 5:1 – 11:10](#)

[Exodus 5:1](#) Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.' " <sup>2</sup> 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 5:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 5:4](#) Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get [back] to your labor." <sup>5</sup> And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land [are] many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"

<sup>6</sup> So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, <sup>7</sup> "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. <sup>8</sup> "And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go [and] sacrifice to our God.' <sup>9</sup> "Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words." [Exodus 5:4-9 NKJV](#)

So why did Pharaoh make this change in the working arrangements, accusing the Israelites of stopping their work? There are a couple reasons speculated by Ellen White in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 23.<sup>30</sup> When Moses first came back and met with the Israelite elders, he may have convinced them to start observing the Sabbath day of rest from their labors. Another possible reason was to give them less time to talk about and plan their departure from Egypt.

[Exodus 6:10](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land."

<sup>12</sup> And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I [am] of uncircumcised lips?" [Exodus 6:10-12 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 7:1](#) So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you [as] God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. [Exodus 7:1 NKJV](#)

This is interestingly the second time Moses is told that he would be like or in place of God. (see also [Exodus 4:16](#)) I believe the reason that God could do this was because He knew that Moses would not misrepresent Him or take advantage of the situation. [Numbers 12:3](#) says that Moses was the humblest person on the face of the earth. [On the other extreme, in [Acts 12:22-23](#) we read that King Herod was killed for accepting praise as a god.]

[Exodus 7:10](#) So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. <sup>11</sup> But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

<sup>12</sup> For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

<sup>13</sup> And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. [Exodus 7:10-13 NKJV](#)

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<sup>30</sup> White. <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pp/pp23.html>

I wonder how it was that Pharaoh's magicians were able to seemingly transform their staffs into serpents. I think we can safely assume that it was not a miracle from God. Today many amazing magic tricks are done through illusion and sleight of hand, but miraculous things can also be done with supernatural aid. However, assuming that Satan does not have the ability to create life, I can speculate that if these were actually real serpents which they appeared to be, Satan could have very convincingly replaced the thrown staff with a real serpent that he had captured.

## 1 - Blood

[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. [Exodus 7:19-20 NKJV](#)

The Nile River is by far the primary source of fresh water for Egypt.<sup>31</sup> In ancient Egyptian religions, there was a god named Hapi, who was the god of the Nile.<sup>32</sup> I don't know if the worship of this god occurred at that very time in history. But what I am showing, is that in ancient Egyptian religion, there were many gods associated with things in nature. This first plague struck not only at the source of their water but also the streams, canals and reservoirs that were fed by it. Through this plague, God was showing Pharaoh and the Egyptians that He had power over their gods. But because Pharaoh's magicians could also seemingly turn water into blood, he would not acknowledge the power of God and refused to let the Israelites go.

## 2 - Frogs

[Exodus 8:6](#) So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. [Exodus 8:6 NKJV](#)

In ancient Egyptian religion, the goddess Hekt had a frog head. There was a time when the frog was thought to spontaneously appear out of the mud from the annual inundation of the Nile River. This gave rise to the belief that all life originated in the Valley of the Nile.<sup>33</sup> Again, God was showing His power over their gods. This plague caused Pharaoh to agree to release the Israelites, only to go back on his word when the plague was removed.

## 3 - Lice

[Exodus 8:17](#) And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. [Exodus 8:17 NKJV](#)

There is some debate about exactly what these lice were in terms of modern insects or pests. The NASB and NLT translated it gnats, but the KJV used the word lice. Possibly the more interesting thing was that they were made from the dust of the earth, which again was associated with some god. It is interesting to note that the Bible says Pharaoh's magicians could mimic the first two plagues, but not the third, yet he still refused to let the Israelites go.

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<sup>31</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water\\_resources\\_management\\_in\\_modern\\_Egypt#Current\\_resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_resources_management_in_modern_Egypt#Current_resources)

<sup>32</sup> Wiedemann, Alfred. *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, London, H. Grevel & Co., 1897, p145. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0eVGKXV4Eg4C&pg=PA145>

<sup>33</sup> Wiedemann. p129. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0eVGKXV4Eg4C&pg=PA129>

## 4 - Flies

[Exodus 8:24](#) And the LORD did so. Thick swarms [of flies] came into the house of Pharaoh, [into] his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms [of flies]. [Exodus 8:24 NKJV](#)

This time the plague was different in that it did not affect the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. Pharaoh's response was also different in that he seemed less defiant and even somewhat desperate. He actually granted them permission to take the time off to sacrifice to God but asked that they not leave the country.

[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? <sup>27</sup> "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us." [Exodus 8:26-27 NKJV](#)

I believe this is evidence that there were animals that the Egyptians held sacred or worshipped, including some that the Israelites would sacrifice. When Moses refused, in desperation Pharaoh relented but said just don't go too far, now hurry and get rid of the flies. But when the flies were gone, he refused to let the Israelites go.

## 5 - Plague on the livestock

[Exodus 9:6](#) So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. <sup>7</sup> Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go. [Exodus 9:6-7 NKJV](#)

As was the case with the last one, this plague did not touch the land of Goshen. However, Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go. I believe, some if not all the livestock affected in this plague were probably the ones held sacred or worshipped by the Egyptians. Again, God was showing His power over their gods.

## 6 - Boils

[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. <sup>11</sup> And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. [Exodus 9:10-11 NKJV](#)

Up to this point, the plagues were not directly inflicted on the people. Yes, they impacted them greatly, but they occurred in nature around them. This time it struck at their bodies. Yet, Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go.

## 7 - Hail

[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](#)

Moses had warned Pharaoh and told him that they should bring their servants and animals out of the fields and under shelter or they would be killed. It says that some of Pharaoh's officials were afraid and did bring their servants and livestock in from the fields. [\[Exodus 9:20\]](#) This time Pharaoh quickly called Moses and Aaron and admitted his wrong and begged them to stop the hailstorm. But as before, when the hail stopped, Pharaoh refused to honor his word.

## 8 - Locust

[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](#)

Pharaoh again desperately summoned Moses and Aaron and confessed his wrong and begged for them to stop the plague, but when the locusts were gone, he refused to do as he said.

## 9 - Darkness

[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](#)

Sun worship was common among ancient religions and Egypt was no exception. Probably the most prominent designation for the sun god in Egypt was Ra.<sup>34</sup> Here again, God made it very clear that this was no natural phenomenon. At the same time that it was dark in Egypt, the sun shone on the Israelites. This time Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said that all the people could go, but their livestock must be left behind. When Moses refused this offer and said they needed their livestock, Pharaoh got angry and told him to never come before him again.

## 10 - Death of the firstborn

[Exodus 11:4](#) Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; <sup>5</sup> 'and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who [is] behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. [Exodus 11:4-5 NKJV](#)

Pharaoh had defied God and 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." [\[Exodus 5:2\]](#) God proceeded to let him know that he was the God of the waters, animals, insects, health, weather, sun, moon, stars, and finally life and death.

What do you believe?

- In [Exodus 7:3](#) God said He would make Pharaoh stubborn so that He could perform miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt. Do you think God literally made Pharaoh refuse so He could get through all ten plagues?
- How important was it for the Israelites to get a fist hand demonstration of God's power?
- Do you think it was unfair that one man's (Pharaoh's) stubbornness could affect the lives and deaths of so many of his own people?

<sup>34</sup> Wiedemann. p14. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0eVGKXV4Eg4C&pg=PA14>

# The Exodus

Story: [Exodus 12:1 – 14:31](#)

The Exodus from Egypt is considered by many to be the birth of the Israelite or Jewish nation. Although Abraham was the one originally called by God, both he and Isaac are fathers of more than just the Jews. Jacob who was renamed Israel during his wrestling match with Jesus or an angel [[Genesis 32:24-30](#)] is literally the father of the Israelites. He went to Egypt with a family, which numbered seventy males plus wives and daughters, counting Joseph and his two sons. [[Genesis 46:1-27](#)] The Israelites left Egypt numbering 600,000 men plus women and children. [[Exodus 12:37](#)]

## Passover

One major event of note that happened in conjunction with the Exodus was the start of the Jewish Passover festival. In modern times, the Passover begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month Nisan which typically occurs in March or April and is celebrated for seven or eight days. It is probably one of the best known and most widely observed Jewish festivals.

[Exodus 12:11](#) <sup>1</sup>And thus you shall eat it: [with] a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It [is] the LORD's Passover.

<sup>12</sup> 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [am] the LORD. <sup>13</sup> 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you [are]. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy [you] when I strike the land of Egypt.

<sup>14</sup> 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. [Exodus 12:11-14 NKJV](#)

The first ten verses of [Exodus 12](#) detail the instructions given to the Israelites leading up to the Exodus, including selection and preparation of the lamb. Among these instructions was the command to make this month, Nisan, the first month of their year going forward.

[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. <sup>30</sup> So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for [there was] not a house where [there was] not one dead.

<sup>31</sup> Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. [Exodus 12:29-31 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 13:17](#) Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them [by] way of the land of the Philistines, although that [was] near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." <sup>18</sup> So God led the people around [by] way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. [Exodus 13:17-18 NKJV](#)

[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. [Exodus 13:21 NKJV](#)



## Logistics

Many different guesses have been made of the total population of Israelites that left Egypt. Estimating a wife for each counted man and a couple children would give a very conservative estimate of about two and a half million people plus livestock. Chances are the average number of children per household was probably closer to three or four. The logistics of handling such a large company including movement, setting up camp and dealing with essentials such as waste, water and food, must have taken an immense amount of planning and organization. It is probable that Moses had received military training as he grew up an adopted son of Pharaoh. I would guess that this training along with specific instructions from God were the reasons that Moses was able to maintain order. Another way to visualize the size of the crowd is that if the people had actually walked in formation with 500 people per row, there would have been 5000 rows, using the conservative estimate of 2.5 million. Allowing ten feet between rows, which is also conservative considering that they had livestock, would have strung them out 50000 feet or almost ten miles.

Their first stop was along the shore of the Red Sea hemmed in by mountains on either side. It was as if they were backing themselves into a corner. Meanwhile back in Egypt, Pharaoh had had some time to get over the shock and horror of what had just happened. I believe he became angry and decided that he would bring those runaway slaves back or slaughter them.

## Parting of the Red Sea

[Exodus 14:9](#) So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses [and] chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

<sup>10</sup> And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup> Then they said to Moses, "Because [there were] no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup> "[Is] this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For [it would have been] better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

<sup>13</sup> And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. <sup>14</sup> "The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. <sup>16</sup> "But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry [ground] through the midst of the sea. [Exodus 14:9-16 NKJV](#)

Even given the escape route of the path through the sea, mobilizing the Israelites and getting them all to the opposite shore must have taken a lot of time. To give them time, the pillar of fire moved between them and the Egyptians, preventing the Egyptians from reaching and attacking them. Now Pharaoh must not have been thinking very rationally and his army must have been very afraid of him to follow his orders. How else could you explain following the Israelites down into the Red Sea? After all the waters were miraculously parted by God to let them escape from you, He has been blocking you from reaching them with a pillar of fire, and now you expect this God to keep the path through the sea open so you can attack His people on the other side? The Bible says that the waters rushed back into place and Pharaoh's entire army drowned in the sea. I believe this miraculous demonstration along with the plagues in Egypt were meant to give the Israelites faith in God's power but also to make other nations fear God and not bother the Israelites.

What do you believe?

- Why did God make His people put the blood on their door posts to avoid the plague of the death of the first born? In other words, why were they not automatically exempt like they were from most of the other plagues?
- How many Israelites do you think left Egypt?
- How do you think order and communication was maintained as the Israelites moved through the wilderness?

# Ten Commandments

Story: [Exodus 20:1 – 20:17](#)

## 1 - Have no other gods before Me

[Exodus 20:1](#) And God spoke all these words, saying: <sup>2</sup> "I [am] the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before Me. [Exodus 20:1-3 NKJV](#)

God had given the Israelites abundant evidence of His existence. He had also showed them how He was willing to favor them in the plagues that they were protected from. The Egyptians worshipped many gods and He wanted the Israelites to acknowledge Him as the only God. While this may seem self-serving or jealous, I believe that human beings naturally seek out something or someone to admire, respect and in ways worship. After all, doesn't it seem there has always been religion and worship of one kind or another throughout history. God knows that we are be better off worshipping a good, loving, forgiving, all powerful God, then inanimate nature, dumb beasts, or a self-serving person. After all we would probably not strive to be better than what we reverence and worship.<sup>35</sup>

## 2 - Don't make images or idols and bow down and worship them

[Exodus 20:4](#) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness [of anything] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. [Exodus 20:4-6 NKJV](#)

At the time, many people worshipped things in nature as gods. They would often make images or physical representations for their chosen deities, which they would then bow down to and worship. God had already told them that He is their only God and I believe He didn't even want them to make an image as a representation of Him. The thing with images is that over time, people would come to reverence the image even though they knew it was just a representation. Isaiah presents a good logical monolog on the folly of worshipping idols made with human hands.

[Exodus 44:12](#) The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, Fashions it with hammers, And works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; He drinks no water and is faint. <sup>13</sup> The craftsman stretches out [his] rule, He marks one out with chalk; He fashions it with a plane, He marks it out with the compass, And makes it like the figure of a man, According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. <sup>14</sup> He cuts down cedars for himself, And takes the cypress and the oak; He secures [it] for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes [it]. <sup>15</sup> Then it shall be for a man to burn, For he will take some of it and warm himself; Yes, he kindles [it] and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a god and worships [it]; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. <sup>16</sup> He burns half of it in the fire; With this half he eats meat; He roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms [himself] and says, "Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire." <sup>17</sup> And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image. He falls down before it and worships [it], Prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you [are] my god!" [Isaiah 44:12-17 NKJV](#)

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<sup>35</sup> Goldstein, Clifford. *Life without limits*. Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2007, p147.

### 3 - Don't use God's name in vain

[Exodus 20:7](#) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold [him] guiltless who takes His name in vain. [Exodus 20:7 NKJV](#)

Now this is an interesting one to me. I think in our culture in America, even among people who call themselves Christians, it has become very accepted to use the expression "Oh my god." In my opinion, this is a direct violation of the third commandment. But here is a little food for thought. If you use the expression "my word" or "my goodness," what is the context in which you are using it? Is it the same context in which someone uses "my god?" Now add to that the fact that Jesus is referred to as the "Word" [[John 1](#)], or when Moses asked to see God, He said I will make "My Goodness" pass before you [[Exodus 33:19](#)]. In [Matthew 5:33-37](#) where Jesus is teaching by giving the people examples of things they have done, then telling them what is better. One of those examples is about vows or oaths, which is not directly bearing on this, but I believe is related.

### 4 - Keep the Sabbath holy

[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](#)

Up to this point, we have commands detailing our relationship with God. But who is this God and why is He entitled to our worship and our respect? Traditionally when a law is passed, someone who has been given the authority must sign the law into effect. Along with their signature is their title or position which gives them this authority. In this case, God has the authority to pass these laws because He made us. So, in a sense, you could say this commandment contains God's signature, which validates the law. Uriah Smith argues this to make a different point.<sup>36</sup> Now what about this fourth commandment? It seems that the majority of Bible believing Christians have conveniently decided to ignore multiple aspects of this fourth commandment. First, the majority of Bible believing Christians worship on the first day of the week rather than the seventh. Secondly, aside from going to church the majority do not treat this day as special. There are some who would say that the Ten Commandments were only given to the Jews and hence this commandment does not apply to them. However, we should remember that that Sabbath was established at creation, before there were Jews. I believe God wisely gave us this day for our own good. As a student in school, I remember looking forward to the Sabbath as a day when I could, without guilt, ignore my homework and studying for a day. As a working person, I can use it to force me to put aside work which can consume so much of my time. But rather than only look at what not to do, why not look at what to do on the Sabbath. It gives me the time to worship God, and to spend time with family and friends. It also gives me time to do good things for other people. In fact, I would argue that regardless of how strenuous or hard the work, it is probably good and acceptable to do anything on the Sabbath if it is completely for the good of others and not yourself. I believe Jesus' many healings on the Sabbath support this line of thinking.

### 5 - Honor your parents

[Exodus 20:12](#) "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. [Exodus 20:12 NKJV](#)

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<sup>36</sup> Smith. 2005. p457 <http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA457>; 1907. p525 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA525>

This commandment has often been called the commandment with a promise. Honoring parents is a special case of honoring elders in general. Is the blessing for keeping this commandment something that God has to give to keep His end of the bargain, or is it a natural law? Does a society naturally live longer, fuller, happier lives if they honor their elders and parents in specific?

## 6 - Do not murder

[Exodus 20:13](#) "You shall not murder. [Exodus 20:13 NKJV](#)

## 7 - Do not commit adultery

[Exodus 20:14](#) "You shall not commit adultery. [Exodus 20:14 NKJV](#)

## 8 - Do not steal

[Exodus 20:15](#) "You shall not steal. [Exodus 20:15 NKJV](#)

## 9 - Do not lie

[Exodus 20:16](#) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. [Exodus 20:16 NKJV](#)

Commandments six, eight and nine are common sense civil laws that probably exist in almost every single nation and culture.

Seven is a common sense law which is enforced in some cultures and not others but is frowned upon even in countries where it is not enforced as a civil law. The word adultery in this case refers to having sexual relations with someone besides your marriage partner. Contrary to what some may think, this commandment doesn't specifically address pre-marital sex. There are other places where the Bible addresses this topic. At the time, there really was no pre-marital sex because if two consenting adults had sex, they were declared married, unless the father objected [[Exodus 22:16-17](#)]. If the woman was not consenting, obviously it was rape.

To be fair, #9 doesn't say not to lie. So, is God ok with us lying as long as we are not lying against our neighbor in court? There are examples in the Bible of people lying to protect the innocent, or God's people [[Joshua 2:3-7](#)]. Many people who protected Jews lied to the Germans. I think this goes back to the natural law, or laws of nature that I mentioned for the fifth commandment. I think if you lie for your own benefit, or just lie because you don't care, it will usually come back to hurt you. Perhaps people will lie to you more, or for sure people will not trust what you say. I think in general it says something about your character.

## 10 - Do not covet

[Exodus 20:17](#) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that [is] your neighbor's." [Exodus 20:17 NKJV](#)

Finally, the commandment on coveting is next to impossible to enforce because it has to do with thoughts. However, breaking the tenth is generally a precursor to breaking the seventh or eighth. This one also says something to us about being content with what you have.

The words quoted in these verses were words spoken by God from Mount Sinai. He subsequently wrote these commands on two tables of stone and gave them to Moses. In summary, the first four commandments have to do with our relationship with God and the later six with our fellow man.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the Ten Commandments are Jewish laws or are the laws for all people?
- Do you think these laws are all equally important?
- Do you believe it is important to keep the fourth commandment literally?

# Food and water in the wilderness

Story: [Exodus 15:1 – 17:7](#), [Numbers 11:1 – 11:35](#), [Numbers 20:1-12](#)

I had conservatively estimated that there were 2.5 million Israelites leaving Egypt. Just for the sake of illustrating a point, let's assume each person used one gallon of water per day, for drinking, cleaning, cooking and livestock. A typical tanker truck can carry somewhere around 5,500 to 9,000 gallons.<sup>37</sup> If we rounded up to 10,000 gallons to make the math easy, 2,500,000 gallons (using one gallon per person) divided by 10,000 gallons/truck would be on the order of 250 large tanker trucks every single day.

After leaving the Red Sea, the site of their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptian army, the Israelites traveled for three days without finding water. When they came to an oasis and found the water bitter, they turned to Moses and started complaining. Now the people could rightfully be concerned about finding water, but they should have trusted that since God was leading them, He would not allow them to die of thirst in the dessert. [Exodus 15:22-25](#) says that God performed another miracle for them and made the water drinkable.

[Exodus 16:1](#) And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat [and] when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." [Exodus 16:1-3 NKJV](#)

I'm going to guess that they were just running out of the food that they had brought from Egypt at this time. I'm sure they also realized that there was no way that such a large congregation of people would be able to live off the land. Given the circumstances, I think they could rightly be concerned, but they should have remembered that God was taking care of them.

[Exodus 16:11](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I [am] the LORD your God.' "

<sup>13</sup> So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. <sup>14</sup> And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, [as] fine as frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup> So when the children of Israel saw [it], they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it [was]. And Moses said to them, "This [is] the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. [Exodus 16:11-15 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 16:31](#) And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it [was] like white coriander seed, and the taste of it [was] like wafers [made] with honey. [Exodus 16:31 NKJV](#)

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<sup>37</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank\\_truck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank_truck)

God chose to use this opportunity to remind the people about the Sabbath. They would receive the manna six days a week and were to only collect enough for the day except on Friday when they were to collect enough for two days. Then on Sabbath, there would be no manna to collect, but the extra that they had collected on Friday, which on any other day would have gone bad, was still fresh on Sabbath. The really interesting thing to note about this is that they had still not received the Ten Commandments, the fourth of which reminds us to keep the Sabbath holy.

[Exodus 17:1](#) Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but [there was] no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

<sup>3</sup> And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why [is] it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

<sup>4</sup> So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

<sup>5</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. <sup>6</sup> "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. [Exodus 17:1-6 NKJV](#)

Once again the people found themselves in need of water and once again instead of believing that God would provide, they complained. This time God simply created a river that flowed out of a rock to supply the water needed.

[Numbers 11:4](#) Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? <sup>5</sup> "We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; <sup>6</sup> "but now our whole being [is] dried up; [there is] nothing at all except this manna [before] our eyes!" [Numbers 11:4-6 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 11:10](#) Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. <sup>11</sup> So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? [Numbers 11:10-11 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 11:18](#) "Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For [it was] well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. <sup>19</sup> 'You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, <sup>20</sup> '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?" ' " [Number 11:18-20 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 11:31](#) Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left [them] fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. <sup>32</sup> And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread [them] out for themselves all around the camp. <sup>33</sup> But while the meat [was] still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great



plague. <sup>34</sup> So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving. [Numbers 11:31-34 NKJV](#)

This mixed multitude, was kind of like a thirteenth tribe. They were made up mostly of Egyptians who had followed the Israelites out of Egypt. They probably did this because they were so impressed with the power of Israel's God, but probably didn't think of Him as the one and only god. I believe it was this mixed multitude that started the complaint for meat, but it didn't take long for some of the Israelites to join in.

[Numbers 20:1](#) Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.

<sup>2</sup> Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! <sup>4</sup> "Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? <sup>5</sup> "And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It [is] not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor [is] there any water to drink." <sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup> "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." <sup>9</sup> So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

<sup>10</sup> And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup> Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." [Numbers 20:1-12 NKJV](#)

This last incident occurred very near the end of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Unfortunately for Moses, he DIDN'T do as he was told. God told him to speak to the rock, but instead he struck the rock as he had been commanded to do when God brought water from the rock at the start of the wilderness wanderings. Because of this disobedience, Moses and Aaron were not allowed to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

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What do you believe?

- Why did God wait until the Israelites were so hungry or thirsty that they started complaining before performing miracles to meet their needs?
- When the Bible says the people complained, it makes it sound like they all complained. What percentage of the people do you think were actually involved in the complaining and do you think it generally started with the mixed multitude?
- Do you think it was too harsh a punishment to not allow Moses to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land after such a seemingly small mistake?

# Sanctuary

Story: [Exodus 25-31](#), [Exodus 35:10-40:38](#), [Leviticus 1-9](#), [Leviticus 16-17](#), [Leviticus 21-22](#), [Leviticus 24:1-9](#), [Numbers 3-4](#), [Numbers 8](#)

When Israel came out of Egypt, one of their first stops was Mount Sinai where they received the ten commandments and their other civil and religious laws. It was there where they also received the plans for the sanctuary which was the mobile predecessor to the famous Jewish temple. We are not given the dimension in units of measure that we use today but we have a pretty good idea of the size, based on estimates that a cubit in Bible times was probably 18-20 inches.<sup>38</sup>

[Exodus 25:1](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. <sup>3</sup> "And this [is] the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; <sup>4</sup> "blue, purple, and scarlet [thread], fine linen, and goats' [hair]; <sup>5</sup> "ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; <sup>6</sup> "oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; <sup>7</sup> "onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. <sup>8</sup> "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. <sup>9</sup> "According to all that I show you, [that is], the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make [it]. [Exodus 25:1-9 NKJV](#)

Whether he saw a literal model or a vision, we don't know but Moses was actually "shown" what to build and then he wrote it down in words. Clearly, he would have been able to clarify the details and answer the questions the craftsmen had. Since we don't have Moses to answer our questions, then we don't really know exactly what each piece of furniture looked like, but that hasn't stopped us from imagining. I have included links to pictures to fuel the imagination, but rather than choose just one, I will include a hyperlink to a google image search for each piece.

## Ark of the covenant

[Exodus 25:10](#) "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits [shall be] its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. <sup>11</sup> "And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. <sup>12</sup> "You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put [them] in its four corners; two rings [shall be] on one side, and two rings on the other side. <sup>13</sup> "And you shall make poles [of] acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. <sup>14</sup> "You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. <sup>15</sup> "The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. <sup>16</sup> "And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

<sup>17</sup> "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits [shall be] its length and a cubit and a half its width. <sup>18</sup> "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. <sup>19</sup> "Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it [of one piece] with the mercy seat. <sup>20</sup> "And the cherubim shall stretch out [their] wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim [shall be] toward the mercy seat. <sup>21</sup> "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. <sup>22</sup> "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from

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<sup>38</sup> Smith, William (Editor). *Dictionary of the Bible*. London, 1863, p 1737.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=kvwCAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA1737>

above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which [are] on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel. [Exodus 25:10-22 NKJV](#)

The ark of the covenant should undoubtedly be considered the most holy piece of furniture in the sanctuary. It was to contain the ten commandments, engraved by God Himself onto stone tablets, and to be located in the most holy place in the sanctuary. The mercy seat above the ark was the place where God would come and manifest His presence among the Israelites. There is no description of the mercy seat except for the fact that it was between the two cherubim on the lid of the ark. The fact that it was called a "seat" and was a location for his presence probably meant that it was symbolic of the throne of God in heaven. The word "mercy" is very fitting as well since the sanctuary is about forgiving sin through the sacrifice of a substitute.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=ark+of+the+covenant&espv=210&es\\_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=9gazUrTFN47hoATSo4CYCQ&ved=0CAkQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=ark+of+the+covenant&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=9gazUrTFN47hoATSo4CYCQ&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Table of showbread

[Exodus 25:23](#) "You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits [shall be] its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. <sup>24</sup> "And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. <sup>25</sup> "You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. <sup>26</sup> "And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that [are] at its four legs. <sup>27</sup> "The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. <sup>28</sup> "And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. <sup>29</sup> "You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold. <sup>30</sup> "And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always. [Exodus 25:23-30 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 24:5](#) "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths [of an ephah] shall be in each cake. <sup>6</sup> "You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure [gold] table before the LORD. <sup>7</sup> "And you shall put pure frankincense on [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. <sup>8</sup> "Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. <sup>9</sup> "And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it [is] most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute." [Leviticus 24:5-9 NKJV](#)

In his last supper with the disciples before he died, Jesus said that the bread they broke and ate was a symbol of his body that would be broken for them. [[Matthew 26:26](#), [Mark 14:22](#), [Luke 22:19](#)] Then in John, multiple times Jesus said "I am the bread of life" and that those who ate this bread would have eternal life. [[John 6:35](#), [John 6:48](#), [John 6:50-51](#), [John 6:58](#)]

[http://www.google.com/search?q=table+of+showbread&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=1QvDUoCNBZH8oATW3oDWAg&sqi=2&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=table+of+showbread&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=1QvDUoCNBZH8oATW3oDWAg&sqi=2&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Golden lampstand

[Exodus 25:31](#) "You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its [ornamental] knobs, and flowers shall be [of one piece]. <sup>32</sup> "And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. <sup>33</sup> "Three bowls [shall be] made like almond [blossoms] on one branch, [with] an [ornamental] knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond [blossoms] on the other branch, [with] an [ornamental] knob and a flower--and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. <sup>34</sup> "On the lampstand itself four bowls

[shall be] made like almond [blossoms, each with] its [ornamental] knob and flower. <sup>35</sup> "And [there shall be] a knob under the [first] two branches of the same, a knob under the [second] two branches of the same, and a knob under the [third] two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. <sup>36</sup> "Their knobs and their branches [shall be of one piece]; all of it [shall be] one hammered piece of pure gold. <sup>37</sup> "You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it. <sup>38</sup> "And its wick-trimmers and their trays [shall be] of pure gold. <sup>39</sup> "It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. <sup>40</sup> "And see to it that you make [them] according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain. [Exodus 25:31-40 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 24:1](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. <sup>3</sup> "Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; [it shall be] a statute forever in your generations. <sup>4</sup> "He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure [gold] lampstand before the LORD continually. [Leviticus 24:1-4 NKJV](#)

For symbolism let's look at the oil first. It was commonly used in the Old Testament for anointing, a symbol of being chosen by God. For just a couple examples out of many, Samuel anointed Saul [[1 Samuel 10:1](#)] and David [[1 Samuel 16:13](#)] as the first two kings of Israel. Following the theme of anointing with oil, the Spirit of the Lord, is directly connected to anointing in the life of Jesus and the actions he performed.

[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;  
<sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." [Luke 4:18-19 NKJV](#) [[Isaiah 61:1](#)]

Next let's take a look at the oil lamp. Jesus told a parable about ten virgins and their oil lamps, symbolizing people waiting for His second coming. [[Matthew 25:1-13](#)] If oil provides the fuel to produce light, then when Jesus said to let our light shine so that people will see our good works and glorify God, perhaps it is logical to assume the light is equated with good works fueled by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. Is it fair to say that without oil there is no light?

[Matthew 5:16](#) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:16 NKJV](#)

In Revelation, John wrote that he saw seven lamps of fire before the throne of God in heaven and he said they were the seven Spirits of God. [[Revelation 4:5](#)]

It seems that the oil represents the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. Moses must have instructed the workmen on the size of the lampstand, but he neglected to write it down.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=golden+lampstand&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=rQvDUrykGseFogTruoGoCA&sig=2&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=golden+lampstand&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=rQvDUrykGseFogTruoGoCA&sig=2&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Altar of incense

[Exodus 30:1](#) "You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. <sup>2</sup> "A cubit [shall be] its length and a cubit its width--it shall be square--and two cubits [shall be] its height. Its horns [shall be] of one piece with it. <sup>3</sup> "And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. <sup>4</sup> "Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place [them] on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. <sup>5</sup> "You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. <sup>6</sup> "And you shall put it before the veil that [is] before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that [is] over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.

<sup>7</sup> "Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it.

<sup>8</sup> "And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. <sup>9</sup> "You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. <sup>10</sup> "And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It [is] most holy to the LORD." [Exodus 30:1-10 NKJV](#)

The incense was to rise up over the veil and enter the most holy place which is where the presence of God is. So, what is the incense a symbol of?

[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](#)

[1 Chronicles 6:49](#) But Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the Most Holy [Place], and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. [1 Chronicles 6:49 NKJV](#)

It was symbolic of prayers especially those offered on behalf of the people by the priests. Like the blood which it was also mingled with on the horns of the altar, the incense was also a symbol for atonement, or covering of sins.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=altar+of+incense&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=kAvDUtKhC4zooASKiYGgCg&sqi=2&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=altar+of+incense&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=kAvDUtKhC4zooASKiYGgCg&sqi=2&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Boards and sockets

[Exodus 26:15](#) "And for the tabernacle you shall make the boards of acacia wood, standing upright. <sup>16</sup> "Ten cubits [shall be] the length of a board, and a cubit and a half [shall be] the width of each board. <sup>17</sup> "Two tenons [shall be] in each board for binding one to another. Thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. <sup>18</sup> "And you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. <sup>19</sup> "You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. <sup>20</sup> "And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, [there shall be] twenty boards <sup>21</sup> "and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. <sup>22</sup> "For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six boards. <sup>23</sup> "And you shall also make two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. <sup>24</sup> "They shall be coupled together at the bottom and they shall be coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be for the two corners. <sup>25</sup> "So there shall be eight boards with their sockets of silver--sixteen sockets--two sockets under each of the boards.

<sup>26</sup> "And you shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, <sup>27</sup> "five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far

side westward. <sup>28</sup> "The middle bar shall pass through the midst of the boards from end to end. <sup>29</sup> "You shall overlay the boards with gold, make their rings of gold [as] holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. <sup>30</sup> "And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.

[Exodus 26:15-30 NASB](#)

I believe there was an exact pattern that was followed in the construction of these boards, but the verbal description does not seem sufficient to eliminate variations in interpretation. From my perspective, it is sufficient to see it as a one third/two thirds ratio between the most holy place and the holy place of the tabernacle. The height of the walls was to be 10 cubits and depending on how they went together, the most holy place could have been a cube. The boards formed three walls, for the sides and back of the sanctuary. There were no boards on the entrance side or for the ceiling.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=moses+sanctuary+boards+and+sockets&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=dwvDUralG5bfoAS2goKIDA&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=moses+sanctuary+boards+and+sockets&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=dwvDUralG5bfoAS2goKIDA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Curtains of linen

[Exodus 26:1](#) "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle [with] ten curtains [of] fine woven linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet [thread]; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. <sup>2</sup> "The length of each curtain [shall be] twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements. <sup>3</sup> "Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and [the other] five curtains [shall be] coupled to one another. <sup>4</sup> "And you shall make loops of blue [yarn] on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of [one] set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of [the other] curtain of the second set. <sup>5</sup> "Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that [is] on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. <sup>6</sup> "And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle. [Exodus 26:1-6 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 36:8](#) Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet [thread; with] artistic designs of cherubim they made them. [Exodus 36:8 NKJV](#)

For the curtains, I think there was also a specific way they were to be hung, but we seem to be left with some ambiguity as to exactly how it was done. I believe these curtains had angels embroidered on them and were used as a ceiling and wall coverings. Once joined together, there were 40x28 square cubits of curtain area. The tabernacle was 10 cubits high and 30 cubits long, so the 28-cubit length could have gone from the floor up to virtually the top of the wall, then across the ceiling and back down to the floor. The 40 cubits with a fourth of the length gathered could have covered the 30-cubit length.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=moses+sanctuary+tabernacle+embroidered+curtain&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=WAvDUvDJDlivoATX84CACw&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=moses+sanctuary+tabernacle+embroidered+curtain&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=WAvDUvDJDlivoATX84CACw&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Curtains of goat hair

[Exodus 26:7](#) "You shall also make curtains of goats' [hair], to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. <sup>8</sup> "The length of each curtain [shall be] thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. <sup>9</sup> "And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. <sup>10</sup> "You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in [one] set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. <sup>11</sup> "And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. <sup>12</sup> "The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that

remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. <sup>13</sup> "And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it.

<sup>14</sup> "You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that.  
[Exodus 26:7-14 NKJV](#)

It appears that there were to be three layers to be stretched over the rigid walls as a tent covering for the tabernacle. The first layer was a cloth made from goat hair. The second layer of rams' skin sounds like what we call the leather hide. The third and outer most layer was to be made from the skin of [תהא, taha](#)<sup>39</sup> which the Strong's concordance says could be a badger, dugong, dolphin, sheep, or an animal that is now extinct. The entire surface area of the under layer of goat hair was 30x44 square cubits, which was understandably larger than the inner curtains. Details are given about the overlapping portions on the two ends, but nothing is said about how the tent covering is to be secured along the long edge.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=moses+tabernacle+tent+covering&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=OAvDUouuFM6oATCn4HgBA&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=moses+tabernacle+tent+covering&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=OAvDUouuFM6oATCn4HgBA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Veil and screen

[Exodus 26:31](#) "You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet [thread], and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. <sup>32</sup> "You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia [wood] overlaid with gold. Their hooks [shall be] gold, upon four sockets of silver. <sup>33</sup> "And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy [place] and the Most Holy. <sup>34</sup> "You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy. <sup>35</sup> "You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.

<sup>36</sup> "You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, [woven of] blue, purple, and scarlet [thread], and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. <sup>37</sup> "And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia [wood], and overlay them with gold; their hooks [shall be] gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them. [Exodus 26:31-37 NKJV](#)

The veil was to separate the holy from the most holy place and was to be hung from four pillars along the boundary between the two compartments. The screen was essentially the doorway into the holy place and was hung on five pillars across the entrance.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=most+holy+place+veil&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=EQvDUv2EDZTdoATc4oL4Bg&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=most+holy+place+veil&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=EQvDUv2EDZTdoATc4oL4Bg&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Bronze altar

[Exodus 27:1](#) "You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide--the altar shall be square--and its height [shall be] three cubits. <sup>2</sup> "You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. <sup>3</sup> "Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. <sup>4</sup> "You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. <sup>5</sup> "You

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8476/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. <sup>6</sup> "And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. <sup>7</sup> "The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. <sup>8</sup> "You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make [it]. [Exodus 27:1-8 NKJV](#)

The bronze altar of sacrifice was to be outside the tabernacle in the courtyard. The structure was wood covered with bronze. It was square and relatively large, with the edge of five cubits, being longer than the height of a man. The grate on which the sacrifices were to be burned was hung at 1.5 cubits or halfway up the 3 cubit height of the altar. The coal and ashes would fall through the grate and be shoveled out periodically.

[http://www.google.com/search?q=sanctuary+tabernacle+bronze+altar+of+sacrifice&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=7wrDUseEDYXnoASpt4CoCA&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=sanctuary+tabernacle+bronze+altar+of+sacrifice&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=7wrDUseEDYXnoASpt4CoCA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## The laver

[Exodus 30:17](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>18</sup> "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, <sup>19</sup> "for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. <sup>20</sup> "When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. <sup>21</sup> "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them--to him and his descendants throughout their generations." [Exodus 30:17-21 NKJV](#)

The laver was kind of like a big washtub where the priests were to wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle. Here the symbolism seems pretty clear that sin, represented by dirtiness was to be washed off before entering the presence of God. If sin cannot exist in the presence of God, then the sin must be washed off first or the carrier of the sin would be destroyed along with the sin in His presence. I'm sure Moses knew exactly how big the laver was to be made, but he neglected to write it down.

Solomon, who built the first temple which was to replace the sanctuary, did give dimensions for the laver he built. But since the temple Solomon built was bigger, it is a pretty sure bet that the laver he built was bigger.

[1 Kings 7:23](#) And he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; [it was] completely round. Its height [was] five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference.

<sup>24</sup> Below its brim [were] ornamental buds encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The ornamental buds [were] cast in two rows when it was cast. <sup>25</sup> It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea [was set] upon them, and all their back parts [pointed] inward. <sup>26</sup> It [was] a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, [like] a lily blossom. It contained two thousand baths. [1 Kings 7:23-26 NKJV](#)

<http://www.google.com/search?q=sanctuary+tabernacle+laver&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=IQRDUUpOWJdf ooATPiIGgBg&ved=0CDQQsAQ&biw=1920&bih=954>

## The courtyard

[Exodus 27:9](#) "You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side [there shall be] hangings for the court [made of] fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. <sup>10</sup> "And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets [shall be] bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands [shall be] silver. <sup>11</sup> "Likewise along the



length of the north side [there shall be] hangings one hundred [cubits] long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver.

<sup>12</sup> "And along the width of the court on the west side [shall be] hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. <sup>13</sup> "The width of the court on the east side [shall be] fifty cubits. <sup>14</sup> "The hangings on [one] side [of the gate shall be] fifteen cubits, [with] their three pillars and their three sockets. <sup>15</sup> "And on the other side [shall be] hangings of fifteen [cubits, with] their three pillars and their three sockets.

<sup>16</sup> "For the gate of the court [there shall be] a screen twenty cubits long, [woven of] blue, purple, and scarlet [thread], and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It [shall have] four pillars and four sockets. <sup>17</sup> "All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks [shall be] of silver and their sockets of bronze. <sup>18</sup> "The length of the court [shall be] one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, [made of] fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. <sup>19</sup> "All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, [shall be] of bronze.

<sup>20</sup> "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. <sup>21</sup> "In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which [is] before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. [It shall be] a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel. [Exodus 27:9-21 NKJV](#)

I find it interesting that the ratio of the length of the courtyard to that of the tabernacle was approximately 3:1 which is the same ratio of the sanctuary to that of the most holy place. The courtyard was rectangular in shape, 100x50 cubits walled with a linen curtain. The height of 5 cubits was such that people would not be able to peer over the walls unless they were standing on something. I doubt there was any intent to keep people from peering over the walls into the courtyard, but definitely to keep people from hopping the fence. There was to be only one entrance which is symbolic of Jesus based on His statement:

[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](#)

I found it interesting that in the time of Jesus, that many people were excluded from the courtyard of the temple. In fact, in addition to the courtyard where the altar and laver were, there was a court for women, and further out was the court for gentiles. There was a court for women because only Israelite males were allowed in the courtyard where the altar of sacrifice was. Even lower was the court for gentiles who were not even allowed in the court for women.<sup>40</sup> By doing this, the Jews of the time were greatly reducing access to God and forgiveness for sin. This was not a problem for them because as far as they were concerned, Jews were the only people who could be saved anyways. I don't think this was God's original plan because I didn't find any law in the books of Moses either directly or indirectly restricting Israelite women from the sanctuary courtyard. There was a law in [Deuteronomy 23](#) which restricted certain classes and races of people from the assembly or congregation of Israel. However, I think most scholars interpret this as a restriction from holding civil office, but even this doesn't restrict women.

[Deuteronomy 23:1](#) "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

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<sup>40</sup> Jennings, David. *Jewish Antiquities*. London, William Baynes and son, 1823, p 361.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=oK82AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA361>

<sup>2</sup> "One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his [descendants] shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his [descendants] shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, <sup>4</sup> "because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. <sup>5</sup> "Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. <sup>6</sup> "You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

<sup>7</sup> "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he [is] your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. <sup>8</sup> "The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

[Deuteronomy 23:1-8 NKJV](#)

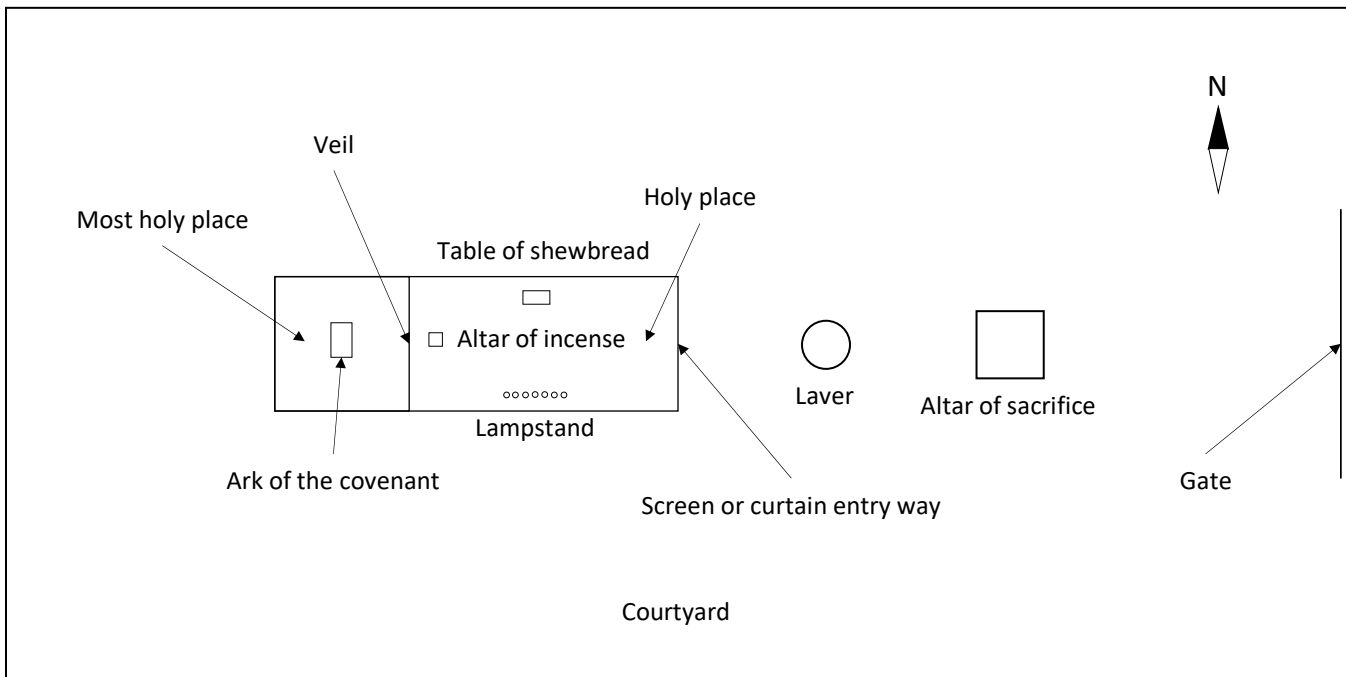
The fact that all who choose to accept Jesus are all equal is made very clear by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians.

[Galatians 3:26](#) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> 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 3:26-29 NKJV](#)

<http://www.google.com/search?q=tabernacle+courtyard&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=MAnDUoSzMIXboAThYHoCA&ved=0CAcQAUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954>

## Floor plan

Here is a simple overhead floor plan drawn to scale, except for laver and lampstand (because I don't have dimensions). We do not have measurements for the placement of items, so they are simply laid out in a uniform arrangement. The position of the three pieces in the holy place relative to each other is by instruction, but their exact distance from the walls and each other is not known.



[http://www.google.com/search?q=tabernacle+courtyard&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=MAnDUoSzMIXboAThYHoCA&ved=0CAcQ\\_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954](http://www.google.com/search?q=tabernacle+courtyard&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=MAnDUoSzMIXboAThYHoCA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAQ&biw=1920&bih=954)

## Sacrifices

There are several different types of sacrifices mentioned in the first few chapters of [Leviticus](#). Stephen Tam has very nicely tabulated them on his website [<http://www3.telus.net/public/kstam/en/tabernacle/details/offerings.htm>]. They were for different purposes symbolically and practically and had varying procedures. I found it interesting that there seemed to be a lot of mention of forgiveness for unintentional sin and very little on intentional. While I believe there is forgiveness for intentional sin, I wonder if it was de-emphasized so there was not a concept buying forgiveness with the sacrifice? After all, how would that differ from the practice of selling indulgences in the Middle Ages, especially if the symbolism were lost sight of. After all, in each case the sacrifice cost the person something, be it an animal which could have been very costly, all the way down to some food in the case of the very poor. Back at that time, I should mention there was a death sentence for a number of intentional sins, including murder and sexual immorality.

I am aware that the idea of killing animals can be very distasteful to some. But on the practical side, I think it is worth noting, first that the people were slaughtering animals for food and clothing anyway, and secondly, in most cases the priesthood would receive some portion of the sacrifice. This was actually part of their compensation for the services they were providing to the people.

Looking at the symbolism next, the sacrifice of an innocent animal for acts committed by a person, is clearly pointing at the sacrifice of the life of God to atone for the sins for those who ask to be forgiven. The Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death.

[Romans 6:23](#) For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 3:23](#) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [Romans 3:23 NKJV](#)

So how do we escape the sentence of death for our sins?

[Romans 5:8](#) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. <sup>10</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. [Romans 5:8-10 NKJV](#)

[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, [1 Peter 3:18 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 9:22](#) And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. [Hebrews 9:22 NKJV](#)

The sacrifice has been made, and forgiveness is free [[Romans 6:23](#)], but we know that not all will benefit from it. So, what must one do to benefit from it?

[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](#)

When Jesus actually died on the cross, He accomplished what the sacrifices were pointing forward to. Because of that the sacrifices were no longer needed.

[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](#)

[Mark 15:37](#) And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. <sup>38</sup> Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. [Mark 15:37-38 nkjv](#)

At the moment of Christ's death, the most holy place of the temple, which was previously only accessible to the high priest once a year, was now exposed. I wouldn't say it was literally exposed to all, because not everyone had access to the holy place or even the courtyard at that time, but symbolically I think it signified the end of the earthly sanctuary services including the sacrifices.

[Hebrews 9:1](#) Then indeed, even the first [covenant] had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. <sup>2</sup> For a tabernacle was prepared: the first [part], in which [was] the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; <sup>3</sup> and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, <sup>4</sup> which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which [were] the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; <sup>5</sup> and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

<sup>6</sup> Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. <sup>7</sup> But into the second part the high priest [went] alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and [for] the people's sins [committed] in ignorance; <sup>8</sup> the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. <sup>9</sup> It [was] symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—<sup>10</sup> [concerned] only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

<sup>11</sup> But Christ came [as] High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. <sup>12</sup> Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

<sup>16</sup> For where there [is] a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. <sup>17</sup> For a testament [is] in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. <sup>18</sup> Therefore not even the first [covenant] was dedicated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup> saying, "This [is] the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." <sup>21</sup> Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. <sup>22</sup> And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore [it was] necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, [which are] copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; <sup>25</sup> not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—<sup>26</sup> He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. <sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. [Hebrews 9 NKJV](#)

I think that what Paul wrote in his letter to the Hebrews makes it pretty clear that the earthly sanctuary and the Jewish temple had become obsolete after the death of Jesus. However, the things they pointed to, the death of Jesus and His ministry as our high priest in heaven were still in progress. The sacrifice was complete, but the things that took place in the earthly sanctuary after the sacrifice were still to take place in the heavenly sanctuary. I think this is a good lead in to look at what John saw and wrote about the temple in heaven.

## Sanctuary in heaven

I believe that the sanctuary that the Israelites built and its services were earthly symbols patterned after a sanctuary in heaven.

[Hebrews 8:1](#) Now [this is] the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup> a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

<sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore [it is] necessary that this One also have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; <sup>5</sup> who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See [that] you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." [Hebrews 8:1-5 NKJV](#)

Paul in his letter to the Hebrews makes it pretty clear that there is a sanctuary in heaven, and that the design and services given to Moses were a copy or shadow of the one in heaven. The apostle John, in the book of Revelation, saw things in heaven that seemed to correspond to items in the earthly sanctuary. We already read about each of the pieces that were built by the Israelites for the earthly sanctuary. Now read what John saw.

### Seven branch lampstand

[Revelation 1:12](#) Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,  
[Revelation 1:12 NKJV](#)

### Altar of incense

[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](#)

### Ark of the covenant

[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](#)

### Altar with four horns

[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](#)

So, it does appear that there is evidence to suggest that the earthly sanctuary was a model of one in heaven. It would also stand to reason that the services of the earthly sanctuary are symbolic of bigger things, namely the actual handling of sin by God on our behalf. All the animal sacrifices were symbolic of the blood that was required to allow the forgiving of sin. They were symbolic of the blood that would be shed by Jesus to allow sinful human beings to be forgiven and saved.

## Day of Atonement

Now, let's circle back and look at one of the special ceremonies given to the Israelites with the sanctuary. Remember that the most holy place would only be entered once each year, so that must have been a very solemn occasion. [Leviticus 16](#) describes for us a procedure that was to take place only one time each year, during which the sanctuary would symbolically be cleansed. This was done on the Day of Atonement on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month each year and was the only time each year that the high priest would enter the most holy place of the sanctuary. During this annual ceremony two goats would be chosen, one to be sacrificed as a sin offering and the other to be sent into the wilderness as a scapegoat, symbolically carrying the sins of the Israelites that had been confessed throughout the year. After this ceremony, the people would be clean of all their sins before the Lord. But not only the people, the sanctuary itself would be atoned for by this ceremony. The scapegoat must represent Satan who would bear the responsibility of the sins which had been forgiven, the transference of which was made possible by the death of Jesus who was represented by the goat that was sacrificed as a sin offering. As with all other things associated with the earthly sanctuary, they pointed to things that would take place in the heavenly sanctuary. Clearly, the sacrifice of Jesus has been fulfilled, but the scapegoat has not been sent into the wilderness yet.

I believe that the atonement for the sanctuary in heaven was shown to Daniel in vision as part of his timeline of world events. See [Daniel's dreams of world kingdoms](#) and more specifically the portion about the [Judgment](#).

[Daniel 8:14](#) And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." [Daniel 8:14 NKJV](#)

## Summary

I believe the sanctuary and its services were given to the Israelites to show all of us God's plan of salvation for humanity. I believe that the sanctuary was replaced by the Jewish temple built by Solomon, and subsequently rebuilt a couple times, finally being decommissioned by God when the veil was torn when Jesus died. And finally, I believe that the sanctuary in heaven is still in use, for the purpose of putting an end to sin and the cleansing of as many as will choose the free gift of salvation offered by God.

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe there is a sanctuary in heaven?
- Do you think the Israelites themselves ever really understood the meaning of the sanctuary services and sacrifices?
- Do you think Moses understood the full meaning of the sanctuary services and sacrifices?

# Moses, friend of God

What kind of impact did this one extraordinary man have on the Jewish nation and the world? Moses is traditionally credited with the authorship of the first five books of the Bible. These first five books, also known as the Pentateuch, are probably the most revered and generally accepted portion of the Bible among religious groups. Let us consider the following two questions:

1. Did Moses write all five books of the Pentateuch, also known to the Jews as the Torah?
2. What does the Pentateuch mean to all of us (both religious and secular)?

Probably most of us who grew up as Bible believing Christians were taught from a young age that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. While it is quite obvious that much of the Pentateuch must have been written by Moses, did he necessarily write all of it in its current form or has it been compiled and edited over centuries? What is less obvious is the book of Genesis with the detailed accounts of creation, the flood and the early patriarchs. There are numerous beliefs and theories with no conclusive evidence, leaving us to choose what we believe which is what I will attempt to do. My personal belief is that the majority of the Pentateuch, the portion that Moses lived and played such a key role in, was originally written by him. However, I believe based on what we read in a few spots, that there must have been some compilation or editing at later dates. For example:

- [Numbers 12:3](#) makes a statement about Moses being more humble than any other person on the earth. It doesn't seem like a statement that someone would make about themselves.
- [Deuteronomy 34:5-9](#) describes Moses' death
- [Deuteronomy 34:10](#) gives a brief epitaph if you will, saying that there has not been another prophet like Moses in Israel, written as if time and prophets had come and gone, to justify this statement.

I credit this article [[http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_tora.htm/](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_tora.htm/)] for the three examples above. It is also an interesting summary of some of the current beliefs and theories along with additional references.

Now let's go back and talk about Genesis. Based on the timelines I developed in [The Antediluvian world](#), and [After the flood](#), it is interesting to note that Noah lived 600 years before the flood, almost all of that concurrent with Methuselah, who overlapped and could have spoken to Adam for 200 years. Noah lived 350 years after the flood and died shortly before the birth of Abraham. His son Shem lived 100 years before and 500 years after the flood, overlapping the lives of both Abraham and Isaac. I think it was very possible that there was a lot of oral history passed down through these links but I think there must have been some written history as well. Obviously from Abraham through Jacob, there could have also been written historical records. I think these possible sources combined with all that time talking directly with God on Mount Sinai to fill in the gaps, allowed Moses to write the book of Genesis. After all, I don't think it would have taken the entire forty days for God to communicate what was later referred to as the Law of Moses.

Now what does the Pentateuch mean to us? To Young Earth Creationists these books account for approximately half the history of the world. Through the story of creation, we learn about our origin and that of our world. We get the Ten Commandments. Jews, Muslim's and Christians alike hold these books to be sacred. In the secular world, even the origin of the seven-day week can be found in Genesis.



Now let's take a look at what God said to Aaron and Miriam about Moses at the time:

[Numbers 12:6](#) Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, [I], the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. <sup>7</sup> Not so with My servant Moses; He [is] faithful in all My house. <sup>8</sup> I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" [Numbers 12:6-8 NKJV](#)

And here is what God told Moses:

[Exodus 4:16](#) "So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. [Exodus 4:16 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 7:1](#) So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you [as] God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. [Exodus 7:1 NKJV](#)

When Jesus was here on earth, He referred to Moses as the author of the law:

[Luke 10:25](#) And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading [of it]?"

<sup>27</sup> So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "

<sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." [Luke 10:25-28 NKJV](#)

Moses was an extraordinary man and well deserving of our esteem. The fact that it was God working through him to perform amazing miracles does not, in my opinion, detract from his greatness. Unfortunately, down through the ages, this fact seems to have been largely lost sight of and Moses has been credited with many of the amazing things God did through him. I believe that if Moses were here today, he would deflect all the praise and honor away from himself toward God.

Now to the sad incident that led to the death of Moses. God instructed Moses and Aaron to talk to the rock, and water would come gushing out. So, what did Moses do that was wrong? 1) He finally lost his patience and yelled at the people. 2) He spoke as if he was the one who would bring the water out of the rock. 3) Lastly, he disobeyed God by striking the rock instead of speaking to it. [[Numbers 20:9-12](#)] It is clear that he did not do as God had instructed, but was this really worthy of death, after all the people probably didn't even know that Moses was supposed to speak to the rock? I believe that because Moses was a representative of God to the people, he was held to the highest standard. I also believe that if this act had gone unpunished, some of the people might have lost sight that it was God and not Moses who was performing the miracles for them.

[Deuteronomy 34:5](#) 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 34:5-7 NKJV](#)

It says the Lord Himself buried Moses.

[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](#)

[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. [Matthew 17:2-3 NKJV](#)

Jude wrote of an event that I believe occurred shortly after the death of Moses. Michael the Archangel confronted Satan over the body of Moses and did not bother to debate with him or waste time accusing him. I believe Satan was laying claim to the body because Moses had sinned in disobeying and misrepresenting God. But Michael simply rebuked the devil, effectively brushing him aside, and then presumably raised Moses and took him to heaven. Exactly how and when this happened, we are not told, but by the time Jesus was on earth, Moses and Elijah came down from heaven to talk to Him.

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What do you believe?

- How do you think the book of Genesis was written?
- What do you think God and Moses talked about for forty days on Mount Sinai?
- Do you think God often spoke verbally to Moses other than on Mount Sinai?

# The chosen people

Does God have a chosen people? I believe God has always had a chosen people. Unfortunately, they have not always chosen Him. From the beginning, there were always people who taught about and represented God in their lives and by their actions. However, because of sin, eventually, their descendants have tended to drift away from Him and His purpose. When a particular line or group of chosen people turned their backs on God, He would choose someone else. At the time of the flood, it got so bad that Noah and his family were the only ones who believed in God. After the flood, people gradually forgot about God again, so He called on Abram. Next God called the children of Israel out of Egypt. This pattern continued when Jesus started the Christian church, calling his true followers first from the Jewish nation and then the rest of the world. The Christian church however drifted far away from God's intended purpose for them, eventually getting to the place where they were persecuting His true followers. Next, through the reformation, He called the Protestants out of the Roman Catholic Church. But I believe it didn't end there, He called a remnant out of the Protestant church to preach the three angel's messages of Revelation [[Revelation 18:4](#)]. Finally, I think it is quite possible that the last group that God will call could be the 144,000 who will be called right out of this world to heaven without dying.

## The purpose

Having discussed the concept of a chosen people, let's examine what God's purpose was and has always been for His chosen people.

[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: <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 19:3-6 NKJV](#)

If the Israelites had been faithful to God, I believe they would have been blessed and favored above all nations of the earth for as long as they remained faithful. I believe he intended the entire nation to be priests to the rest of the world, not just one tribe, the Levites, to the rest of Israel.

## Solomon

There were times when God was able to fulfill his purpose through Israel.

[1 Kings 4:29](#) And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. <sup>30</sup> Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. <sup>31</sup> For he was wiser than all men--than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. <sup>32</sup> He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. <sup>33</sup> Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. <sup>34</sup> 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 4:29-34 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 10:1](#) Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. <sup>2</sup> She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. <sup>3</sup> So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain [it] to her. <sup>4</sup> And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, <sup>5</sup> the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. <sup>6</sup> Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. <sup>7</sup> "However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. <sup>8</sup> "Happy [are] your men and happy [are] these your servants, who stand continually before you [and] hear your wisdom! <sup>9</sup> "Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." [1 Kings 10:1-9 NKJV](#)

Unfortunately, it didn't last, eventually Solomon let the honor, power and glory go to his head rather than deflecting it toward God, the source of all his blessings. In addition to introducing idol worship [[1 Kings 11:4-6](#)], Solomon became a tyrant, overworking and overtaxing the people for his own glorification and gratification [[1 Kings 12:3-4](#)].

## Joseph

Before this, there was Joseph who represented God faithfully before the Egyptians. As a result, he was placed in a position of great power and authority from which many could observe and benefit from the ministry of a man filled with the spirit of the true God.

[Genesis 41:38](#) And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find [such a one] as this, a man in whom [is] the Spirit of God?" <sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, [there is] no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> "You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." [Genesis 41:38-40 NKJV](#)

## Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Years later, when Israel as a nation seemed to have failed as God's chosen, He was able to use Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were rewarded by God with great wisdom, and by the king of Babylon with positions of power in the Babylonian court. Until the age of seventy, Daniel stood as a faithful representative for God before greatest civil and military powers of the world at the time.

[Daniel 2:47](#) The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God [is] the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." [Daniel 2:47 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 3:38](#) 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! [Daniel 3:28 NKJV](#)

## Waldenses

Even during the dark ages of persecution by the Roman Catholic Church, God had a chosen people.

Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished. In every age there were witnesses for God--men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true

Sabbath. How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know. They were branded as heretics, their motives impugned, their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, or mutilated. Yet they stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come. [White. \*Great Controversy\*. p61](#)<sup>41</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Who do you think God's chosen people are today?
- What does it mean to be a kingdom of priests?
- Do you think God's chosen have generally been individuals or groups?

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<sup>41</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p61.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA61>,  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=61>

# Judges

Story: [Judges](#)

After settling into the land of Canaan, over a period of over 300 years, the people of Israel did not really have a centralized government. We know the duration of this period of time from the following verse:

[Judges 6:1](#) And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which [is] the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. [1 Kings 6:1 NKJV](#)

After leaving Egypt, we know that 40 years were spent in the wilderness. Now near the tail end of the 480-year period, in fact following the end of the period of the judges is Saul, the first King of Israel. But there is some question about the length of his reign. The following verse has been problematic because it seems to be written in a way that some words are missing. If you just read the translation in KJV or NKJV, it doesn't give any sense of the length of his reign, but simply the year of his reign after which he did the following things in verses 2 and on.

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, [1 Samuel 13:1 KJV](#)

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, [1 Samuel 13:1 NKJV](#)

But the NKJV has a footnote that states the following:

The Hebrew is difficult (compare 2 Samuel 5:4; 2 Kings 14:2; see also 2 Samuel 2:10; Acts 13:21).

Which seems to imply that the verse was intended to indicate a length of reign but is incomplete, and as is, is inconsistent with the other verses mentioned.

In the following verse the RSV placed a ... where it appears that words were missing.

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign; and he reigned . . . and two years over Israel. [1 Samuel 13:1 RSV](#)

Notice what some translations have done by adding his age and a decade word before the two.

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul was **thirty** years old when he became king, and he reigned for **forty**-two years. [1 Samuel 13:1 NLT](#)

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul was **thirty** years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel **forty**- two years. [1 Samuel 13:1 NIV](#)

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul was [**thirty**] years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for [**forty**-]two years over Israel. [1 Samuel 13:1 NASB20](#)

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul was [**thirty**] years old when he began to reign; he ruled over Israel for [**forty**] years. [1 Samuel 13:1 NET](#)

[1 Samuel 13:1](#) Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, [1 Samuel 13:1 ASV](#)

I don't really want to debate this topic here so I will just provide a reference for those who wish to read more about it. <https://www.thebiblicaltimeline.org/saul/> I will just say that while the 1 Samuel 13:1 NKJV doesn't conflict with Acts 13:21, a 40-year reign for Saul may be inconsistent with some other statements in the Bible.

[1 Kings 2:11](#) tells us that David reigned 40 years. So, taking 40 years (wandering in the wilderness) off the front end and 44 years (40 (Saul) + 40 (David) + 4 (Solomon)) off the back end, leaves us with a period of about 356 years for the time of the judges including Joshua. The following verses sum up this period of time fairly well.

[Judges 17:6](#) In those days [there was] no king in Israel; everyone did [what was] right in his own eyes. [Judges 17:6 NKJV](#)

[Judges 2:10](#) When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. [Judges 2:10 NKJV](#)

By the time of King David, the lifespan seems to have come down to about 70 years [[Psalm 90:10](#)]. So, with decreasing life spans, there could have been an increased tendency to forget history. Winston Churchill is famously quoted as saying, "those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it."<sup>42</sup> He was possibly echoing the sentiment, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," made a few years earlier by George Santayana.<sup>43</sup> Because this is such a timeless truth, probably many others before and after them have made similar statements. The truth of these statements seems to be perfectly illustrated in the book of Judges, but lest we be tempted to point fingers, it would be good for us to realize that we are probably repeating history ourselves at this very moment in time.

Now if one wanted to get a glimpse of a timeline and added up the years mentioned in Judges, they would come up with too many years. The most likely explanation for this is that some of the events and judges mentioned occurred concurrently. Events that are clearly stated as following the death of a previous judge will be considered consecutive. First, we have to make some assumptions about Joshua's age and how long after he died, the Israelites turned their backs on God. Next, we will also adopt the ascension year method proposed by Thiele in his book, "The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings,"<sup>44</sup> where he proposes that the reign of each king included the beginning and ending partial years that he reigned, so if you simply added up the years that each king was said to reign, you would be counting the transition years twice. We will assume the same thing for the adjacent time frames given in the book of Judges. Here is a list of the Judges in the order they are mentioned in Judges and 1 Samuel. References with chapter:verse only are from the book of Judges. The following footnotes were some references that assisted in putting together the following timeline and maps:<sup>45 46 47 48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> [http://rhf.org.uk/rhf/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=62](http://rhf.org.uk/rhf/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=62)

<sup>43</sup> Santayana, George. *The Life of Reason: Or, the Phases of Human Progress*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920, p 284. <http://books.google.com/books?id=KNvWAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA284>

<sup>44</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Mysterious\\_Numbers\\_of\\_the\\_Hebrew\\_Kings#Biblical\\_chronology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mysterious_Numbers_of_the_Hebrew_Kings#Biblical_chronology)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-date-chronology-of-judges.htm>

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/48/48-3/JETS\\_48-3\\_491-500.pdf](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/48/48-3/JETS_48-3_491-500.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.biblemap.org>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/Map-Canaan-Twelve-Tribes.jpg>

- I. Line 1:  $8 + 39 + 17 + 79 + 19 + 39 = 201$  years
- Othniel – Tribe of Judah, son of Caleb’s younger brother, married Caleb’s daughter [[Joshua 15:17](#)]. Israelites did evil, subjugated by Mesopotamia 8 years, delivered by Othniel who then judged them the last 40 years of his life. [[Judges 3:7-11](#)]
  - Ehud – Israel did evil again, subjugated by Moab 18 years, delivered by Ehud of the tribe of Benjamin, land undisturbed for 80 years. [[3:12-30](#)]
  - Shamgar – After him [Ehud], presumably after the 80 years, struck down 600 Philistines, delivered Israel. [[3:31](#)] We don’t really have a timeframe for how long or whether Shamgar even judged Israel and no judge is said to follow him, so he is really not very important in the timeline.
  - Deborah & Barak – Israel did evil again after Ehud [[4:1](#)], in the time of Shamgar [[3:31](#)]. They were subjugated by Jabin from the north for 20 years [[4:2-3](#)], was judged by the prophetess Deborah at the time [[4:4](#)]. God then called her and Barak to deliver Israel, after which she continued to judge, land undisturbed for 40 years [[4:1-5:31](#)]
- II. Line 3:  $7 + 39 + 2 + 22 + 21 = 91$  years
- Gideon – Israel afflicted by Midianites and Amalekites for 7 years [[6:1](#)], delivered by Gideon, youngest in his family of the tribe of Manasseh, land undisturbed for 40 years [[8:28](#)].
  - Abimelech – Power hungry son of Gideon, wanted to be king, killed all but one of his 70 brothers, ruled Israel for 3 years [[9:22](#)], killed when a woman threw a millstone on his head.
  - Tola – After Abimelech died, Tola of the tribe of Issachar, saved Israel, judged 23 years [[10:1-2](#)].
  - Jair – After Tola, Jair the Gileadite judged Israel 22 years [[10:3](#)].
- III. Line 4:  $18 + 5 + 6 + 9 + 7 = 45$  years
- Jephthah – Israel afflicted by the Ammonites and Philistines for 18 years [[10:8](#)], then they repented and chose Jephthah the Gileadite to lead them [[11:1-11](#)]. 300 years since the Exodus [[11:26](#)]. Judged Israel 6 years [[12:7](#)].
  - Ibzan – After him [Jephthah] [[12:8](#)], Ibzan of Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah judged Israel 7 years [[12:9](#)].
  - Elon – After him [Ibzan], Elon of the tribe of Zebulun judged Israel 10 years [[12:11](#)].
  - Abdon – After him [Elon], Abdon of the tribe of Ephraim judged Israel 8 years [[12:13-15](#)].
- IV. Line 5: 20 years
- Samson – Israel did evil, afflicted by Philistines 40 years [[13:1](#)] presumably starting at the same time as the Ammonites [[10:8](#)]. Samson was chosen by God from birth to deliver Israel [[13:5](#)]. He was a nemesis to the Philistines but was not faithful to God and was ultimately captured and imprisoned [[16:1](#)]. He judged Israel 20 years presumably in the midst of the 40 years of Philistine affliction [[15:20](#)].
- V. Line 6: I will let the years stretch to fill in the gap from the Philistine subjugation to the start of the kings.
- Eli – Was High Priest, lived 98 years [[1 Samuel 4:15](#)], judged Israel 40 years [[1 Samuel 4:18](#)]. We know the Ark was captured by the Philistines at the time of Eli’s death. I will assume this is part of the 40 years of Philistine affliction during the time of Samson.
  - Samuel – Was prophet and judge over Israel all the days of his life [[1 Samuel 3:20](#), [7:15](#)]. Ark was in Kiriath-jearim 20 years after death of Eli, Israel repented, Samuel prayed for them and the Philistines were subdued [[1 Samuel 7](#)]. I’m going to assume this ended the 40 years of Philistine affliction during the days of Samson and Eli. Samuel died during the reign of Saul [[1 Samuel 25:1](#)].



The timeline below shows in a slightly more graphical manner what is stated in the outline above. Assumptions were made on the front end for Joshua and the elders who outlived him. I assume the Ark was capture and Eli died 20 years before the end of Philistine oppression [[1 Samuel 7](#)]. Then Samuel fills the gap to the period of the kings of Israel. The Bible does say he was old when he appointed his sons judges, which led to the request for a king [[1 Samuel 8:1-5](#)]. The number at the start of each row is the number of years from the Exodus to the end of that particular event.

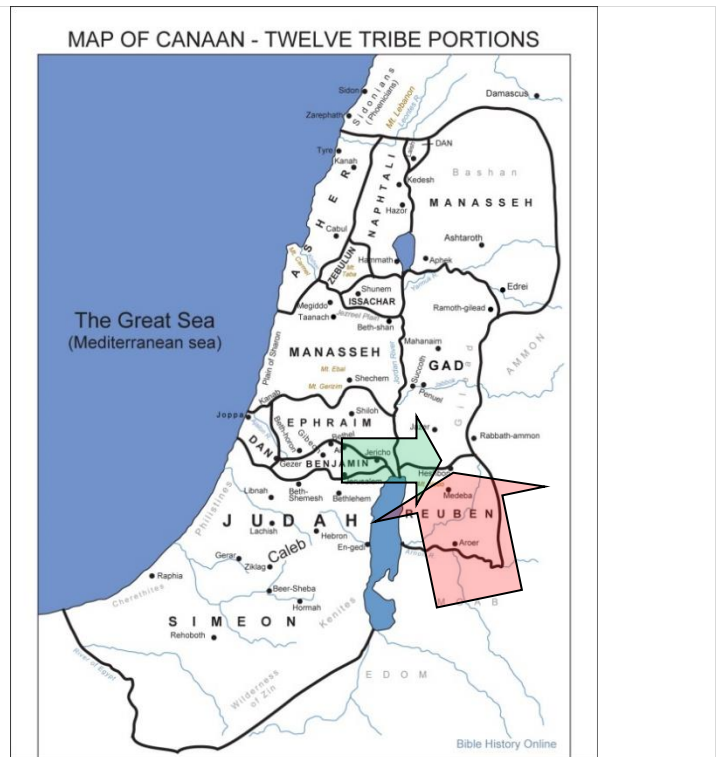


Next, I will show a series of maps that show the regions for subjugations and judges. The maps are from <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/Map-Canaan-Twelve-Tribes.jpg>, with the green and pink arrows overlaid by me. Since Gideon is not said to follow someone, I choose to place him concurrent with Deborah because for both of them, Judges says the land was undisturbed for 40 years, so I lined up those 40-year periods. [10:7-8] tells us that the Israelites were afflicted by the Ammonites and Philistines. [10:8-9] then proceeds to describe the 18 years of

Ammonite oppression and the regions they invaded: Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim. [13:1] then described 40 years of oppression by the Philistines which I will assume begin at the same time as



We are not told exactly where Mesopotamia invaded but they were from the northeast and Othniel from the south.



Moabites were from the southeast and Ehud was from the Tribe of Benjamin.



Shamgar killed 600 Philistines and saved Israel from them. Jabin was from Hazor, Deborah judged from the hill country of Ephraim. Barak was from Naphtali, gathered 10,000 men at Kedesh from Naphtali and Zebulun, and attacked Sisera at Mount Tabor. Around that time, the Midianites who were allied with the sons from the east were camped northwest of Beth-shan. Gideon of the tribe of Manasseh, attacked from the south, then pursued them southeast through Succoth and Penuel.

Ammonites afflicted Israel from the east and were defeated by Jephthah.

The Philistines invaded from the southwest and could well have penetrated south as well as north. Samson was from the tribe of Dan and attacked but did not subdue them. Under the leadership of Samuel, the Philistines were finally subdued in a battle at Mizpah near Bethel.

I am not presenting this as the definitive timeline of the judges and I do not feel that it is necessary to know exactly when each judge lived. I am merely presenting this as a plausible scenario to fit the Biblical timeline of the judges as well as events on either end.

What do you believe?

- After all the evidence the Israelites had of God's existence, why do you think they kept falling into idol worship?
- What do you think was the difference between a Judge and the king?
- Who do you think wrote these stories of the judges and how do you think they came together into one book?

# Ruth

Story: [Ruth](#)

The story of Ruth occurs during the period of the Judges. In short, this is a story about an Israelite family with two sons who moved from Bethlehem to Moab because of a famine in their land. Tragedy struck and all the men of the family died, leaving three widows. At that time, widows without family to provide for them were not much better off than beggars. I will not retell the story here because we are reading between the lines, but it would be a well spent half hour reading the entire story in the book of Ruth.

The book itself does not tell us exactly when it occurred and who was judge at the time. With the current ending, it would have had to have been written by someone during or after the reign of David. Some speculate that it was written by Solomon. Let's begin by looking at the genealogy which is given with the same number of generations in Ruth [[Ruth 4:18-22](#)], Chronicles [[1 Chronicles 2 :4-15](#)], Matthew [[Matthew 1:3-6](#)], and Luke [[Luke 3:31-33](#)]. Of course, Ruth is mentioned in the genealogy in the book by her name, but aside from that, Matthew is the only one that mentions women namely Tamar, Rahab and Ruth.

- Perez – son of Judah and Tamar (daughter-in-law of Judah)
- Hezron
- Ram
- Aminadab
- Nahshon – leader of the tribe of Judah [[Numbers 2:3](#)] during the exodus. His sister Elisheba married Aaron [[Exodus 6:23](#)].
- Salmon – married Rahab [[Matthew 1:5](#)], the prostitute from Jericho, who helped the two spies avoid capture. (Speculation on my part says: he was probably the leader of the tribe of Judah after his father died in the wilderness, and possibly one of the two spies sent by Joshua into Canaan, hence being saved by Rahab, and then promising to save her back)
- Boaz married Ruth
- Obed
- Jesse
- David – second king of Israel

From [Numbers 32:11](#) we read that no one over twenty that left Egypt (except for Joshua and Caleb) would enter the Promised Land. That means that Salmon would have been less than twenty years old at the start of the 480 years that began at the Exodus from Egypt and ended in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomon's reign. If we assume Salmon was 19 years of age at the time of the Exodus, and David lived 70 years [[2 Samuel 5:4](#)] and died 3 years before the end of the 480 years there should be at most  $480+19-70-3 = 426$  years from the birth of Salmon to the birth of David. If he was young enough to be one of the spies, he would most likely have been younger than 19 at the time of the Exodus. For instance, if he was born 7 years after the Exodus, he would have been 33 years old when Joshua sent to spies into Canaan, and it would have been 400 years from his birth to the birth of David. If David really were the 4<sup>th</sup> generation from Salmon, each succeeding generation would have been 100 years apart, meaning that each son was born to the father at around the age of 100. The alternative is to assume there were unnamed people in the genealogy. The latter is not a problem because in that

culture, a person was still referred to as a son of someone no matter how many generations there were between them. Recall how Jesus and many of the kings of Judah were referred to as sons of David.

I believe Obed was literally the son of Boaz and Ruth [[Ruth 4:13-17](#)], as I believe David was the son of Jesse [[1 Samuel 17:12](#)]. With these two assumptions, and the fact that the book of Ruth points out the close ancestry of Ruth to David, I believe that Jesse was indeed the son of Obed and that there must have been some unnamed generations between Salmon and Rahab and Boaz and Ruth. I believe that Boaz was an older man [[Ruth 3:10](#)], probably from the same generation of Naomi. Based on these assumptions, the story probably happened some time during the life of the High Priest Eli.

I do have one question or issue with this genealogy. If Boaz was the goel, providing an offspring for Ruth's first husband, Naomi's son, why is he named in the genealogy? Shouldn't Obed be considered the descendant of Mahlon?

Looking beyond the names, numbers and genealogy, there is a beautiful story of redemption that is based on the laws given to Israel through Moses. Boaz was a kinsman to the family of Elimelech and hence could fill the role of the goel. This word is derived from the Hebrew [גֹּאֵל](#), *gā'al*<sup>49</sup>, which is defined 'to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman.' In the KJV, this word occurred 104 times and was translated to 'redeem' 50 times, 'redeemer' 18 times, 'kinsman' 13 times, 'revenger' 7 times, 'avenger' 6 times. This translation distribution along with the reading of the laws recorded by Moses gives us the following roles of the goel.<sup>50 51</sup>

1. The kinsman should buy back their relative's land that was sold. [[Leviticus 25:25-34](#)]
2. The kinsman should redeem their relative from slavery or servitude. [[Leviticus 25:47-54](#)]
3. Avenge the murder of a relative. [[Numbers 35:12,19-27](#), [Deuteronomy 19:11,12](#)]
4. To appear in a lawsuit as a helper for a relative. [[Proverbs 23:11](#), [Jeremiah 50:34](#), [Psalm 119:154](#)]
5. Produce an heir for a deceased brother. [[Deuteronomy 25:5,6](#)]

As we just read in this story, Boaz beautifully played the role of goel. Using this as a launching pad, let's look at some of the ways God is our goel.

- The earth was given to Adam and Eve [[Genesis 1:27-30](#)] but they lost dominion of it when they sinned [[Genesis 3](#)] but God redeemed the earth through the death of Jesus [[Galatians 3:13](#)].
- When humanity sinned, they became slaves to sin [[John 8:34](#)], but God redeemed us from sin through the death of Jesus [[Hebrews 2:14,15](#)].
- God will avenge all the death caused by sin when Satan is finally destroyed [[Revelation 20:10](#)].
- Jesus, as our redeemer and advocate, pleads the case of those who accept Him [[Jeremiah 50:34](#), [Psalm 119:154](#), [1 John 2:1](#)].
- Since sinful humanity was not capable of producing an heir worthy to inherit the world, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary [[Matthew 1:18](#), [Luke 1:35](#)] and produced an heir, not only to receive our inheritance, but also to save dead and dying humanity [[Hebrews 2:11-15](#), [Colossians 1:12-14](#)].

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1350/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goel>

<sup>51</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Surprised by Love*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010, p43.

I believe that throughout the Old Testament, beyond the obvious prophecies about the Messiah, the theme of God's plan to redeem humanity can be found in the stories and even the laws given to the Jews. One just has to dig a little deeper to see it sometimes. In fact, Jesus Himself explained to the two travelers on the road to Emmaus, beginning with the law and all the writings of the prophets, how they pointed to Him [[Luke 24:27](#)]. Then when he appeared in the midst of the disciples, he said that the law, the prophets and the psalms were fulfilled by Him [[Luke 24:44](#)]. Those three categories covered the entire sacred scriptures of the Jews and are essentially the same as what is contained in our Old Testament of the Bible.

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What do you believe?

- It is fairly obvious that Boaz was quite taken with Ruth. What do you think attracted his attention? Do you think it was her looks or her deeds?
- If Boaz's first born with Ruth was a fulfillment of the roll of the goel, then why is he listed in the genealogy and not Elimelech?
- Can you think of additional ways that you see God as our goel?

# Samuel

Story: [1 Samuel 1:1 – 25:1](#)

Samuel was the last judge of Israel but he was much more than that. He was also a prophet who received messages from God from the time he was a child. The story begins in much the same way several other stories began with a couple who were unable to have children.

[1 Samuel 1:1](#) Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name [was] Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. <sup>2</sup> And he had two wives: the name of one [was] Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. [1 Samuel 1:1-2 NKJV](#)

At first glance it appears that Elkanah and hence Samuel is from the tribe of Ephraim. However, digging a little deeper we find that Samuel was a Levite.

[1 Chronicles 6:33](#) And these [are] the ones who ministered with their sons: Of the sons of the Kohathites [were] Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, <sup>34</sup> the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, <sup>35</sup> the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, <sup>36</sup> the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, <sup>37</sup> the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, <sup>38</sup> the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. [1 Chronicles 6:33-38 NKJV](#)

This is not a contradiction because the Levites were not given a portion of land as a tribe but were given cities in all twelve tribes. In this way they could minister to all the tribes [[Numbers 35:2-8](#)]. This meant Samuel was eligible to serve in the sanctuary, but not as a priest since he wasn't a descendant of Aaron. Another interesting observation is that Heman, the grandson of Samuel, had a prominent part as a temple musician in the court of King David but in one instance he is even referred to as a seer or prophet [[1 Chronicles 25:5](#)].

In Jewish rabbinical literature there is an interesting story where Samuel allegedly claimed that laymen may offer sacrifices. On being brought before the High Priest Eli, Samuel argued that Leviticus only said that the priest must be the one to bring the blood. According to the story, Eli acknowledged Samuel's argument but claimed that he deserved the death penalty for delivering a legal decision in the presence of a master. If true, this must have occurred when Samuel was just a child, before God spoke to him and before he had gained Eli's respect.<sup>52</sup>

With regard to Samuel sacrificing to the Lord even though he was not a priest, in the following incident involving the anointing of David, God Himself told Samuel to sacrifice.

[1 Samuel 16:4](#) So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" <sup>5</sup> And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. [1 Samuel 16:4-5 NKJV](#)

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13079-samuel#anchor6>



The Bible doesn't tell us how long Samuel lived. It does tell us that he judged Israel all the days of his life [[1 Samuel 7:15](#)]. To me this means that he was very influential even during the judgeship of Eli as well as during the reign of King Saul. I believe Eli had lost some of the confidence of Israel because of the wickedness of his sons and Samuel had the confidence of Israel because God spoke to him directly [[1 Samuel 2:26](#)][[1 Samuel 3:19-20](#)]. The Jewish encyclopedia source quoted above claims that Samuel lived to the age of 52. Josephus in Book 6:13:<sup>53</sup> says that Samuel judged Israel 12 years between Eli and Saul and he died 18 years into Saul's reign. This seems to contradict [1 Samuel 8:1](#) which says that when Samuel was old, that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. Putting these two non-biblical sources together with the Bible, that would mean that Samuel was considered old at 34, which was 18 years before his death at 52. The following verses also seems to conflict with the two non-biblical sources in that there seems to be a 20-year period after the Ark was captured at the time Eli died, after which the people repented. This led to their victory over the Philistines, mentioned later in that same chapter. At that time, more than 20 years had passed since the death of Eli and Saul had still not been appointed king.

[1 Samuel 7:1](#) Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. <sup>2</sup> So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, [then] put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." [1 Samuel 7:1-3 NKJV](#)

I believe we do not have enough information to know how long Samuel judged and when he died but we can propose some possible scenarios. According to my timeline in the chapter on [Judges](#), Samuel could have judged Israel 41 years between the death of Eli and start of Saul's reign. I would also add that there are many questions regarding the 40-year reign of Saul.<sup>54</sup>

It is interesting how few prophets were mentioned before the time of Samuel and in fact the Bible says that it was uncommon for the people to receive messages or communication from God.

[1 Samuel 3:1](#) Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; [there was] no widespread revelation. [1 Samuel 3:1 NKJV](#)

However, after his time, beginning with the reign of King David, there is mention of many prophets. Perhaps Samuel started schools for religious instruction leading to existence of more prophets. The Jewish encyclopedia source quoted above also speculates that Samuel may have been responsible for the founding of schools of prophets.<sup>55</sup> Now that your appetite has been whetted, I recommend that you read the entire story of Samuel which spans most of the first book named after him, [1 Samuel 1:1 – 25:1](#).

What do you believe?

- How old do you think Samuel was when he was called old and appointed his sons to help him with judging Israel?
- Do you think that Samuel was special like Moses in the way God spoke to him?

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/book-6/chapter-13.html>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.thebiblicaltimeline.org/saul/>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13079-samuel#anchor5>

- How responsible do you think Samuel was for establishing the monarchy in Israel?

# King David

Story: [1 Samuel 16 – 1 Kings 2:11](#), [1 Chronicles 11:1 – 29:30](#)

Aside from Moses, king David is probably one of the most important people in Jewish history. He led the nation at possibly its greatest time in terms of world dominance and military power. I believe it was during his reign, and what he handed to his son Solomon, that God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled:

[Genesis 15:18](#) On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates-- [Genesis 15:18 NKJV](#)

This is the kingdom he handed to his son Solomon:

[2 Chronicles 9:26](#) So he reigned over all the kings from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. [2 Chronicles 9:26 NKJV](#)

David is undoubtedly the most successful and most notable King of Israel, and probably the person most claimed as an ancestor of anyone in the Bible. In the New Testament, Jesus is repeatedly referred to as the Son of David. In the Old Testament, David is referred to as the Father of each of the kings of Judah. Interestingly, in the Old Testament, "son of David," always referred to a literal son of David.

David was the youngest son of Jesse and his three older brothers, Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, were named as soldiers in king Saul's army [[1 Samuel 17:13](#)]. We also know the names of David's other three brothers, Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem, and his two sisters, Zeruah and Abigail [[1 Chronicles 2:13-16](#)].

You may have heard the story of David playing his harp for Saul to sooth his spirit and drive the evil spirits away, but did you know it was mentioned in the Bible before the story of David killing Goliath? This first occurs in [1 Samuel 16:14-23](#) before the story of David killing the giant Goliath which happens in [chapter 17](#). The interesting thing about this is that in [16:21-23](#) it says that Saul loved David and made him his armor bearer and told Jesse that he was going to keep David. Then in chapter [17:55](#) after David killed Goliath, Saul asked Abner, the commander of his army, who the young man was and Abner was clueless. After that in [18:2](#), again it says that Saul kept him and did not let him return to his Father. Some have used this puzzling sequence of events to claim that the Bible is not true or not inspired. But there are many logical explanations which would be difficult if possible to disprove. Eric Lyons presents the following arguments:<sup>56</sup>

- In the telling of the story, there is evidence outside of the one mentioned that there are events that are out of sequence
- Saul could have lapsed back into one of his psychotic states making his mental capacity less than reliable
- Saul could have remembered David but over jealousy pretended that he didn't know who he was

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&article=807>

I think the key verse is the following:

[1 Samuel 17:15](#) But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. [1 Samuel 17:15 NKJV](#)

This seems to indicate that even though [chapter 16](#) said that Saul kept David, he apparently didn't keep him 100% of the time. In fact, it sounds like David would go back and forth as needed. I think it is possible that there was a period of time between the last harp playing and the Goliath incident that Saul may not have recognized David. He probably also thought of David as one of his musicians and wouldn't have been expecting to meet him, in this context, on the field of battle.

## Philistine giants killed by David and his men

The story of David and Goliath is without doubt one of the most well-known stories in the bible. What may be less known is that Goliath had some relatives who were also involved in battles with David and his men.

[2 Samuel 21:15](#) When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. <sup>16</sup> Then Ishbi-Benob, who [was] one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear [was] three hundred [shekels], who was bearing a new [sword], thought he could kill David. <sup>17</sup> But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel." <sup>18</sup> Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph, who [was] one of the sons of the giant. <sup>19</sup> Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed [the brother of] Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear [was] like a weaver's beam. <sup>20</sup> Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of [great] stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. <sup>21</sup> So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. <sup>22</sup> These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. [2 Samuel 21:15-22 NKJV](#)

[1 Chronicles 20:4](#) Now it happened afterward that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines, at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Sippai, [who was one] of the sons of the giant. And they were subdued. <sup>5</sup> Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear [was] like a weaver's beam. <sup>6</sup> Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of [great] stature, with twenty-four fingers and toes, six [on each hand] and six [on each foot]; and he also was born to the giant. <sup>7</sup> So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. <sup>8</sup> These were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. [1 Chronicles 20:4-8 NKJV](#)

From these two quotes we see that there was a family of Giants from Gath. Whether all five were literal brothers, the sons of one father, or whether they were related descendants of a common ancestor from Gath is not entirely clear. There are several Hebrew words or names that are associated with giants. Do you think it is just a coincidence that when David killed Goliath, he picked up five stones?

- [נְפִילִים, נְפִילִים](#)<sup>57</sup> which in some versions is translated Nephilim, but giant in the KJV and NKJV. The Nephilim were mentioned as early as Genesis shortly after the flood. The sons of Anak, who were giants, were thought to be part of the Nephilim, probably descendants.

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5303/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

- [רִפְאִים, Rōpā'im](#)<sup>58</sup> which was generally translated as Rephaim or giant. I believe it originally referred to a person or clan that was the ancestor of giants in the land of Canaan. Goliath, Ishbi-benob, Saph, Lahmi, and a twelve fingered twelve toed giant were said to be descended from a common giant (same word) ancestor in Gath. This could have implied they were all brothers, or cousins, or simply descendants of the Rephaim.
- [עֲנָק, 'ānāq](#)<sup>59</sup> appears to be the common ancestor of most of the giants in the land of Canaan. [Numbers 13:33](#) implies a relationship between Anak and the Nephilim. Perhaps, Anak was a descendant of the Nephilim.

[Genesis 6:4](#) There were **giants** on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore [children] to them. Those [were] the mighty men who [were] of old, men of renown. [Genesis 6:4 NKJV](#)

[Numbers 13:33](#) "There we saw the **giants** (the descendants of **Anak** came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." [Numbers 13:33 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 2:10](#) (The **Emim** had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the **Anakim**.<sup>11</sup> They were also regarded as **giants**, like the **Anakim**, but the Moabites call them **Emim**. [Deuteronomy 2:10-11 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 3:8](#) "And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who [were] on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon <sup>9</sup> "(the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), <sup>10</sup> "all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. <sup>11</sup> "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the **giants**. Indeed his bedstead [was] an iron bedstead. ([Is] it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits [is] its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit. [Deuteronomy 3:8-11 NKJV](#)

[Joshua 11:21](#) And at that time Joshua came and cut off the **Anakim** from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. <sup>22</sup> None of the **Anakim** were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. [Joshua 11:21-22 NKJV](#)

The reference in Joshua also indicated that there were Anakim left in Gath. It seems that at one time, these giant races or families, possibly descendants of the Nephilim were numerous but most of them were killed when the Israelites occupied the land of Canaan.

## David's might men

David's mighty men is an interesting subject if not a little confusing in some of its details. A list of his most notable warriors is found in [2 Samuel 23:8-39](#), and in [1 Chronicles 11:10-47](#). There is mention of the top 3, followed by the top 30 not including the top 3, but strangely Chronicles only names 2 of the top 3 and its second-tier list is longer than the one in Samuel. Both second tier lists are longer than 30, so that number is probably just given as a round number. Each of the top 3 are noted for specific acts of valor. Then there is special mention of 2 individuals from the second tier, who were both noted for acts of valor like the top 3 but were specifically said to not have attained the status of the top 3. I believe most if not all of these men joined David before he became king and were the leaders of his personal army which first numbered 400 and later expanded to 600 men. These men were probably noted for their leadership, fearlessness, and maybe most of all for their loyalty to David. What is interesting is that Joab, who also happened to be

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7497/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6061/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

David's nephew, who was also named the commander of the entire army, was not named among the top 3 or the top 30. I think Joab was a very brave warrior and capable leader, but I think he was probably very assertive about wanting to be in charge during the early days. He officially earned the position and title of commander of the army by single handedly penetrating the Jebusite stronghold leading to the capture of their city which became known as Jerusalem and the capital city of Israel as well as the city of David [[1 Chronicles 11:4-6](#)].

## David's weakness

Although Joab was commander of the army for most of David's kingship, his relationship with David grew more and more strained as time went on. In [2 Samuel 3:39](#), even though he was king, David admitted that he was unable to control these sons of Zeruiah. These three brothers, Joab, Abishai and Asahel, were always called the sons of Zeruiah, who was David's sister. In fact, their father is not even named. I wonder if there was some reason they were always referred to as the sons of a woman rather than known as the son of their father. Finally in [1 Kings 2:5](#), David asked his son Solomon to not let Joab die a natural death, because he had murdered Abner former command of Saul's army, and Amasa former commander of Absalom's army and his own cousin, because they were threats to his position as commander.

I believe David was weak when it came to disciplining or punishing those who were family. As I mentioned above, when Joab, the son of David's sister, murdered Abner in cold blood he said:

[2 Samuel 3:39](#) "And I [am] weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, [are] too harsh for me. The LORD shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness." [2 Samuel 3:39 NKJV](#)

When it appeared that David was going to make Amasa commander of the army [[2 Samuel 19:13](#)], Joab murdered him in cold blood [[2 Samuel 20:9-10](#)], and regained his status as commander of the army. There is no record of any disciplinary action taken by David against Joab.

When David's oldest son Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, David was angry but apparently didn't do anything [[2 Samuel 13:21](#)]. The bible has the following to say regarding David's son Adonijah, but it was probably the same for all his sons.

[1 Kings 1:6](#) (And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He [was] also very good-looking. [His mother] had borne him after Absalom.) [1 Kings 1:6 NKJV](#)

## A man after God's heart

A good and positive way for us to close our discussion of David is to remember what made him great and why he could be used so powerfully by God. King David made some serious mistakes, but he always acknowledged them, repented, and asked for God's forgiveness. This is why despite his failures; God could refer to him as "a man after My heart."

[Acts 13:22](#) "And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the [son] of Jesse, a man after My [own] heart, who will do all My will.' [Acts 13:22 NKJV](#)

As with the story of Samuel, it is well worth your time to read the entire story of David, [1 Samuel 16 – 1 Kings 2:11, 1 Chronicles 11:1 – 29:30](#).

What do you believe?

- Do you think David played his harp for Saul before he faced Goliath?
- [2 Samuel 21:15](#) says that David grew faint and the giant Ishbi-Benob was about to kill him and Abishai came to his aid and killed the giant. How do you picture the warrior David growing faint in battle?
- If we take a cubit to be a foot and a half which is a common assumption, Goliath was over 9 feet tall [[1 Samuel 17:4](#)], and Og's bed was over 13 feet long. How big do you think these giants were?

# King Solomon

Story: [1 Kings 2:12 – 11:43](#), [2 Chronicles 1:1 – 9:31](#)

The transition from one king to the next was usually a very tense situation. Because kings reign their entire life, they are usually old, weak, and not as alert at the end. This is an opportune time for upstarts to move in and take control. This is what David's sons Absalom and Adonijah tried. But it was David's will that Solomon would follow him on the throne of Israel. In the discussion of "[King David](#)," I already mentioned his short comings as a father and disciplinarian. It is speculation on my part, but I think with Solomon, David made more of an attempt to train and discipline him, thus making him better fitted to follow his father on the throne. Being one of the youngest however, he would probably not have been the natural choice in the eyes of the people or David's older sons. Nevertheless, with David's backing, some humility towards God, the execution of Joab and Adonijah, and some wise rulings, Solomon became firmly established on the throne. In terms of peace, prosperity and world dominion, the early reign of Solomon was probably the golden age of the Israelite nation.

## Forced labor

I say early reign, when I believe he was more humble and didn't think so highly of himself. I think that over time, the power, praise and adulation went to his head. In spite of the massive tribute he was collecting from the surrounding nations that had been subjugated by his father, Solomon began to tax and enslave his own people to satisfy his own extravagant desires and ambitious building projects. This leads us to the debate over whether Solomon conscripted forced labor from his own nation or only from non-Israelites.

[1 Kings 4:6](#) Ahishar, over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labor force. <sup>7</sup> And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. [1 Kings 4:6-7 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 5:13](#) Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel; and the labor force was thirty thousand men. <sup>14</sup> And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon [and] two months at home; Adoniram [was] in charge of the labor force. <sup>15</sup> Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried [stone] in the mountains, <sup>16</sup> besides three thousand three hundred from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. <sup>17</sup> And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, [and] hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple. <sup>18</sup> So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried [them]; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple. [1 Kings 5:13-18 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. <sup>16</sup> (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it [as] a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.) <sup>17</sup> And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, <sup>18</sup> Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land [of Judah], <sup>19</sup> all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.



<sup>20</sup> All the people [who were] left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who [were] not of the children of Israel—<sup>21</sup> that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely--from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day.

<sup>22</sup> But of the children of Israel Solomon made no forced laborers, because they [were] men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry. [1 Kings 9:15-22 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 11:28](#) The man Jeroboam [was] a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph. [1 Kings 11:28 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 12:4](#) "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." [1 Kings 12:4 NKJV](#)

So, did Solomon force the Israelites to labor for him? I think the evidence seems to indicate that he did. So, what do we make of the statement in 1 Kings 9 that "Solomon did not make slaves of the sons of Israel?" I think the answer lies in 1 Kings 5 where it describes Solomon's use of forced labor for building the Temple. One month of labor and two months home. I think he thought of it as a tax rather than enslavement. The peasant probably couldn't pay gold or silver for their tax, but they could work. I think Solomon saw it as a 33% tax where they were required to labor for the kingdom one third of the time without pay to effectively cover their tax bill. Now those who were not Israelites were probably forced into labor all the time as slaves.

Now there are some who believe that Solomon exempted Judah, his own tribe from taxation to ensure their loyalty to him.<sup>60</sup> This makes sense because it was the ten northern tribes, under the leadership of Jeroboam who complained to Rehoboam, Solomon's son, about the heavy yoke and not the tribe of Judah.

In my mind, the picture that emerges is this. Solomon thought of forcing part time labor as a tax and not slavery. He taxed the Northern tribes of Israel in this way, but he made people from the tribe of Judah, the commanders and officers in his military instead of forcing them into labor. He forced non-Israelite residents of the land into full time slavery. As time went on, and Solomon had more and more extravagant desires and building projects, he probably increased the rate of taxation, effectively providing him with the needed labor.

## Solomon's fall into idolatry

The sad story of Solomon's fall into idolatry is well known.

[1 Kings 11:3](#) And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. <sup>4</sup> For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as [was] the heart of his father David. <sup>5</sup> For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup> Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as [did] his father David. <sup>7</sup> Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that [is] east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. <sup>8</sup> And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

<sup>9</sup> So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, [1 Kings 11:3-9 NKJV](#)

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<sup>60</sup> [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Ancient\\_and\\_Medieval\\_History/2500\\_BCE-539\\_BCE/Social\\_History/King\\_Solomon.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Ancient_and_Medieval_History/2500_BCE-539_BCE/Social_History/King_Solomon.shtml)

The question is, did Solomon repent? There is no record of his repentance in 1 Kings, and Chronicles doesn't mention his apostasy. The book of Ecclesiastes reads like a book of regrets and lessons learned, but does not contain evidence of repentance, the way his father David responded when confronted with his sin.

[Ecclesiastes 2:11](#) Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all [was] vanity and grasping for the wind. [There was] no profit under the sun. [Ecclesiastes 2:11 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](#)

The bible leaves us to speculate whether he actually ever did repent and take ownership of his sin. Ellen White says: Solomon's repentance was sincere; but the harm that his example of evil-doing had wrought could not be undone.<sup>61</sup> The following verse speaks of some of the actions taken by the good king Josiah, in his attempts to thoroughly rid his kingdom of idolatry.

[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. <sup>14</sup> And he broke in pieces the [sacred] pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men. [2 Kings 23:13-14 NKJV](#)

Apparently, it wasn't until the reign of Josiah, over 300 years later, that the high places that Solomon built for idol worship were destroyed. So even if Solomon repented, he definitely did not clean up his mess.

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What do you believe?

- How old do you think Solomon was when he became king?
- Do you think Solomon's descent into self-indulgent tyranny happened at the same time as his fall into idolatry?
- What does it tell you about Solomon that he would have a harem of 700 wives and 300 concubines?

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<sup>61</sup> White, Ellen. *Prophets and Kings*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943. p84. <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pk/pk5.html>

# The divided kingdom

Story: [1 Kings 12:1 – 12:24](#), [2 Chronicles 10](#)

The division of the kingdom of Israel happened after the end of Solomon's reign. God had promised David that he would always have a descendant sitting on the throne, but He didn't promise that it would be over the entire Israelite nation.

[2 Samuel 7:16](#) "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' " [2 Samuel 7:16 NKJV](#)

Because of Solomon's self-indulgent tyranny, he left a nation on the verge of civil war to his son Rehoboam. We aren't told Solomon's age when he began to reign, but we are told that he was young. That is why it is interesting to note that Rehoboam was 41 years old when he began to reign [[1 Kings 14:21](#)]. Considering the fact that Solomon reigned 40 years [[1 Kings 11:42](#)], that would mean that Rehoboam was born before Solomon became king. The second interesting thing is that Rehoboam's mother, probably the first wife of Solomon was Naamah, an Ammonitess [[1 Kings 14:31](#)].

[1 Kings 12:3](#) that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, <sup>4</sup> "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." [1 Kings 12:3-4 NKJV](#)

Apparently, Rehoboam was not ready to give up the self-indulgent life he had under his father.

[1 Kings 12:14](#) and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!" [1 Kings 12:14 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 12:16](#) Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: "What share have we in David? [We have] no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!" So Israel departed to their tents. [1 Kings 12:16 NKJV](#)

[1 Kings 12:21](#) And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen [men] who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. [1 Kings 12:21 NKJV](#)

I can understand why the tribe of Judah would remain loyal to the dynasty of King David, but why did Benjamin side with them? Some have speculated that the fact that Jerusalem was on the border between Judah and Benjamin, may have meant that they received similar preferential treatment, to ensure their loyalty for the security and stability of the capital city. The end result of this turmoil is that the nation of Israel was split into two kingdoms, who were at times even at war with each other. The southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin were ruled for nearly 350 years by 20 kings from a single dynasty, more than half of which were good. If you just added up the years, you would get 387 but Thiele showed that in order to harmonize everything, there were some overlapping reigns, and there was a mixture of "ascension year" and "non- ascension year" dating that had to be sorted out.

- "ascension year" - if a king died in the middle of a year, the period to the end of that year would be called the "ascension year" and year 1 of the new king's reign would begin at the new year

- "non- ascension year" - the period to the end of the year would be Year 1 of the new king and Year 2 would begin at the start of the new year.<sup>62</sup>

The ten northern tribes had more instability and were ruled for a little over 200 years by 20 kings and 9 different dynasties, all of which were wicked in the sight of God.

The following table of the divided kingdom lists the kings, the different dynasties of the Northern kingdom, how long they reigned, and whether they were good or bad. Probably the most notable recent work on the chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah was done by Edwin Thiele. He was a Seventh-Day Adventist missionary, editor, archaeologist, writer and Old Testament professor. His doctoral dissertation, later published as "*The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*," is widely regarded as the definitive work on the chronology of the Hebrew kings.<sup>63</sup> His work including beginning and ending months for most reigns, and proposed overlapping reigns, is summarized in full at the URL in the footnote, and is the source for the alignment of the following table.<sup>64</sup>

Northern Kingdom of Israel				Southern Kingdom of Judah		
King	Dynasty	Years	Character	King	Years	Character
<a href="#">Jeroboam I</a>	Jeroboam I	22	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 14:7-20</a> ]	<a href="#">Rehoboam</a>	17	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Chronicles 12:1</a> ]
<a href="#">Nadab</a>		2	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 15:25-26</a> ]	<a href="#">Abijah</a>	3	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 15:1-3</a> ]
<a href="#">Baasha</a>	Baasha	24	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 15:33-34</a> ]	<a href="#">Asa</a>	41	Good [ <a href="#">1 Kings 15:9-15</a> ]
<a href="#">Elah</a>		2	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 16:8-13</a> ]			
<a href="#">Zimri</a>	Zimri	7 days				
<a href="#">Tibni</a>						
<a href="#">Omri</a>	Omri	12	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 16:23-25</a> ]			
<a href="#">Ahab</a>		22	Worst [ <a href="#">1 Kings 16:29-30</a> ]	<a href="#">Jehoshaphat</a>	25	Good [ <a href="#">2 Chronicles 17:1-6</a> ]
<a href="#">Ahaziah</a>		2	Bad [ <a href="#">1 Kings 22:51-53</a> ]			
<a href="#">Joram</a>		12	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 3:1-2</a> ]	<a href="#">Jehoram</a>	8	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Chronicles 21:4-6</a> ]
<a href="#">Jehu</a>	Jehu	28	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 10:31-36</a> ]	<a href="#">Ahaziah</a>	1	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 8:25-27</a> ]
<a href="#">Jehoahaz</a>		17	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 13:1-2</a> ]	<a href="#">Athaliah</a>		Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 11:1</a> ]
<a href="#">Jehoash</a>		16	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 13:10-11</a> ]	<a href="#">Joash</a>	40	Good [ <a href="#">2 Kings 12:1-2</a> ] - Bad [ <a href="#">2 Chronicles 24:17-22</a> ]
<a href="#">Jeroboam II</a>		41	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 14:23-24</a> ]	<a href="#">Amaziah</a>	29	Good [ <a href="#">2 Kings 14:1-3</a> ]
<a href="#">Zechariah</a>		6 mo	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 15:8-9</a> ]	<a href="#">Azariah (Uzziah)</a>	52	Good [ <a href="#">2 Kings 15:1-3</a> ] - Bad [ <a href="#">2 Chronicles 26:16-21</a> ]
<a href="#">Shallum</a>	Shallum	1 mo				
<a href="#">Menahem</a>	Menahem	10	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 15:17-18</a> ]	<a href="#">Jotham</a>	16	Good [ <a href="#">2 Kings 15:32-34</a> ]
<a href="#">Pekahiah</a>		2	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 15:23-24</a> ]			
<a href="#">Pekah</a>	Pekah	20	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 15:27-28</a> ]	<a href="#">Ahaz</a>	16	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 16:1-3</a> ]
<a href="#">Hoshea</a>	Hoshea	9	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 17:1-2</a> ]			
				<a href="#">Hezekiah</a>	29	Good [ <a href="#">2 Kings 18:1-3</a> ]
				<a href="#">Manasseh</a>	55	Worst [ <a href="#">2 Kings 21:1-17</a> ]

<sup>62</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Mysterious\\_Numbers\\_of\\_the\\_Hebrew\\_Kings#Biblical\\_chronology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mysterious_Numbers_of_the_Hebrew_Kings#Biblical_chronology)

<sup>63</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin\\_R.\\_Thiele#Biography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_R._Thiele#Biography)

<sup>64</sup>

	<a href="#">Amon</a>	2	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 21:18-20</a> ]
	<a href="#">Josiah</a>	31	Best [ <a href="#">1 Kings 22:1-2</a> , <a href="#">2 Kings 23:25</a> ]
	<a href="#">Jehoahaz</a>	3 mo	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 23:31-32</a> ]
	<a href="#">Jehoiakim</a>	11	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 23:36-37</a> ]
	<a href="#">Jehoiachin</a>	3 mo	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 24:8-9</a> ]
	<a href="#">Zedekiah</a>	11	Bad [ <a href="#">2 Kings 24:18-19</a> ]

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think there were some good kings in the southern kingdom but not a single one in the northern kingdom?
- King Saul whom David replaced was from the tribe of Benjamin. Can you think of any reasons, other than the one mentioned, that they might have been loyal to the dynasty of King David?
- Why do you think the southern kingdom lasted longer than the northern kingdom?

# Prophets

Prophets were one of the primary ways that God communicated with the Israelites in Old Testament times. Of course, there was [Moses](#) who was very instrumental in establishing the nation of Israel. In fact, it seems that Moses was even more than a prophet, because God spoke directly with him.

[Numbers 12:6](#) Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, [I], the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. <sup>7</sup> Not so with My servant Moses; He [is] faithful in all My house. <sup>8</sup> I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" [Numbers 12:6-8 NKJV](#)

Next there was [Samuel](#) who ushered in the era of the kings.

[1 Samuel 3:1](#) Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; [there was] no widespread revelation. [1 Samuel 3:1 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 3:10](#) Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

<sup>11</sup> Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. <sup>12</sup> "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup> "And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." [1 Samuel 3:10-14 NKJV](#)

[1 Samuel 3:19](#) So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel [had been] established as a prophet of the LORD. <sup>21</sup> Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. [1 Samuel 3:19-21 NKJV](#)

Between the time of Moses and the time of Samuel, there were [judges](#). Most of these judges were called by God to free the Israelites from oppression and bring them back to the worship of the true God, but for the most part, they were not prophets. There may have been more, but there were only two prophets mentioned during the time of the judges, and one of them was not even named.

[Judges 4:4](#) Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. [Judges 4:4 NKJV](#)

[Judges 6:7](#) And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, <sup>8</sup> that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; [Judges 6:7-8 NKJV](#)

During the period of the [kings](#), there were many prophets who were used by God to reprove, correct and communicate His messages to the Israelites. The Bible has a number of books named after prophets. We have taken to categorizing them as major prophets and minor prophets, not based on their roles or impact, but based on the size of the book of the

Bible named for them. In addition to that are a number of prophets who are not named in the title of a book of the Bible. Then there are also numerous false prophets, most of whom are unnamed.

Let's see if we can identify the prophets mentioned in the Bible. The word "prophet" occurs 243 times in 227 verses in the NKJV. Let's list people who were called prophets.

Prophets identified by the primary Hebrew word translated to prophet which is [נָבִיא, nābî](#)<sup>65</sup>: Abraham [[Genesis 20:7](#)], Aaron [[Exodus 7:1](#)], Moses [[Numbers 12:6](#)], unnamed [[Judges 6:8](#)], Samuel [[1 Samuel 3:20](#)], group of unnamed [[1 Samuel 10:5](#)], Gad [[1 Samuel 22:5](#)], Nathan [[1 Samuel 7:2](#)], Ahijah [[1 Kings 11:29](#)], man of God and old prophet [[1 Kings 13:18](#)], Jehu [[1 Kings 16:7](#)], prophets hidden by Obadiah [[1 Kings 18:4](#)], prophets killed by Jezebel [[1 Kings 18:13](#)], prophets of Baal and Asherah [[1 Kings 18:19](#)], Elijah [[1 Kings 18:22](#)], Elisha [[1 Kings 19:16](#)], unnamed [[1 Kings 20:13](#)], unnamed [[1 Kings 20:38](#)], 400 false prophets [[1 Kings 22:6](#)], Micaiah [[1 Kings 22:13](#)], sons of prophets [[2 Kings 2:3](#)], 50 sons of prophets [[2 Kings 2:7](#)], Jonah [[2 Kings 14:25](#)], Isaiah [[2 Kings 19:2](#)], Shemiah [[2 Chronicles 12:5](#)], Iddo [[2 Chronicles 13:22](#)], Oded [[2 Chronicles 15:8](#)], unnamed [[2 Chronicles 25:15](#)], Jeremiah [[2 Chronicles 36:12](#)], Hananiah (false) [[Jeremiah 28:1](#)]

Prophets, some of whom may have been listed above, who had books of the Bible named for them: [Ezekiel](#), [Daniel](#), [Hosea](#), [Joel](#), [Amos](#), [Obadiah](#), [Jonah](#), [Micah](#), [Nahum](#), [Habakkuk](#), [Zephaniah](#), [Haggai](#), [Zechariah](#), [Malachi](#).

Prophets mentioned in the New Testament identified by the Greek word [προφήτης, prophētēs](#)<sup>66</sup>: John the Baptist [[Matthew 1:9](#)], David [[Acts 2:29-30](#)], Agabus and a group of unnamed prophets [[Acts 11:27-28](#)], unnamed prophets in the church in Antioch [[Acts 13:1](#)], Judas & Silas [[Acts 15:32](#)],

## Distinguishing a true from a false prophet

Since I brought up the concept of a false prophet, it would be nice to know if there was a way to distinguish a true prophet from a false prophet. Let's see what the Bible can tell us about this. God will give dreams and visions to His prophets and will reveal things to them.

[Numbers 12:6](#) Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, [I], the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. [Numbers 12:6 NKJV](#)

[Amos 3:7](#) Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. [Amos 3:7 NKJV](#)

If a prophet's predictions do not come true, they are a false prophet. This one is a little tricky because some prophecies are conditional such as Jonah's message to Nineveh that they would be destroyed in forty days [[Jonah 3](#)].

[Deuteronomy 18:22](#) "when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. [Deuteronomy 18:22 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 28:9](#) "As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known [as] one whom the LORD has truly sent." [Jeremiah 28:9 NKJV](#)

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5030/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4396/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[Ezekiel 33:33](#) "And when this comes to pass--surely it will come--then they will know that a prophet has been among them." [Ezekiel 33:33 NKJV](#)

True prophets will try to turn people's hearts to God and their message will be in harmony with the Bible.

[Isaiah 8:20](#) To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them. [Isaiah 8:20 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 13:1](#) "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup> "and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'-- which you have not known--'and let us serve them,' <sup>3</sup> "you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. [Deuteronomy 13:1-3 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 23:13](#) "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal And caused My people Israel to err. <sup>14</sup> Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

<sup>15</sup> "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, And make them drink the water of gall; For from the prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness has gone out into all the land.' "

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup> They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace" '; And [to] everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.' " <sup>18</sup> For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, And has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard [it]? <sup>19</sup> Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury--A violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. <sup>20</sup> The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. <sup>21</sup> "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. <sup>22</sup> But if they had stood in My counsel, And had caused My people to hear My words, Then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings. [Jeremiah 23:13-22 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 23:25](#) "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' <sup>26</sup> "How long will [this] be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed [they are] prophets of the deceit of their own heart, <sup>27</sup> "who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. <sup>28</sup> "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What [is] the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD. [Jeremiah 23:25-28 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 17:13](#) Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments [and] My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." [2 Kings 17:13 NKJV](#)



What do you believe?

- Do you think there are any more prophets today?
- Do you think it would be hard to tell if someone were a true prophet of God?
- Are miracles a good test of a true prophet?

# Elijah

Story: [1 Kings 17:1 – 2 Kings 2:11](#)

[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."

<sup>2</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. <sup>4</sup> "And it will be [that] you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." [1 Kings 17:1-4 NKJV](#)

This is the first verse in the Bible where Elijah is mentioned. Being a Tishbite who settled in Gilead leads me to believe that he was not a descendant of the original Israelite inhabitants of that area. Gilead was part of the land east of the Jordan River that was assigned to one of the descendants of Manasseh, a son of Joseph.

Elijah was a prophet during the time of Ahab, who we are told was the most wicked king of Israel [[1 Kings 16:29-30](#)]. God gave him a message to carry to the wicked, idolatrous king. After delivering the message, Elijah was to go hide and wait for the drought, while being miraculously fed by ravens.

[1 Kings 17:5](#) So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. [1 Kings 17:5-6 NKJV](#)

Miraculously, ravens who would naturally be scavenging for food for themselves, brought foods suitable for human consumption to Elijah. When the brook ran dry, he was instructed by God to go to a Widow in Zerephath where God would miraculously provide for both him and the woman's family [[1 Kings 17:9-16](#)].

[1 Kings 17:17](#) Now it happened after these things [that] the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup> So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

<sup>19</sup> And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup> Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" <sup>21</sup> And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. [1 Kings 17:17-22 NKJV](#)

I believe this is the first mention in the Bible of a person being resurrected from the dead.

Possibly what Elijah is most known for is the confrontation with the 450 priests of Baal and 400 priests of Asherah on Mount Carmel.

[1 Kings 18:20](#) So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup> And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD [is] God,

follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. <sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets [are] four hundred and fifty men. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay [it] on the wood, but put no fire [under it]; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay [it] on the wood, but put no fire [under it]. <sup>24</sup> "Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

<sup>25</sup> Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare [it] first, for you [are] many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire [under it]."

<sup>26</sup> So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared [it], and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But [there was] no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

<sup>27</sup> And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he [is] a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, [or] perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." <sup>28</sup> So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. <sup>29</sup> And when midday was past, they prophesied until the [time] of the offering of the [evening] sacrifice. But [there was] no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD [that was] broken down. <sup>31</sup> And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." <sup>32</sup> Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid [it] on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour [it] on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." <sup>34</sup> Then he said, "Do [it] a second time," and they did [it] a second time; and he said, "Do [it] a third time," and they did [it] a third time. <sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

<sup>36</sup> 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 18:20-39 NKJV](#)

This is possibly the only time mentioned in the Bible where the Northern Kingdom of Israel was said to confess in mass that the Lord is God. Unfortunately, it did not result in the removal of Ahab and Jezebel from power. I believe this confession may have led to some defections to the Southern Kingdom, where the true God was more generally upheld and worshipped, but it did not seem to result in any nationwide change in the Northern Kingdom.

Elijah had the distinction along with [Enoch](#) of being the only two people in the Bible whom we are told were taken to heaven without dying.

[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](#)

But the legend of Elijah did not end with his departure from this earth. His name was mentioned in a prophecy in Malachi.

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

[Malachi 4:5 NKJV](#)

And he was mentioned multiple times in the New Testament, possibly because of the prophecy. First the mission of John the Baptist, the herald of the Messiah was said by Jesus to be the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy.

[Matthew 11:14](#) "And if you are willing to receive [it], he is Elijah who is to come. [Matthew 11:14 NKJV](#)

Another mention of Elijah in the New Testament was his appearance with Moses when they met and talked with Jesus on the Mountain where He was transfigured.

[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. [Matthew 17:2-3 NKJV](#)

Finally, as Jesus was dying on the cross, He uttered some words in a language unknown to the bystanders, who thought that maybe He was calling to Elijah.

[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?" <sup>47</sup> Some of those who stood there, when they heard [that], said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" [Matthew 27:46-47 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think Elijah was taken to heaven without dying?
- Why was John the Baptist likened to Elijah?
- What do you think Moses and Elijah talked to Jesus about on the mountain when He was transfigured?

# Elisha

Story: [1 Kings 19:15 - 21](#), [2 Kings 2:1 - 13:21](#)

Elisha was chosen by God to be the successor to Elijah as prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

[1 Kings 19:19](#) So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who [was] plowing [with] twelve yoke [of oxen] before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.  
<sup>20</sup> And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and [then] I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" <sup>21</sup> So [Elisha] turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant. [1 Kings 19:19-21 NKJV](#)

The fact that Elisha was found by the prophet plowing his father's field may tell us some about him and his family. His family was probably doing well to own 24 oxen. Verse 21 says that when he cooked the meat, he gave it to the people. What people did he give it to? It says there were twelve pairs of oxen, and Elisha was with the twelfth, so there must have been eleven servants plowing the field with him. It would seem logical that he gave it to the people who were helping him in the field. So, despite the fact that his family was wealthy enough to own 24 oxen and servants, Elisha was plowing the field beside the servants? His willingness to give up a comfortable life to essentially wait on Elijah as a servant, also tells us something about his values and priorities. So, Elisha patiently served Elijah, in a master/apprentice role, waiting for the time when he was to take his place as the prophet.

[2 Kings 2:3](#) Now the sons of the prophets who [were] at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" [2 Kings 2:3 NKJV](#)

As the time drew near for Elijah to be taken, somehow Elisha and the "sons of the prophets" had been informed. This term "sons of the prophets" appears 12 times in 11 different verses in the NKJV. Nine of the eleven verses were clearly in connection with Elisha. The last was a New Testament reference and the first could have been connected with Elisha. I believe the term "sons of the prophets" referred not necessarily to literal sons of prophets but to individuals who were in an apprentice role, training to become spiritual leaders and teachers. I didn't say prophets, because God is the one who chooses someone to be a prophet. It is a foregone conclusion that Elisha was an apprentice under Elijah. But the fact that these "sons of the prophets" referred to Elijah as Elisha's master and not theirs leads me to believe that maybe they considered themselves apprentices under Elisha.

[2 Kings 2:9](#) And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." <sup>10</sup> So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. [Nevertheless], if you see me [when I am] taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be [so]." [2 Kings 2:9-10 NKJV](#)

Was Elisha wanting to be twice as great or twice as powerful as Elijah? Considering what we have seen of him so far, I don't think that's what he was asking for. We have already seen how Elisha left a seemingly good life at home to serve

Elijah as his apprentice, which was probably similar to the way a servant serves his master. Whatever he intended, I don't think it was a selfish request.

Almost immediately after the departure of Elijah an incident occurred which on the surface seems out of character for Elisha.

[2 Kings 2:23](#) Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!" <sup>24</sup> So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. [2 Kings 2:23-24 NKJV](#)

Does this action by Elisha seem kind of severe? Were the lads killed or just injured? I believe that Elisha was well able to take an insult, but God had an important work for him to do, and he needed to command some respect to carry out this work. I think this one incident at the start of his ministry would prevent any future sacrilegious youth from mocking God's messenger.

Let's go back to the term "sons of the prophets" again because I think it was a key element of Elisha's ministry.

[2 Kings 2:3](#) Now the **sons of the prophets** who [were] at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" [2 Kings 2:3 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 2:5](#) Now the **sons of the prophets** who [were] at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" [2 Kings 2:5 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 2:7](#) And fifty men of the **sons of the prophets** went and stood facing [them] at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. [2 Kings 2:7 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 2:15](#) Now when the **sons of the prophets** who [were] from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. [2 Kings 2:15 NKJV](#)

There were more than fifty in this group who seemed pretty familiar with Elisha, but when it appeared that Elijah had departed, they bowed down in respect to Elisha. While still serving Elijah, these men probably saw Elisha as more of a peer, even though he probably instructed them as well.

[2 Kings 4:1](#) A certain woman of the wives of the **sons of the prophets** cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves." [2 Kings 4:1 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 4:38](#) And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and [there was] a famine in the land. Now the **sons of the prophets** [were] sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the **sons of the prophets**." [2 Kings 4:38 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 6:1](#) And the **sons of the prophets** said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us." [2 Kings 6:1 NKJV](#)

These verses we just read give us more of a picture of how close Elisha was to the "sons of the prophets." Their families came to him when in financial crisis, he ate with them, and he helped them build a new dormitory.

The missions of the two prophets [Elijah](#) and Elisha were quite different. Elijah reprimanded king Ahab to his face, and through a fiery display from heaven, brought forth a confession from the nation that the Lord was God. Elisha gave aid and counsel to the king, and influenced the nation by educating the youth, and travelling around the country performing miracles. In fact, in some ways if the mission of Elijah was like that of John the Baptist, perhaps the ministry of Elisha could be likened to that of Jesus on this earth.

[2 Kings 13:14](#) Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" [2 Kings 13:14 NKJV](#)

I find it interesting that even the wicked, idol worshipping, king of Israel would come to Elisha and call him father and weep over his impending death. The fact that the young king equated him with chariots and horsemen implies that he realized the role Elisha played in the nation's security.

[2 Kings 13:20](#) Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the [raiding] bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. <sup>21</sup> So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band [of raiders]; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet. [2 Kings 13:20-21 NKJV](#)

We don't know how long Elisha lived but we have an approximation on how long he served as prophet in Israel. In [2 Kings 19:16](#), Elijah was told to anoint Jehu to be the next king of Israel, and Elisha to be his successor. In fact, Jehu was re-anointed during the ministry of Elisha [[2 Kings 9:1-3](#)]. Jehu reigned for 28 years [[2 Kings 10:36](#)], and his successor Jehoahaz reigned 17 years [[2 Kings 13:1](#)]. Although the naming is a little inconsistent between Joash in verse [14](#) and Jehoash in verse [10](#), it seems that he is the one who came to Elisha on his death bed. So, Elisha was a prophet in Israel the entire reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz, which was about 45 years, so I would guess his ministry as a prophet was at least 50 years.

Take some time to read the rest of the miracles in the story of Elisha.

- Crossing the Jordan River on dry land [[2 Kings 2:14](#)]
- Purification of a city's water supply [[2 Kings 2:19-22](#)]
- Water for the entire armies of Israel and Judah [[2 Kings 3:5-27](#)]
- Multiplying the oil supply of a widow in need [[2 Kings 4:1-7](#)]
- A son promised to the barren Shunammite woman [[2 Kings 4:8-17](#)]
- Son of the Shunammite woman raised from the dead [[2 Kings 4:18-37](#)]
- Makes the poisonous stew safe to eat [[2 Kings 4:38-41](#)]
- Feeding a multitude with a few barley loaves and some grain [[2 Kings 4:42-44](#)]
- Naaman cured of his leprosy [[2 Kings 5:1-27](#)]
- Making the axe head float [[2 Kings 6:1-7](#)]
- Warning the king of Israel about the plans of the king of Aram [[2 Kings 6:8-12](#)]
- Aramean army struck blind [[2 Kings 6:13-23](#)]
- Predicts the end of a siege [[2 Kings 6:24-7:12](#)]
- Predicts a seven-year famine [[2 Kings 8:1-6](#)]
- Man resurrected [[2 Kings 13:20-21](#)]

What do you believe?

- Do you think it was hard for Elisha to lay in sickness on his deathbed wondering if he would be taken to heaven like his master Elijah was?
- If the idol worshipping King respected and called him father, why did he not worship Elisha's God?
- Why do you think God had Elisha perform miracles to aid idolatrous Israelite kings [[2 Kings 6:8-12](#)]?



# Isaiah

Isaiah was quoted many times in the New Testament. On his website, Ron Graham has very nicely presented a list of 70 of these quotes, most of which I have included in my text in table format. <http://www.simplybible.com/f591.htm>

## Chapter 1

The first chapter of the book begins by identifying the time during which Isaiah lived and worked. It was during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of the southern kingdom of Judah. From our chapter on [the divided kingdom](#), we can see that it was during this time period that the northern kingdom of Israel met its end.

After the first verse, Isaiah immediately launches into God's rebuke against Judah for turning away from Him, and describes what it will be like for them because of it. He says, referring to their future captivity, that unless some were saved, the nation would have been completely lost like Sodom and Gomorrah. Paul then quotes Isaiah in the New Testament referring to the Christians as the remnant saved out of the nation of Israel.

[Isaiah 1:9](#) Unless the LORD of hosts  
Had left to us a very small remnant,  
We would have become like Sodom,  
We would have been made like Gomorrah.  
[Isaiah 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:29](#) And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of  
Sabaoth had left us a seed,  
We would have become like Sodom,  
And we would have been made like Gomorrah." [Romans  
9:29 NKJV](#)

The middle of the chapter talks about how God is fed up with their sacrifices, burnt offerings, and their keeping of the festivals. The reason is because they think that by doing those things, they are obeying God, but He says cease to do evil, learn to do good as evidenced by: seeking justice for all, reproving the ruthless, defending orphans and widows. This is followed by the oft quoted verses which assures us of God's ability and willingness to forgive us:

[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.  
<sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient,  
You shall eat the good of the land;  
<sup>20</sup> But if you refuse and rebel,  
You shall be devoured by the sword";  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.  
[Isaiah 1:18-20 NKJV](#)

The last third of the chapter returns to God's condemnation of Zion for its injustice, murders, rulers being friends with thieves, bribery, and not taking care of the orphans and widows.

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What do you believe?

- During Isaiah's ministry, there were three good kings and one evil king. During which king's reign do you think this chapter was written?
- Do you think God is more displeased with idolatry or with mistreatment of the underprivileged?
- [Verse 19,20](#) says if you obey, things will be good, if you rebel you will be devoured by the sword. How does this apply when good people suffer, and bad people prosper?

## Chapter 2

In this chapter, the second and third verses seem like they could apply to the time in the church when Christians from all nations would hold Jerusalem in high esteem and make pilgrimages there.

[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 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](#)

In fact, even a second dominant world religion, Islam holds the original Jewish temple site in high esteem. But when does the statement, "the last days," refer to? Let's look at the next verse.

[Isaiah 2:4](#) He shall judge between the nations,  
 And rebuke many people;  
 They shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
 And their spears into pruning hooks;  
 Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
 Neither shall they learn war anymore. [Isaiah 2:4 NKJV](#)

If this verse is a continuation of the previous two verses, it would not apply to the time mentioned above because there was a lot of war, especially between the religions who held Jerusalem in high esteem. In my opinion, there is only one time when there will be no more war and that is in the world which is made new after sin.

The event described in the second half of the chapter has places where it sounds like the second coming of Christ.

[Isaiah 2:12](#) For the day of the LORD of hosts  
 [Shall come] upon everything proud and lofty,  
 Upon everything lifted up--  
 And it shall be brought low-- [Isaiah 2:12 NKJV](#)

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 2:19</a> 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. <a href="#">Isaiah 2:19 NKJV</a></p> <p><a href="#">Isaiah 2:21</a> To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. <a href="#">Isaiah 2:21 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:30</a> "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' <a href="#">Luke 23:30 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Revelation 6:15</a> 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, <a href="#">Revelation 6:15 NKJV</a></p>
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The verses preceding 19 and 21 mention that idols will be cast away. I suppose in the context of the time, this could be said to be a prediction of the terror they will experience when confronted with the aggression of Assyria or Babylon. But in the context of the first part of the chapter describing the second return of Christ, the parallels to Jesus' statement in Luke and John's in Revelation fit together nicely.

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What do you believe?

- Which "last days" do you believe [verse 2](#) is referring to?
- If God wanted to bless the Israelites with temporal things (see [chapter 61](#)), then why is the silver and gold, and no end to treasure in [verse 7](#) a bad thing?
- There is a lot of repetition in this chapter, what does it mean to you?
  - [9/11/12/17](#) the pride of man will be humbled
  - [10/19/21](#) men will try to hide from the splendor of God's majesty

### [Chapter 3](#)

This chapter speaks of a coming void of leadership in Judah.

[Isaiah 3:1](#) For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,  
 Takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah  
 The stock and the store,  
 The whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water;  
<sup>2</sup> The mighty man and the man of war,  
 The judge and the prophet,  
 And the diviner and the elder;  
<sup>3</sup> The captain of fifty and the honorable man,  
 The counselor and the skillful artisan,  
 And the expert enchanter. [Isaiah 3:1-3 NKJV](#)

The Lord will judge the elders and princes because the possessions of the poor are in their houses. Israelites were not supposed to keep loan collateral from the poor.

[Exodus 22:26](#) "If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. <sup>27</sup> "For that [is] his only covering, it [is] his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I [am] gracious. [Exodus 22:26-27 NKJV](#)

Because of their pride and seductive behavior, the women of Judah would be humbled.

[Isaiah 3:16](#) Moreover the LORD says:

"Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,  
And walk with outstretched necks  
And wanton eyes,  
Walking and mincing [as] they go,  
Making a jingling with their feet,  
<sup>17</sup> Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab  
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,  
And the LORD will uncover their secret parts." [Isaiah 3:16-17 NKJV](#)

I believe this whole chapter to be a prophecy of the Babylonian exile. At that time all the people of power and influence were taken to Babylon.

[2 Kings 25:8](#) And in the fifth month, on the seventh [day] of the month (which [was] the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. <sup>10</sup> And all the army of the Chaldeans who [were with] the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around. <sup>11</sup> Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people [who] remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. <sup>12</sup> But the captain of the guard left [some] of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers. [2 Kings 25:8-12 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Verse 5 paints a picture of lawlessness in the absence of the leadership.

[Isaiah 3:5](#) The people will be oppressed,  
Every one by another and every one by his neighbor;  
The child will be insolent toward the elder,  
And the base toward the honorable." [Isaiah 3:5 NKJV](#)

Is it impossible for people to live without some kind of civil government to enforce laws?

- So what good is a civil government if they side with the bullies and oppress the poor and helpless?
- Did the women of Judah literally get scabs on their head ([verse 17](#))? Is there some historical explanation of what this meant?

## [Chapter 4](#)

This is a really short chapter so I've included the text of the entire chapter.

[Isaiah 4:1](#) And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach." <sup>2</sup> In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; And the fruit of the earth [shall be] excellent and appealing For those of Israel who have escaped.

<sup>3</sup> And it shall come to pass that [he who is] left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy--everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, <sup>5</sup> then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there [will be] a covering. <sup>6</sup> And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. [Isaiah 4 NKJV](#)

Verse 3 talks about a time when the remnant living will be called holy, it says they will be recorded which is translated to write, record, enroll. This sounds a lot like the names written in the book of life (see the following).

[Psalm 69:28](#) Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous. [Psalm 69:28 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](#)

But looking at the first verse, this doesn't sound like the salvation of the righteous at the second coming of Christ.

[Isaiah 4:1](#) And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach." [Isaiah 4:1 NKJV](#)

This first verse seems to logically follow my assertion that chapter 3 described the people left in the land of Judah during the Babylonian exile. Furthermore, I don't recall reading anywhere else in the Bible where it claims that those who were left in Jerusalem during the exile were holy. Some commentators apply this to the Christian church and God's protection of it and His followers in general. I'm not sure what I think about this chapter.

What do you believe?

- Do you think this chapter is referring to literal Mount Zion and Jerusalem in the Middle East?
- During the exodus, God provided a cloud of shade by day and fire for warmth by night [[Exodus 13:21](#)]. Does verse 5 imply that this will happen again?
- Can you think of a specific time in the history of Jerusalem or Judah when women outnumbered men by 7:1 as described in verse 1?

## [Chapter 5](#)

This chapter begins with a parable of the vineyard.

[Isaiah 5:1](#) Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:

My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;  
So He expected [it] to bring forth [good] grapes,  
But it brought forth wild grapes. [Isaiah 5:1-2 NKJV](#)

It is easy to overlook the fact that there are three participants rather than just the husbandman and the vineyard. Upon deeper examination, the participants are:

1. The one telling the story, the owner of the vineyard, symbolizing God the Father.
2. The owner's beloved, presumably his son, who tended the vineyard, symbolizing God the Son.
3. The vineyard, symbolizing Israel and Judah.

The parable tells the familiar story of God's choice of Israel as His people, whom He nurtured and protected, but they continually only yielded worthless fruit, He finally removed the hedge of protection after which they suffered the woes described in the latter half of the chapter. Verses 13-17 seem pretty clearly to be predicting an exile and the depopulation of the land. And interestingly, verse 13 informs us that lack of knowledge or ignorance is not an excuse for disobeying God.

[Isaiah 5:13](#) Therefore my people have gone into captivity,  
Because [they have] no knowledge;  
Their honorable men [are] famished,  
And their multitude dried up with thirst.  
<sup>14</sup> Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself  
And opened its mouth beyond measure;  
Their glory and their multitude and their pomp,  
And he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.  
<sup>15</sup> People shall be brought down,  
Each man shall be humbled,  
And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.  
<sup>16</sup> But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment,  
And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness.  
<sup>17</sup> Then the lambs shall feed in their pasture,  
And in the waste places of the fat ones strangers shall eat. [Isaiah 5:13-17 NKJV](#)

Verses 21-23 give specific examples of the reason God considered them to be producing worthless fruit.

[Isaiah 5:18](#) Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity,  
And sin as if with a cart rope;  
<sup>19</sup> That say,  
"Let Him make speed [and] hasten His work,  
That we may see [it];  
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come,

That we may know [it]."

<sup>20</sup> Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;  
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

<sup>21</sup> Woe to [those who are] wise in their own eyes,  
And prudent in their own sight!

<sup>22</sup> Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,  
Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,

<sup>23</sup> Who justify the wicked for a bribe,  
And take away justice from the righteous man! [Isaiah 5:18-23 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Do you think God literally caused the Jews to be defeated and exiled, or simply allowed it?
- Do you think the nations that God supposedly sold the Israelites to were any better?
- What do you think God would have considered good grapes from the Jews?

## [Chapter 6](#)

In this chapter we learn about seraphim and their six wings.

[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!" [Isaiah 6:1-3 NKJV](#)

In Revelation, John describes the throne room in heaven, which he presumably saw in vision.

[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](#)

John's account is a lot more descriptive than Isaiah's but one very interesting point in common was the six-winged creatures. Isaiah called them all Seraphim, but John described them as four difference creatures.

Isaiah is called and accepts the commission to prophetic ministry. What follows in Isaiah's commission about the lack of belief he will encounter was repeated as a fulfillment of prophecy when Jesus and Paul were faced with the same.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 6:9</a> And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'<sup>10</sup> "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." <a href="#">Isaiah 6:9-10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 13:14</a> "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;<sup>15</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull. [Their] ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' <a href="#">Matthew 13:14-15 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 4:11</a> 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,<sup>12</sup> "so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And [their] sins be forgiven them.' " <a href="#">Mark 4:11-12 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 8:10</a> And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest [it is given] in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'<sup>11</sup> <a href="#">Luke 8:10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 12:39</a> Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:<sup>40</sup> "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with [their] eyes, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."<sup>41</sup> <a href="#">John 12:39-40 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Act2 28:25</a> So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers,<sup>26</sup> "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive;<sup>27</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull. [Their] ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'" ' <a href="#">Acts 28:25-27 NKJV</a></p>
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What do you believe?

- Do you think a physical throne room in heaven exists, or do you think it's just a visualization for us?
- Do you think Isaiah's Seraphim and John's four creatures are the same?



- Why is verse 10 written as if someone, God?, is making them this way? Are we not responsible for our own choices?

## Chapter 7

This chapter begins with a bit of history, so let's look at that briefly. There had been almost 100 years of good kings in Judah, when Ahaz came along (see [the divided kingdom](#)). He not only worshipped idols, but he was so wicked that he even sacrificed his own sons on his pagan altars [[2 Chronicles 28:3](#), [2 Kings 16:3](#)]. Chronicles and Kings tell us different parts of the story of Ahaz, and I believe that Isaiah and the 2 Kings account are referring to the same incident. It seems that the kings of Aram and Israel joined together to fight against Jerusalem and besiege it. [2 Kings 16:5](#) says they didn't succeed. In [Isaiah 7:7](#), God told Ahaz through the prophet that it would not succeed. [Verse 8](#) prophesied the end of the kingdom of Israel within 65 years. In spite of this assurance, Ahaz asked the king of Assyria for assistance and had to take the gold and silver from the temple to pay him. On this occasion, the Assyrians came and attacked the capital city of Aram and killed their king [[2 Kings 16:7-9](#)]. After this Ahaz went to Damascus to meet the king of Assyria and while there, was enamored with the pagan alter he saw, so he built a copy of it in Jerusalem [[2 Kings 16:10-16](#)]. On another occasion, possibly later on in his reign, he was defeated by Pekah, king of Israel. In one day, he lost 120,000 valiant men in battle and then 200,000 captives were taken [[2 Chronicles 28:5-15](#)].

The next part of this chapter prophesies the virgin birth of Immanuel which was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary.

[Isaiah 7:14](#) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 1:22](#) So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." [Matthew 1:22-23 NKJV](#)

The last part of the chapter prophesies bad times for Judah, worse than they have experienced since the kingdom was divided. It seems that the Assyrians, whom Ahaz trusted instead of God for his salvation, will betray him and turn on him. Finally, I believe the last few verses are a prophecy of the desolation of the land during the Babylonian captivity.

[Isaiah 7:23](#) It shall happen in that day, [That] wherever there could be a thousand vines [Worth] a thousand [shekels] of silver, It will be for briers and thorns. <sup>24</sup> With arrows and bows [men] will come there, Because all the land will become briers and thorns. <sup>25</sup> And to any hill which could be dug with the hoe, You will not go there for fear of briers and thorns; But it will become a range for oxen And a place for sheep to roam. [Isaiah 7:23-25 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- The sign in verse 14 is clearly a prophecy of the virgin birth of the Messiah, but was this also an immediate sign given to Ahaz? Was a child born to a virgin back then as a sign?
- If this was only a prophecy of the Messiah, then how was this a sign to Ahaz?
- Do you believe the prediction of bad times was specifically referring to one time, or did God like in [Matthew 24](#) intermingle events?

## Chapter 8

Isaiah's wife was called a prophetess. They named their son Mahershalalhashbaz, the longest name in the Bible. The fall of Damascus and Samaria to Assyria was predicted to occur before the child would talk.

Verse 12 was partially quoted by Peter in his first epistle where he is speaking of godly living.

[Isaiah 8:12](#) "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. [Isaiah 8:12 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 3:14](#) But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, [you are] blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." [1 Peter 3:14 NKJV](#)

The following statement about the rock to stumble over was applied by both Peter and Paul to Jesus because the Jews rejected Him.

[Isaiah 8:14](#) He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [Isaiah 8:14 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 2:8](#) and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. [1 Peter 2:8 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:33](#) As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." [Romans 9:33 NKJV](#)

However just a few verses later the words of Isaiah were quoted in reference to those who accepted Jesus and were called the children that God had given Him.

[Romans 8:17](#) And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him. <sup>18</sup> Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! [We] are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion. [Isaiah 8:17-18 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 2:13](#) And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." [Hebrews 2:NKJV](#)

The phrase, 'the children whom the LORD has given me,' makes me think of the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17.

[John 17:9](#) "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. [John 17:9 NKJV](#)

We know from the four gospels, and the Acts of the apostles, that both Jesus and His disciples performed many miracles ('signs and wonders'), primarily for the benefit of the Jews. So, it would seem pretty clear that the middle portion of this chapter is a prophecy of the rejection of Jesus and the following ministry of the apostles.

Verse 20 as one of the tests of a prophet, but I believe it was broader than that because it was meant to identify God's faithful remnant.

[Isaiah 20](#) To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them. [Isaiah 8:20 NKJV](#)

I believe the law and the testimony that Isaiah was referring to was their sacred writings of the time. The law was most likely what we now refer to as the Pentateuch. This is what makes up the first five books of the Old Testament, where the Ten Commandments and other civil and religious Jewish laws were recorded by Moses. I believe the testimony was most likely a reference to the historical books at that time which possibly included Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Samuel. So

when this verse was written, it probably referred to the majority of what would be considered the sacred writings and history of the Jews.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Isaiah's wife was literally a prophet, or do you think it was a figure of speech to mean prophet's wife?
- What do you think was meant by the phrase, 'stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,' or A 'stumbling stone and rock of offense,' as Paul put it?
- Do you think the Jews at the time had a clear definition of what they considered sacred writings and what were not?

## **Chapter 9-10**

Chapter 9 begins with a prophecy of the Messiah.

[Isaiah 9:1](#) Nevertheless the gloom [will] not [be] upon her who [is] distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed [her], [By] the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. [Isaiah 9:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 4:14](#) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: <sup>15</sup> "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, [By] the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: <sup>16</sup> The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." [Matthew 4:14-16 NKJV](#)

But what about the following verses about breaking the yoke, and the never-ending increase of His government.

[Isaiah 9:3](#) You have multiplied the nation  
[And] increased its joy;  
They rejoice before You  
According to the joy of harvest,  
As [men] rejoice when they divide the spoil.  
<sup>4</sup> For You have broken the yoke of his burden  
And the staff of his shoulder,  
The rod of his oppressor,  
As in the day of Midian.  
<sup>5</sup> For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle,  
And garments rolled in blood,  
Will be used for burning [and] fuel of fire.  
<sup>6</sup> For unto us a Child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder.  
And His name will be called  
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of [His] government and peace

[There will be] no end,  
 Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,  
 To order it and establish it with judgment and justice  
 From that time forward, even forever.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. [Isaiah 9:3-7 NKJV](#)

This is the part of the prophecy the Jews focused on. In hindsight though, a never ending increase of His government on the throne of David, could not apply literally to Jesus at His first coming. Jesus never made a play for the throne of David although at times there was a lot of popular support for Him to take it. In fact, Jesus clearly stated this in His trial before Pilate.

[John 18:36](#) Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." [John 18:36 NKJV](#)

The second half of the chapter and the beginning of the next, is about God's anger over Israel's arrogance and the punishment predicted for them. This is written kind of like a song with three verses and a refrain that is repeated at the end of each verse. Portions of this message specifically mention the Northern kingdom of Israel and hence I believe it is targeted at the combined descendants of Jacob. In the last verse of this song, in chapter 10, God is pronouncing woes against those who make unjust decisions which deprive the needy of justice, and rob the poor of their rights, as well as those who plunder widows and orphans.

[Isaiah 10:1](#) "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,  
 Who write misfortune,  
 [Which] they have prescribed  
<sup>2</sup> To rob the needy of justice,  
 And to take what is right from the poor of My people,  
 That widows may be their prey,  
 And [that] they may rob the fatherless. [Isaiah 10:1-2 NKJV](#)

God will allow (use?) the aggressiveness of king of Assyria to punish Israel and threaten Judah, but then the king of Assyria will suffer for his arrogance. I believe [verses 12-19](#) are a prophecy of what happened to Sennacherib as recorded in [chapters 36, 37](#).

The second half of chapter 10 talks about a remnant of Israel. Does this mean the northern tribes, who were often referred to as Israel, or does it mean the southern portion of Israel that Isaiah ministered to? In Romans 9 Paul quotes Isaiah in reference to the remnant that will be saved because the majority will find Jesus to be a stumbling block.

[Isaiah 10:22](#) For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness. <sup>23</sup> For the Lord GOD of hosts Will make a determined end In the midst of all the land. [Isaiah 10:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:27](#) Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:  
 "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved.  
<sup>28</sup> For He will finish the work and cut [it] short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth." [Romans 9:27-28 NKJV](#)

It seems that Paul is calling the remnant of Israel, the Jews who would accept Christ and become Christians. Is it possible that this refers to the remnant of Judah who would return from Babylonian exile?

What do you believe?

- Is it possible to apply verse 4 (breaking the yoke), and 7 (increase of His government), to the conversion of the oppressor (Rome) to Christianity and the growth of the Christian church?
- How do you think Jesus' ministry would have been different if the Jews had accepted Him?
- Do you think Isaiah understood the prophecies he wrote about, or as Daniel did on occasion, did he just write down what he was shown without always understanding?

## Chapter 11-12

[Isaiah 11:1](#) There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,  
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> His delight [is] in the fear of the LORD,  
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,  
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,  
And faithfulness the belt of His waist. [Isaiah 11:1-5 NKJV](#)

Verses 1-the middle of 4 and 5 can be easily applied to Jesus, the Messiah at His first coming. What can we say about the second half of verse 4? Taken literally, it sounds a lot like something that would happen at the final judgment of earth when sin is finally destroyed. Paul quotes from verse 5 in his letter to the Ephesians encouraging them to think of using God as armor to protect them against the schemes of the devil.

[Isaiah 11:5](#) Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,  
And faithfulness the belt of His waist. [Isaiah 11:5 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 6:14](#) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [Ephesians 6:14 NKJV](#)

Continuing on:

[Isaiah 11:6](#) "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,  
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
And a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
Their young ones shall lie down together;  
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,  
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,  
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
As the waters cover the sea. [Isaiah 11:6-9 NKJV](#)

The verse about the wolf and the lamb, leopard and goat, and calf and lion hanging out together could only occur in the new earth if taken literally. But what about verse 8 which speaks of the nursing child playing by the cobra? I believe from statements made by Jesus, that there will be no more reproduction in heaven. If that is the case, how can you have a nursing child?

[Matthew 22:29](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup> "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. [Matthew 22:29-30 NKJV](#)

I'm choosing to take the first part of the chapter to be a prophecy of the Messiah. The part about striking the earth and slaying the wicked can be taken symbolically as Paul takes the next verse. In other words, winning the battle against sin through righteousness and faithfulness and the Word of God. But I believe it can also be taken literally if referring to the judgment that precedes the new earth which can easily be visualized in verses 6, 7. Following this line of interpretation, I would take verse 8 symbolically, as a way of stating the striking change in the nature of animals without the presence of sin.

In Romans Paul quotes from verse 10, implying that Jesus the root of Jesse, will rule over the Gentiles and not just the Jews.

[Isaiah 11:10](#) "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." [Isaiah 11:10 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:12](#) And again, Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope." [Romans 15:12 NKJV](#)

The second half of the chapter sounds like the reunification of Israel, but it begins by saying, "It shall come to pass in that day..." Following my chosen line of interpretation, the reunification described in the second half of the chapter, nicely describes the people who will be saved in the new earth. The only problem is, I'm not sure what to make of the plundering, subjugation and destruction mentioned in verses 14, 15 unless those countries are symbolic of sin which will be conquered and destroyed.

[Chapter 12](#) is a prayer of thanksgiving, which begins with "And in that day you will say." If we take 'that day,' to be the day we were speaking of in verses [11:10,11](#) of the previous chapter, it would be what the remnant will say when they have been restored as described in the previous chapter.

What do you believe?

- How would you explain the scene depicted of the nursing child playing by the cobra? Will there be cobras and vipers in heaven?
- Considering the use of a belt, is there a reason it is a symbol of righteousness?
- Do you think these chapters literally refer to a re-unification of Israel?

## [Chapter 13-14](#)

The first verse of chapter 13 clearly tells us this following text is about what Isaiah saw (presumably in vision) about Babylon. However, to me it is not at all obvious whether [verses 2-5](#) describe things that will happen to Babylon or whether they will perform them against the Jews. In [verses 6-16](#) the pronouns "they" and "their" are used which implies that the judgment and destruction predicted are against Babylon. However,

- [Verse 11](#) speaks of punishment for the world.
- [Verse 12](#) speaks of mortal man and mankind.
- [Verse 14](#) speaks of each returning to their own people and to their own land.

So, it seems that while these verses may apply to Babylon, I believe they have a larger application. In fact, the following verses were quoted in the New Testament to be signs preceding the second coming or the day of the Lord. Verse 10 was quoted by Jesus Himself.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 13:10</a> 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. <a href="#">Isaiah 13:10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Isaiah 24:29</a> "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. <a href="#">Matthew 24:29 NKJV</a></p>
<p><a href="#">Isaiah 13:13</a> 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. <a href="#">Isaiah 13:13 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Hebrews 12:26</a> whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." <a href="#">Hebrews 12:26 NKJV</a></p>

[Verses 17-19](#) mentions the Medes would be stirred up against Babylon. We know from history that Cyrus the Great, founder of the Medo-Persian empire, captured the capital city of Babylon.<sup>67</sup> Then [verses 20-22](#) say that the place of their great capital city would never again be inhabited by people, but desert creatures would live there.

The [next chapter](#) follows the previous chapter's prediction of the fall of Babylon with Israel's taunt against its king. The interesting thing about this taunt is that it also seems to be a reference 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](#)

<sup>67</sup> Abbott, Jacob. *Cyrus the Great*. New York and London, Harper Brothers Publishers, 1901, p 222.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=gOU9AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA187>

Was Isaiah referring to king Nebuchadnezzar here, who was brought to the point of insanity after his boasts of his own greatness [[Daniel 4:30](#)]. Or was he as many people seem to believe, speaking of the fall of Lucifer from heaven? The chapter continues with judgments that will fall on a couple other of Israel's nemesis nations, the Assyrians and the Philistines.

What do you believe?

- Do you think [13:6-16](#), could be referring to the Babylon spoken of in Revelation [[14:8](#), [16:19](#), [17:5](#), [18:2](#), [18:10](#), [18:21](#)] rather than the ancient Babylonian empire?
- Is the location of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon still occupied by desert animals?
- How do you think verses [14:12-15](#) can be applied to Babylon?

## [Chapter 15-21](#)

These chapters predict defeats or destruction for some of the nations surrounding Israel. [Chapters 15-16](#) are about judgment and devastation predicted for Moab within three years. The Israelites and the Moabites were relatives through the uncle/nephew relationship between Abraham and Lot [[Genesis 11:27](#); [Genesis 19:36-38](#)]. But the Moabites also oppressed the Israelites [[Judges 3:14](#); [2 Kings 13:20](#)].

[Chapter 17](#) predicts the fall of Damascus and the end mentions that those who plunder and pillage Judah will be terrorized. But the fall of Syria is not at the hands of Israel, and Judah will not benefit from it because it is predicted that their glory will also fade. In that time, there will be a remnant who will turn away from their idols and remember their maker, but it seems that it will be too little and too late.

[Chapter 18-20](#) contains messages to Cush (Ethiopia) and Egypt and then a prediction that they will be led away naked and barefoot as captives by Sargon king of Assyria.

In the prophecy about Egypt, something interesting caught my eye.

[Isaiah 19:18](#) In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction. <sup>19</sup> In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. <sup>20</sup> And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. <sup>21</sup> Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform [it]. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal [it]; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them. [Isaiah 19:18-22 NKJV](#)

In his commentary, Matthew Henry says there are two possible explanations. During the reign of Ptolemy Philometer, the Jewish High Priest had a son named Onias who was living in Alexandria at the time. He obtained permission from Ptolemy Philometer to build a Jewish temple in Bubastis, Egypt. You can read Josephus' account of this story in, "The



Empire of the Ptolemies,"<sup>68</sup> as well as from a translation of the "Antiquities of the Jews."<sup>69</sup> However, Henry, prefers the interpretation that in the spreading of the Gospel by the early Christian church, Mark was said to have gone to Egypt and planted many churches there.<sup>70</sup> Henry, who I feel steers many of the prophesies of Isaiah toward the Christian church, says that the Temple in Egypt was an affront to the pious Jews in Jerusalem, who of course thought theirs was the only one true temple and alter.<sup>71</sup> Then there are those who believe that this prophecy will only be fulfilled in the last days, because they take the mention of the Lord riding upon a cloud to be a reference to the second coming.<sup>72</sup> Civil war [[verse 2](#)], and being under the control of a cruel master [[verse 4](#)], could be said to have occurred many times throughout the history of Egypt. I'm not certain what I believe about this prophecy at this time.

[Chapter 21](#) mentions the fall of Babylon again. Edom will suffer through a period that will seem like never ending night. Arabia will flee in battle.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the misfortunes and fates of these surrounding nations was revealed to Isaiah?
- What do you think about the prophecy regarding Egypt in [chapter 19](#)?
- Were all of these nations oppressors of the Israelites?

## [Chapter 22](#)

In a way I believe this chapter to be a continuation of [15-21](#) because whereas those chapters were about surrounding nations, this one is about Judah. I believe the perpetrator of much of the doom and destruction against the surrounding nations was the Assyrians whom I think are predicted to threaten the Jews in this chapter. See comments on [chapters 36-37](#) for the actual events I believe are predicted. The interesting thing about this chapter is the condemnation of Shebna and the commendation of Eliakim. Shebna was the manager of the royal household. The person who held this position was highly trusted by the king because he had access to the king where he was most vulnerable. He also had a great deal of influence on who was granted access to the king. Apparently, he was not a good person from God's perspective, perhaps acting too much in his self-interest rather than in God's or the king's. He would apparently be succeeded by Eliakim who must have been a very good person, because the description of him seems to blend into a prophecy of Christ. Revelation 3:7 below may not necessarily be a quotation from Isaiah, but the similarity in language is undeniable. It appears that Isaiah was speaking about Eliakim who would become the manager of the royal household but perhaps it was a dual meaning prophecy. In Revelation John was clearly talking about Jesus.

[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 NKJVNASB](#)

[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](#)

<sup>68</sup> Mahaffy, John Pentland. *Empire of the Ptolemies*. London: Macmillan and Co. and New York, 1895, p354.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=3PhAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA354>

<sup>69</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews - Volume III*. London: New York, 1810, p79.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=6sovAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA79> <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link132HCH0003>

<sup>70</sup> Nathaniel Lardner. *Works of Nathaniel Lardner - Volume VI*. London, 1788, p 83.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=s0grAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA83>

<sup>71</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_019.cfm?a=698019#anchor\\_Isa19190](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_019.cfm?a=698019#anchor_Isa19190)

<sup>72</sup> <http://revivedbyhisword.org/en/bible/isa/19/>

Paul quoted from this chapter of Isaiah, in making a case for the resurrection. He said, if the dead are not raised, then we should just eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

[Isaiah 22:13](#) But instead, joy and gladness, Slaying oxen and killing sheep, Eating meat and drinking wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" [Isaiah 22:13 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 do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" [1 Corinthians 15:32 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- If you read chapters [36-37](#), do you get any sense of the back story of Shebna and Eliakim?
- Even though Jerusalem was not overthrown by the Assyrians, how were the Jews impacted?
- Do you have a sense of how far in the future these events are?

## [Chapter 23](#)

This chapter is clearly predicting the fall of Tyre, but the question is which one? There is also the mention of the 70 years, which coincidentally or not happens to sound very similar to the 70-year exile of Judah to Babylon. Ezekiel some years after Isaiah also predicted the fall of Tyre but named Nebuchadnezzar as the king responsible [[Ezekiel 26:7](#)]. Secular history of the fall of Tyre to Babylon is scarce, but drawn from admittedly religious sources, there seems to be some agreement that there was a very prolonged 13-year siege from 585-572 B.C. followed by the destruction of the city. In the end Nebuchadnezzar was highly disappointed in the plunder that was left for him, because apparently most of the wealth of the city had been secretly shipped to the Island, a half mile offshore, which would become the new city of Tyre.<sup>73 74</sup> The fall of Tyre ended about 30 years after the fall of Judah to the Babylonians.<sup>75</sup> It is possible that the 70 year period for Tyre which began a few years after Judah's, ended the same number of years after when they provided building material for the new Jewish temple.

What do you believe?

- In [verse 1](#), why is Tarshish mentioned and what is its relationship to Tyre? In [verse 10](#), is Tyre being referred to as the daughter of Tarshish?
- In [verse 3](#), why is Tyre called the market of nations?
- Should this 70-year prophecy be taken as literal years or prophetic years (see [Appendix B](#))?

## [Chapter 24-27](#)

These chapters seem to be about the final destruction of the world and a song to be sung by those who are saved and who benefit from God's judgment on the wicked. On a lesser scale, this judgment and the subsequent song can apply to other times in history when God's people have received a measure of salvation and relief from the oppression by the wicked.

<sup>73</sup> Bemment, R. B. *Tyre; the History of Phoenecia, Palestine and Syria, and the Final captivity of Israel and Judah, by the Assyrians*. Alton, Illinois, Park & Ennis, 1858, p 66. <http://books.google.com/books?id=j5FHAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA66>

<sup>74</sup> Flemming, Wallace Bruce. *The History of Tyre*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1915, p44. <http://books.google.com/books?id=c-xNAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA44>

<sup>75</sup> Bemment. p 74. <http://books.google.com/books?id=j5FHAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA74>

[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 24:3](#) The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered,  
For the LORD has spoken this word.  
<sup>4</sup> The earth mourns [and] fades away,  
The world languishes [and] fades away;  
The haughty people of the earth languish. [Isaiah 24:3-4 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 24:6](#) Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,  
And those who dwell in it are desolate.  
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned,  
And few men [are] left. [Isaiah 24:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 24:19](#) The earth is violently broken,  
The earth is split open,  
The earth is shaken exceedingly.  
<sup>20</sup> The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard,  
And shall totter like a hut;  
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it,  
And it will fall, and not rise again. [Isaiah 24:19-20 NKJV](#)

The next two chapters [25,26](#) is a song to be sung by those who are the recipients of God's favor and protection. [25:8](#) talks about death being swallowed up for all time. In fact, I presume that Paul is quoting from Isaiah when he says in his first letter to the Corinthians, "it is written. 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

[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](#)

[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." [1 Corinthians 15:54 NKJV](#)

Along with the previous quotations, the next one seems an appropriate exclamation for people who are alive at the time of the second coming of Christ.

[Isaiah 25:9](#) And it will be said in that day:

"Behold, this [is] our God;  
We have waited for Him, and He will save us.  
This [is] the LORD; We have waited for Him;  
We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." [Isaiah 25:9 NKJV](#)

[Chapter 26](#) begins with the statement, "In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah." Since it immediately follows [chapter 25](#), then we could presume that it is a song that God's people can sing at the time of the second coming

mentioned in chapter 25. In fact, verses 19 and 21 seem to confirm this as they appear to be speaking of a resurrection and in 19, the rejoicing for those who are raised.

[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. [Isaiah 26:19 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 26:21](#) For behold, the LORD comes out of His place  
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
The earth will also disclose her blood,  
And will no more cover her slain. [Isaiah 26:21 NKJV](#)

Continuing the theme that I have established for the preceding four chapters, [chapter 27](#) begins by immediately speaking of the punishment of the serpent which sounds like a symbolic reference to Satan?

[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](#)

The chapter closes as it began with a promise of what God will do "In that day."

[Isaiah 27:12](#) And it shall come to pass in that day  
[That] the LORD will thresh,  
From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt;  
And you will be gathered one by one,  
O you children of Israel.  
<sup>13</sup> So it shall be in that day:  
  
The great trumpet will be blown;  
They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria,  
And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt,  
And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem. [Isaiah 27:12-13 NKJV](#)

I have taken the primary intent of these four chapters to be about the end of sin, the salvation of God's people, and the world made new. However, I believe there have been times when portions have been applicable to experiences by God's people throughout history.

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What do you believe?

- If chapter 24 is talking about the destruction of the world when sin will be brought to an end, then what is meant by the few men left mentioned in [24:6](#)?
- In [chapter 26](#) are you as willing as I am to gloss over the fact that it says the song will be sung in the land of Judah, and assume that it applies to the whole world?

- Recalling that the northern tribes of Israel would be conquered and dispersed by Assyria, can [27:12,13](#) be used as a prophecy of re-unification of the tribes?

## [Chapter 28-29](#)

The fall of the northern kingdom of Israel is predicted which did indeed happen at the hands of the Assyrians [[2 Kings 17](#)], with the second half of the chapter containing a warning to the southern kingdom of Judah.

The first chapter addresses Ephraim which was one of the most prominent tribes of the Northern kingdom. In prophecy, the north was often referred to simply as Ephraim. The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim was probably a reference to the capital city, Samaria. Drunkenness was repeatedly mentioned in the first eight verses, even priests, prophets and those rendering judgments [[verse 7](#)].

Paul loosely quotes from verse 11 to make a point about speaking in tongues. In the context of this chapter about foreign oppressors, Matthew Henry, in his commentary says that Isaiah was probably speaking of being under a foreign power. In other words, if you are being taught in a foreign tongue, it may be because you are under a foreign government. This being a negative thing, was compared by Paul to speaking in tongues, which apparently was happening too much in the Corinthian church. How would the church members benefit if the teaching and preaching was always in an unintelligible tongue? Additionally, if being instructed in a foreign tongue was associated with something bad, why would you want such a thing?<sup>76</sup>

[Isaiah 28:11](#) For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, [Isaiah 28:11 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 14:21](#) In the law it is written: "With [men of] other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. [1 Corinthians 14:21 NKJV](#)

Verse 16 in the same chapter, is pretty clearly a reference to the Jesus, the Messiah.

[Isaiah 28:16](#) Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. [Isaiah 28:16 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 2:6](#) Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." [1 Peter 2:6 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:33](#) As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." [Romans 9:33 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:11](#) For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." [Romans 10:11 NKJV](#)

[Chapter 29](#) continues from the previous chapter with warnings to Jerusalem. In Romans, Paul quoted from chapter 29 of Isaiah when he was writing about the Jews who rejected Jesus.

[Isaiah 29:10](#) For the LORD has poured out on you The spirit of deep sleep, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, [namely], the seers. [Isaiah 29:10 NKJV](#)

[Romans 11:8](#) Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day." [Romans 11:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>76</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Cr/1Cr\\_014.cfm?a=1076021](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Cr/1Cr_014.cfm?a=1076021)

Jesus quoted verse 13 to describe the Jews' relationship with God.

[Isaiah 29:13](#) Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, [Isaiah 29:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:7](#) "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 15:7-9 NKJV](#)

Paul quoted from verse 14 to make a point about how salvation through the death of Christ on the cross seems like foolishness to those who do not accepted it. It doesn't make sense to them, yet it is the power of salvation to those who do accept it.

[Isaiah 29:14](#) Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise [men] shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent [men] shall be hidden." [Isaiah 29:14 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:19](#) For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." [1 Corinthians 1:19 NKJV](#)

Paul in Romans 9 has a little discussion on the sovereignty of God and His desire to choose the gentiles. Essentially, he is saying: who are we to question God's will? That would be like a lump of clay questioning the potter about why it was made into what it is.

[Isaiah 29:16](#) Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? [Isaiah 29:16 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:19](#) You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" <sup>20</sup> But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed [it], "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? [Romans 9:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Verses 17-24 of chapter 29](#) seem to be in reference to the time when Jesus would be on earth. [Verse 19](#) says the afflicted will be glad and the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the drunkenness mentioned in the first 8 verses of [chapter 28](#) was literal or symbolic?
- It seems that Ariel is used three times by Isaiah as another name for Jerusalem in [chapter 29](#). What is the significance or reason for this?
- If you believe we all have free will, how do you explain [Isaiah 29:10](#) and [Romans 11:8](#)?

## [Chapter 30-31](#)

Chapter 30 begins with woes pronounced on those from Judah who would make an alliance with Egypt. Ironically, even the Assyrian invaders warned Judah not to rely on the Egyptians for salvation [[36:5-6](#)]. The second half of the chapter is a reminder that God wants to be gracious to them if they will only turn to Him and call on His name. The following verse

about the light could possibly have a couple applications. We are told in the new earth that there will be no night, and that the glory of God will be the source of light.

[Isaiah 30:26](#) Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound. [Isaiah 30:26 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](#)

If the verses refer to the same occasion, they may seem contradictory because one refers to a sun seven times brighter and the other to no need of the sun, but Isaiah could just be speaking symbolically. Most likely however, the light is symbolic of the understanding of prophecies. That as well could have two possible applications. The first would of course be when Jesus came, the prophecies of Him which were numerous, were brought to light and understood. The second would be the increase of knowledge at the end of time spoken of by Daniel.

[Luke 22:32](#) And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" [Luke 24:32 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](#)

This verse in Daniel itself could have multiple applications, as clearly knowledge and technology have increased, but it is generally understood to refer to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation coming to light and being understood better.

The last part of the chapter is a prophecy of what God will do to the Assyrians on behalf of His people when they call on Him for help. In the context of when this was most likely written, the Assyrians were the dominant world power and were threatening to most surrounding nations, even those who were supposedly paying for their protection. During the reign of good king Hezekiah, he would lead the people away from the idol worship introduced by his father Ahaz, and back to a worship of God. At this future time, the Assyrians would be dealt a severe blow by the protecting hand of God [see [chapters 36-37](#)].

[Chapter 31](#) somewhat repeats [chapter 30](#) in that it begins with a warning not to put trust in Egypt for help and it ends with a prediction of the fall of Assyria.

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What do you believe?

- What is the significance or meaning of the beasts of the Negev, including a flying serpent in [30:6](#)?
- What do you think the light in [30:26](#) refers to?
- In [31:6-9](#), where it says they will forsake their idols and the Assyrians will fall, is that a prediction or a promise?

## [Chapter 32-33](#)

Remembering the time frame of the ministry of Isaiah, the kingdom at this time was probably under the reign of the wicked king Ahaz. This chapter begins with a prophecy of a king who will rule righteously. This prophecy probably referred to king Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz.

[2 Kings 18:1](#) Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, [that] Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. <sup>2</sup> He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Abi the daughter of Zechariah. <sup>3</sup> And he did [what was] right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. <sup>4</sup> He removed the high places and broke the [sacred] pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. <sup>5</sup> He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. <sup>6</sup> For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. [2 Kings 18:1-6 NKJV](#)

But as is the case with many of these type of prophecies, they could also have application to the Messiah, of whom these characters were considered types. The second part of [chapter 32](#) mentions a near time frame for some bad times to come which likely has to do with the coming invasion by the Assyrians.

[Chapter 33](#) then goes into what appears to be a rebuke against the king of Assyria and a prediction that he will be dealt with treacherously even as he has done so to others. In fact, after the angel killed his army of 185,000 and he went home, he was betrayed and killed by his own sons [[37:36-38](#)].

In the middle there is a beautiful promise.

[Isaiah 33:15](#) He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,  
 He who despises the gain of oppressions,  
 Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes,  
 Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,  
 And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:  
<sup>16</sup> He will dwell on high;  
 His place of defense [will be] the fortress of rocks;  
 Bread will be given him,  
 His water [will be] sure. [Isaiah 33:15-16 NKJV](#)

The second half of [33](#) then reverts to the Messianic prophecy again. [Verse 19](#) which speaks of a fierce people with unintelligible speech could very well be a reference to the Romans, who were the occupiers at the time of the Messiah. See also [Daniel 8:23 KJV](#) which mentions a king with a fierce countenance understanding dark sentences. I believe unintelligible speech or dark sentences is a reference to Latin, the language of the Romans, which was very different from Hebrew and Arabic, spoken by the Jews. Perhaps, the question is whether this was one of the many prophecies that was conditional on the Jews' acceptance of the Messiah, or whether it refers to the second coming?



What do you believe?

- We know that Ahaz worshipped idols, but if the prophecy in [chapter 32](#) refers to Hezekiah, does that imply that Ahaz also ruled unjustly?
- [33:15](#) speaks of stopping your ears from hearing about bloodshed. Do you think this includes hearing about it on the news?
- Can you think of an alternative interpretation for the second half of [chapter 33](#) instead of the conditional prophecy based on the acceptance of the Messiah?

## [Chapter 34-35](#)

This chapter speaks of a time that ends with the death of all people, with only animals surviving. This definitely sounds like it could be referring to the end of the world. There is an interesting parallel between verse 4 and the sixth of seven seals spoken of in Revelation.

[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](#)

[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](#)

Then there is a very interesting parallel between this chapter and the beginning of [chapter 63](#).

[Isaiah 34:6](#) The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, It is made overflowing with fatness, With the blood of lambs and goats, With the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. [Isaiah 34:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 34:8](#) For [it is] the day of the LORD's vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion. [Isaiah 34:8 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 63:1](#) Who [is] this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This [One who is] glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?--"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." <sup>2</sup> Why [is] Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? [Isaiah 63:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 64:4](#) For the day of vengeance [is] in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. [Isaiah 63:4 NKJV](#)

Based on these parallels, it would seem that these two chapters are in reference to the same event. In [Genesis 36:33](#) and [1 Chronicles 1:44](#), we read that Jobab, the second king of Edom came from Bozrah. This confirms for us that Bozrah was a city in the kingdom of Edom. But why would Bozrah in Edom be specifically called out if this were indeed world ending destruction? In David Guzik's commentary, he says: "The Edomites rejoiced whenever the people of Judah or Israel were afflicted, so Isaiah focuses on the judgment that will come against Edom, using them as a single example of the large judgment that will come upon all the *nations*."<sup>77</sup>

But if this is the end of the world, why are there animals left alive?

[Isaiah 34:13](#) And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide\\_Isa/Isa\\_34.cfm?a=713006](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Isa/Isa_34.cfm?a=713006)

It shall be a habitation of **jackals**,  
A courtyard for **ostriches**.

<sup>14</sup> The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the **jackals**,  
And the **wild goat** shall bleat to its companion;  
Also the **night creature** shall rest there,  
And find for herself a place of rest. [Isaiah 34:13-14 NKJV](#)

Perhaps animals are mentioned symbolically? The word **Jackal** in [verse 13](#), is translated from [תַּנִּינִי, tannîn<sup>78</sup>](#), whose first interpretation is dragon. [Verse 14](#) mentions a **wild goat** which is translated from, [שַׁעִיר, šā'îr<sup>79</sup>](#), which can also mean demon possessed goat. Later in the same verse, **night creature** is translated from [לִילִית, lîlîṯ<sup>80</sup>](#), whose primary definition is "Lilith", name of a female goddess known as the night demon.

The following verses in the next chapter sound like healings that took place during the time Jesus was on earth.

[Isaiah 35:5](#) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.  
<sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
And the tongue of the dumb sing.  
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,  
And streams in the desert. [Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV](#)

In fact, it appears that these verses were quoted by Jesus Himself when He described His mission to John's disciples?

[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 are raised, [the] poor have the gospel preached to them. [Luke 7:22 NKJV](#)

But if we choose to place these events in conjunction with the end of the world and the second coming of Christ, these healings could clearly take place at that time as well.

[Isaiah 35:4](#) Say to those [who are] fearful-hearted,  
"Be strong, do not fear!  
Behold, your God will come [with] vengeance,  
[With] the recompense of God;  
He will come and save you." [Isaiah 35:4 NKJV](#)

The first coming of Jesus was not accompanied with any vengeance, so this must point toward the second coming. In [verses 9-10](#), Isaiah mentions that there will be no vicious beasts, and the redeemed will walk there. There will be everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Even though I believe there to be a period of 1000 years [[Revelation 19-21](#)] between the destruction of the world at the second coming of Christ and the re-creation of it as the new heaven and earth [[Isaiah 65:17](#), [2 Peter 3:13](#), [Revelation 21:1](#)], I believe these two chapters span both events.

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<sup>78</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8577/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8163/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3917/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

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What do you believe?

- What do you think is meant by the day of vengeance and year of recompense or redemption? Do you think the day and year time periods are literal, prophetic, or symbolic?
- Why do you think animals are mentioned as being left after what seems to be the desolation of all nations of the world?
- Would you have a problem applying the healings in [35:5-6](#) to both the first and second coming of Christ?

## [Chapter 36-37](#)

These chapters are a historical account of the invasion of the land of Judah by Assyria in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign followed by the siege of Jerusalem. The event was also recorded historically in [2 Kings 18:13-19:37](#). The interesting thing about these two historical accounts is their nearly word for word similarity except for one difference. [2 Kings 18:14-16](#) mentions something Isaiah leaves out, that being the response to Sennacherib's initial invasion of the land of Judah and the taking of some fortified cities. I speculate that perhaps Shebna's lack of faith was instrumental in taking the silver and gold from the royal palace and the temple to pay off Sennacherib (see comments on [chapter 22](#)).

In chapter 36 is the message that was delivered from Sennacherib to Hezekiah and the Jews.

[Isaiah 36:4](#) 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>5</sup> "I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but [they are] mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? <sup>6</sup> "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>7</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?'" <sup>8</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>9</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>10</sup> "Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'" [Isaiah 36:4-10 NKJV](#)

I found it interesting that Sennacherib had done some homework on Hezekiah and realized that he had been destroying high places and altars. But he didn't do enough research to understand the difference between those gods and the real God of Israel, whose worship Hezekiah was promoting. Then in chapter 37, God gave a message of encouragement to Hezekiah which was spoken as if addressed to Sennacherib.

[Isaiah 37:21](#) 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, <sup>22</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>23</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>24</sup> By your servants 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 its farthest height,  
To its fruitful forest.

<sup>25</sup> I have dug and drunk water,  
And with the soles of my feet I have dried up  
All the brooks of defense.'

<sup>26</sup> "Did you not hear long ago  
[How] I made it,  
From ancient times that I formed it?  
Now I have brought it to pass,  
That you should be  
For crushing fortified cities [into] heaps of ruins.

<sup>27</sup> Therefore their inhabitants [had] little power;  
They were dismayed and confounded;  
They were [as] the grass of the field  
And the green herb,  
[As] the grass on the housetops  
And [grain] blighted before it is grown.

<sup>28</sup> "But I know your dwelling place,  
Your going out and your coming in,  
And your rage against Me.

<sup>29</sup> Because your rage against Me and your tumult  
Have come up to My ears,  
Therefore I will put My hook in your nose  
And My bridle in your lips,  
And I will turn you back  
By the way which you came." ' [Isaiah 37:21-29 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- In [36:10](#), Rabshakeh said that God told them gave them approval to invade the land of Judah. Is that true? If so can you find it in the Bible?
- Why do you think Rabshakeh knew how to speak Hebrew?
- Do you think God's message addressing Sennacherib ever reached him?

## [Chapter 38-39](#)

These chapters are the story of king Hezekiah's terminal illness and miraculous healing. We are not told the exact nature of Hezekiah's illness except that there was a boil involved, and that it was terminal. He wept and prayed to God asking for healing, reminding God of his faithfulness to Him. God informed Hezekiah that he was going to be healed, and even gave him a sign to confirm the healing both of which could have been used to glorify God but unfortunately were not.

[Isaiah 38:7](#) "And this [is] the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken:

<sup>8</sup> "Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down. [Isaiah 38:7-8 NKJV](#)

The KJV uses the words sun dial and degrees but both words are translated from the same word, [מַעְלָה, ma'alah](#)<sup>81</sup>, which in this context is principally defined as step or stair. In my opinion, it is highly likely that these were literal steps, but set up to be used as a sun dial, by Ahaz. If they were generic steps in the palace, they need not have been referred to as the stairway of Ahaz. This is generally accepted to be the first recorded use of a sun dial type device by the Jews.<sup>82</sup> The sun dial is speculated to have been copied along with the altar and idols that Ahaz saw in Damascus.<sup>83</sup> I believe one of the reasons that God chose this as a sign was to show that He is in control of the sun, which Ahaz had probably thought was under the control of the god of Damascus that he worshipped.

[2 Kings 16:10](#) Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that [was] at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. <sup>11</sup> Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made [it] before King Ahaz came back from Damascus. [2 Kings 16:10-11 NKJV](#)

I don't see any way from what has been written in the Bible to determine the amount of time inferred from the ten steps. If they were literal steps as I speculated, they would almost definitely not be equated with ten degrees in a 360-degree circle. There has also been a lot of speculation about the manner in which this miraculous event was accomplished. Some have said that it could not have been accomplished by turning the world backward in its rotation, as this would have caused severe earthquakes and probably the end of life on the planet. In my opinion, this thinking is very short-sighted because if God had the power to accomplish this, he could have prevented those negative side effects if He wished. Some of those people have claimed that this miracle was accomplished by moving the sun relative to the earth, which I also believe God had the power to accomplish if He wished. Having said all of this, I am not offering an explanation of how God accomplished this miracle, but I do believe it was a global event that was seen in other countries. I say this because after his recovery, the Babylonians, who were known to observe astronomical phenomena, sent a delegation to Hezekiah. Unfortunately, he did not take this opportunity to tell them about God, but instead showed them his wealth.

[2 Chronicles 32:25](#) But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor [shown] him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. [2 Chronicles 32:25 NKJV](#)

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/isa/38/8/p0/t\\_conc\\_717008](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/isa/38/8/p0/t_conc_717008)

<sup>82</sup> Barnes, Albert. *Notes, Critical, Explanatory, and Practical, on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*. New York, Leavitt & Allen, 1853, p 35. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Odk7AAAAcAAJ&pg=PA35>

<sup>83</sup> Henry, Matthew. *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*. London, Religious Tract Society, 1799, p 320. <http://books.google.com/books?id=YXJAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA871>

It is generally thought that one of the reasons Hezekiah was so upset about dying was that he did not have a son to perpetuate his dynasty. It was not stated in the three recorded instances of this story in [Kings](#), [Chronicles](#), and [Isaiah](#), but fifteen years later, his son Manasseh began to reign at the age of 12 [[2 Kings 21:1](#)].

What do you believe?

- Do you think Hezekiah had a right to be upset about his terminal illness?
- Do you have any ideas about how God accomplished the sign for Hezekiah?
- Do you think God would actually have allowed Hezekiah to die without an heir after promising David that there would always be a descendant of his sitting on the throne?

## [Chapter 40-41](#)

Chapter 40 is unquestionably about the Messiah and the greatness of God and begins with a mention of the one who will herald His coming.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 40:3</a> The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; <a href="#">Isaiah 40:3-4 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 3:3</a> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' " <a href="#">Matthew 3:3 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 1:2</a> As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." <sup>3</sup> "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' " <a href="#">Mark 1:2-3 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 3:4</a> as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. <a href="#">Luke 3:4 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 1:23</a> He said: "I [am] 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," ' as the prophet Isaiah said." <a href="#">John 1:23 NKJV</a></p>
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Verse 8 is quoted by Peter.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 40:8</a> The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." <a href="#">Isaiah 40:8 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">1 Peter 1:25</a> But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. <a href="#">1 Peter 1:25 NKJV</a></p>
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The following is an excerpt from the middle of the chapter about the greatness and power of God, which interestingly has the style and sound of [Job 38](#).

[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?  
<sup>13</sup> Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,  
 Or [as] His counselor has taught Him?  
<sup>14</sup> With whom did He take counsel, and [who] instructed Him,

And taught Him in the path of justice?

Who taught Him knowledge,

And showed Him the way of understanding?

<sup>15</sup> Behold, the nations [are] as a drop in a bucket,

And are counted as the small dust on the scales;

Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.

<sup>16</sup> And Lebanon [is] not sufficient to burn,

Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> All nations before Him [are] as nothing,

And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless. [Isaiah 40:12-17 NKJV](#)

Verse 13 that we just read was quoted by Paul in Romans where he was discussing the riches, wisdom, knowledge, and greatness of God.

[Romans 11:34](#) "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" [Romans 11:34 NKJV](#)

The chapter 40 ends with the oft quoted and beautiful promise:

[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](#)

[Chapter 41](#) continues the theme of the greatness of God, written in a way to encourage Israel. It begins with an interesting description of a conqueror of kings but on the other hand a deliverer of nations. Recall from [chapter 23](#) that Tyre was also to be released from captivity around the same time as the Jews. This chapter is thought to be a prophecy of Cyrus the Great, the conqueror who would release the Jews from their Babylonian captivity. The next section encourages and reminds the Jews that they are chosen by God, and that a time will come when their oppressors will not be found. [Verse 21](#) presents a picture like a courtroom where God is calling the side who believes in other gods to present their arguments, to compare with what He can do. Which of them can predict the future, which of them could have foretold of the deliverance from their captivity? In the last part of the chapter, He returns to the prophecy of Cyrus again this time saying that he comes from the north and the east. Matthew Henry says that Cyrus' father was a Mede and his mother was a Persian. The Medes were to the north and the Persians were to the east. Cyrus would proclaim God's name when he released the captive Jews and commissioned them to build the temple.<sup>84</sup>

[Ezra 1:2](#) Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which [is] in Judah. [Ezra 1:2 NKJV](#)

I think it is worth pointing out again that there were multiple prophecies of Cyrus that could also be applied to the Messiah, or vice-versa.

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<sup>84</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_041.cfm?a=720001](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_041.cfm?a=720001)

What do you believe?

- Why do you think such a big deal is made about the one who would prepare the way for the Messiah?
- What does it mean to you to wait for the LORD?
- Do you think the Jews read any of Isaiah's writings at the time and wondered why they would need release from captivity?

## Chapter 42-43

The first half of chapter 42 is pretty clearly a prophecy of the Messiah. Verses 1-4 are simply stated by Matthew to be fulfilled by Jesus.

[Isaiah 42:1](#) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,  
My Elect One in whom My soul delights!  
I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.  
<sup>2</sup> He will not cry out, nor raise His voice,  
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.  
<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench;  
He will bring forth justice for truth.  
<sup>4</sup> He will not fail nor be discouraged,  
Till He has established justice in the earth;  
And the coastlands shall wait for His law." [Isaiah 42:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:17](#) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:  
<sup>18</sup> "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,  
My Beloved in whom  
My soul is well pleased!  
I will put My Spirit upon Him,  
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.  
<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel nor cry out,  
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.  
<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench,  
Till He sends forth justice to victory; [Matthew 12:17-20 NKJV](#)

Then verse 6 was one of several places possibly quoted by Simeon in his thanksgiving prayer to God for allowing him to see the Messiah. Interestingly, while many of the Gospel writers quoted Isaiah as being fulfilled by Jesus after the fact, this occurred when Jesus was just a baby.

[Isaiah 42:6](#) "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,  
And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, [Isaiah 42:6 NKJV](#)

[Luke 2:32](#) A light to [bring] revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." [Luke 2:32 NKJV](#)

I believe the second half of the chapter beginning with [verse 13](#) could be referring to the great growth of the new Christian church, with the enemies being Satan and his followers who would oppose it. The blind who were led in [verse 16](#) were the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity. And the blind servant in [verse 19](#) must be referring to Israel.<sup>85</sup>

[Chapter 43](#) reassures Israel of God's love and favor for them in spite of their sins and rebelliousness. But I feel the first part of this chapter is not just a reassurance to Israel, but also a promise to all people who will accept God and call on His name. As in the previous chapter, I choose to interpret the following verses to refer to converts to Christianity.

[Isaiah 43:5](#) Fear not, for I [am] with you;  
I will bring your descendants from the east,  
And gather you from the west;

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_042.cfm?a=721013](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_042.cfm?a=721013)



<sup>6</sup> I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'  
 And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!'  
 Bring My sons from afar,  
 And My daughters from the ends of the earth--  
<sup>7</sup> Everyone who is called by My name,  
 Whom I have created for My glory;  
 I have formed him, yes, I have made him."  
<sup>8</sup> Bring out the blind people who have eyes,  
 And the deaf who have ears.  
<sup>9</sup> Let all the nations be gathered together,  
 And let the people be assembled.  
 Who among them can declare this,  
 And show us former things?  
 Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified;  
 Or let them hear and say, "[It is] truth."  
<sup>10</sup> "You [are] My witnesses," says the LORD,  
 "And My servant whom I have chosen,  
 That you may know and believe Me,  
 And understand that I [am] He.  
 Before Me there was no God formed,  
 Nor shall there be after Me. [Isaiah 43:5-10 NKJV](#)

In my opinion, this points forward to the time when Gentiles, from the east and the west will join the Christian church. Then He reminds Israel, and likewise His future followers, that they are His witnesses to the world that He is God.

The second half of the chapter contains a promise of the destruction of Babylon which at the time might not have meant much to them. But in the future when they were in exile in Babylon, this would be a comforting promise to the Jews. The last section of the chapter has the sound of a lover trying to reconcile with a partner who has been unfaithful.

What do you believe?

- Clearly [42:13](#) doesn't describe the first coming of Christ. Do you like the Christian church growth interpretation, or do you prefer something else like the second coming?
- Does your interpretation of [42:13](#) affect how you understand [42:14-20](#)?
- Do you agree with the Christian interpretation of [43:5-10](#) or do you think it refers to reunification for Israel only?

## [Chapter 44-48](#)

These chapters begin with a reminder of God's greatness and power and the blessings that He has poured out on the Israelites. It then goes into a little monologue about the folly of idolatry.

[Isaiah 44:12](#) The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals,  
 Fashions it with hammers,  
 And works it with the strength of his arms.  
 Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails;  
 He drinks no water and is faint.

<sup>13</sup> The craftsman stretches out [his] rule,  
He marks one out with chalk;  
He fashions it with a plane,  
He marks it out with the compass,  
And makes it like the figure of a man,  
According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.

<sup>14</sup> He cuts down cedars for himself,  
And takes the cypress and the oak;  
He secures [it] for himself among the trees of the forest.  
He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes [it].

<sup>15</sup> Then it shall be for a man to burn,  
For he will take some of it and warm himself;  
Yes, he kindles [it] and bakes bread;  
Indeed he makes a god and worships [it];  
He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.

<sup>16</sup> He burns half of it in the fire;  
With this half he eats meat;  
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.  
He even warms [himself] and says,  
"Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire."

<sup>17</sup> And the rest of it he makes into a god,  
His carved image.  
He falls down before it and worships [it],  
Prays to it and says,  
"Deliver me, for you [are] my god!" [Isaiah 44:12-17 NKJV](#)

This logic reinforces the reason why the second commandment even applies to Christian images like images of Jesus, the virgin Mary or the cross. The end of chapter 44 and the first part of 45 go into quite a bit of detail about Cyrus, whom God calls his shepherd, who will release the captive Jews and order them to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

[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](#)

[Isaiah 45:1](#) "Thus says the LORD to His anointed,  
To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held--  
To subdue nations before him  
And loose the armor of kings,  
To open before him the double doors,  
So that the gates will not be shut:  
<sup>2</sup> I will go before you  
And make the crooked places straight;  
I will break in pieces the gates of bronze

And cut the bars of iron.

<sup>3</sup> I will give you the treasures of darkness

And hidden riches of secret places,

That you may know that I, the LORD,

Who call [you] by your name,

[Am] the God of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> For Jacob My servant's sake,

And Israel My elect,

I have even called you by your name;

I have named you, though you have not known Me.

<sup>5</sup> I [am] the LORD, and [there is] no other;

[There is] no God besides Me.

I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

<sup>6</sup> That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting

That [there is] none besides Me.

I [am] the LORD, and [there is] no other;

<sup>7</sup> I form the light and create darkness,

I make peace and create calamity;

I, the LORD, do all these [things]. [Isaiah 45:1-7 NKJV](#)

The cool thing about Cyrus is that he was called out by name in prophecy even before he existed. Alexander the Great, the other world nation changer was called out individually in prophecy but was not named [[Daniel's dreams of world kingdoms](#)]. The remainder of the chapter returns to the monologue of the greatness of God. He reminds the reader that He is the only God and is the creator of man as well as the heavens and the earth, but not only did He make, He is the savior of not just the Jews but the whole world.

[Isaiah 45:18](#) For thus says the LORD,

Who created the heavens,

Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it,

Who has established it,

Who did not create it in vain,

Who formed it to be inhabited:

"I [am] the LORD, and [there is] no other.

<sup>19</sup> I have not spoken in secret,

In a dark place of the earth;

I did not say to the seed of Jacob,

'Seek Me in vain'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness,

I declare things that are right.

<sup>20</sup> "Assemble yourselves and come;

Draw near together,

You [who have] escaped from the nations.

They have no knowledge,

Who carry the wood of their carved image,

And pray to a god [that] cannot save.

<sup>21</sup> Tell and bring forth [your case];

Yes, let them take counsel together.  
 Who has declared this from ancient time?  
 [Who] has told it from that time?  
 [Have] not I, the LORD?  
 And [there is] no other God besides Me,  
 A just God and a Savior;  
 [There is] none besides Me.  
<sup>22</sup> "Look to Me, and be saved,  
 All you ends of the earth!  
 For I [am] God, and [there is] no other. [Isaiah 45:18-22 NKJV](#)

The very next verse was quoted by Paul in his letter to the Romans where he is telling fellow believers not to expect everyone to have the same convictions as they do. And furthermore, not to judge each other for we will all be judged by God in the end.

[Isaiah 45:23](#) I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth [in] righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. [Isaiah 45:23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 14:11](#) For it is written: "[As] I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." [Romans 14:11 NKJV](#)

Continuing on the theme of deliverance from Babylon, [chapter 46](#) talks about the futility of Babylon's god, Bel. The remainder of the chapter is a reminder there is none like God, and that He knows everything that will happen from the beginning to the end. Then [chapter 47](#) is all about the fall of Babylon. [Chapter 48](#) reminds Israel of their obstinacy, but finishes with God's promise to deliver them from Babylon.

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What do you believe?

- When does something in a church cross the line and become an image rather than a Christian symbol?
- Many times it seems God speaks almost fondly of Cyrus as a father might speak of an obedient son, or a master of a faithful servant. Do you think Cyrus will be taken to heaven?
- How do you think the Jews took all this talk from Isaiah about deliverance from Babylon?

## [Chapter 49](#)

The first four verses of chapter 49 appear to be spoken by Israel, with He referring to God. But if [verse 6](#) was what was quoted by Simeon over the baby Jesus, then in [verses 5-8](#) the speaker must be the Messiah. So, is there a change of speaker from [verse 4 to 5](#)? If not, then verses 1-4 must be also spoken by the Messiah. [Verse 1](#) says He was called and named from the womb, which was true of the Messiah. [Verse 2](#) says his mouth was like a sword. Paul says:

[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. [Hebrew 4:12 NKJV](#)

Hiding in the quiver in [verse 2](#) could be a reference to the anonymous years in Nazareth.<sup>86</sup> Finally, labored in vain in [verse 4](#) could be a reference to His rejection by the Jews.

"A light to the Gentiles," in verse 6 is one of the possible locations Simeon quoted from in his prayer of dedication for Jesus [see also [chapter 42](#)]. This verse or possibly [42:6](#) was also quoted by Paul after a big argument with the Jews, after which he declared that the Gospel would now be given to the Gentiles.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 49:6</a> Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' " <a href="#">Isaiah 49:6 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 2:32</a> A light to [bring] revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." <a href="#">Luke 2:32 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Acts 13:47</a> "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' " <a href="#">Acts 13:47 NKJV</a></p>
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I think it is noteworthy that the word [גוֹי, Gôy](#)<sup>87</sup>, which is translated as Gentiles in the KJV and NKJV is translated to nations in the NASB. In fact, the word occurs 588 times in the Old Testament and in the KJV is translated 374 times as nations and 30 times as Gentile. Admittedly, the normal use applied to non-Hebrews, but it could also apply to those of the nation of Israel. My point is that if one refused to believe that favor could be shown to the Gentiles, this verse probably did not convince them.

A second quotation from this chapter was made by Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians where he is encouraging them to accept the Gospel now.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 49:8</a> Thus says the LORD: "In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages; <a href="#">Isaiah 49:8 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">2 Corinthians 6:2</a> For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation. <a href="#">2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV</a></p>
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If the first part of this chapter was about the Messiah, then the next section could logically be about the evangelizing and growth of the Christian church.

[Isaiah 49:9](#) That You may say to the prisoners,  
'Go forth,'  
To those who [are] in darkness,  
'Show yourselves.'  
"They shall feed along the roads,  
And their pastures [shall be] on all desolate heights. [Isaiah 49:9 NKJV](#)

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide\\_Isa/Isa\\_49.cfm?a=728002](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Isa/Isa_49.cfm?a=728002)

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1471/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

[Isaiah 49:12](#) Surely these shall come from afar;  
 Look! Those from the north and the west,  
 And these from the land of Sinim." [Isaiah 49:12 NKJV](#)

The second half of the chapter, beginning with [verse 14](#), is God's promise to not forget His people. Even though it begins by addressing Zion, I think it applies to the Christian church and more specifically to God's people. Do you think it's possible that the following verse was fulfilled by such shameful times as when kings groveled at the feet of Pope's?

[Isaiah 49:23](#) Kings shall be your foster fathers,  
 And their queens your nursing mothers;  
 They shall bow down to you with [their] faces to the earth,  
 And lick up the dust of your feet.  
 Then you will know that I [am] the LORD,  
 For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me." [Isaiah 49:23 NKJV](#)

See (option #3 in [The Little Horn](#)).

What do you believe?

- How is God's word like a sword?
- Do you think the latter half of this chapter applies to the Christian church?
- How would you interpret [verse 23](#)?

## **[Chapter 50](#)**

The first part of this chapter is a reminder that when in the future they find themselves in captivity, that it is because of their sins. In verse 1, Zion is represented as the mother and the Jews as the children who find themselves fatherless and sold into slavery. I believe God is saying, if you think I divorced you and sold you into slavery, where is the certificate of divorce, and where is the money. He says, it is your own sins which have landed you in this sorry state.

The rest of the chapter in contrast though mentions that true servants of God may find themselves persecuted and afflicted, but ultimately they will be vindicated when God rescues them.

In verse 6 Isaiah may be describing his own experience, but without doubt this could be said to be a prediction of what happened to Jesus.

<a href="#">Isaiah 50:6</a> I gave My back to those who struck [Me], And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. <a href="#">Isaiah 50:6 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Matthew 27:26</a> Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered [Him] to be crucified. <a href="#">Matthew 27:26 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Mark 15:15</a> So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged [Him], to be crucified.	<a href="#">Luke 18:32</a> "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. <a href="#">Luke 18:32 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">John 19:1</a> So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged [Him]. <a href="#">John 19:1 NKJV</a>
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	<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:67</a> Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck [Him] with the palms of their hands, <a href="#">Matthew 26:67 NKJV</a></p> <p><a href="#">Matthew 27:30</a> Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. <a href="#">Matthew 27:30 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:15 NKJV</a></p> <p><a href="#">Mark 14:65</a> Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands. <a href="#">Mark 14:65 NKJV</a></p> <p><a href="#">Mark 15:19</a> Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. <a href="#">Mark 15:19 NKJV</a></p>		
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What do you believe?

- Do you believe the city of Zion is represented as the bride of Christ?
- If so, does it seem strange that the bride is represented by an inanimate object?
- If Isaiah was tortured as described in verse 6, do you think he knew he was also writing a prophecy of the Messiah?

## **[Chapter 51](#)**

I believe this chapter like [Matthew 24](#), blends two events. I think it is partially a prophecy of deliverance from exile and partially about the second coming of Christ. In the latter case, it would not just be addressed to literal descendants of Abraham, but all true believers who are waiting for their Lord's return. The following three verses are what lead me to believe this chapter also refers to the second coming.

[Isaiah 51:3](#) For the LORD will comfort Zion,  
He will comfort all her waste places;  
He will make her wilderness like Eden,  
And her desert like the garden of the LORD;

Joy and gladness will be found in it,  
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. [Isaiah 51:3 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 51:6](#) Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
And look on the earth beneath.  
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke,  
The earth will grow old like a garment,  
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;  
But My salvation will be forever,  
And My righteousness will not be abolished. [Isaiah 51:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 51:11](#) So the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
And come to Zion with singing,  
With everlasting joy on their heads.  
They shall obtain joy and gladness;  
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. [Isaiah 51:11 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](#)

I believe other portions of this chapter could be taken to refer to the future release from exile from Babylon.

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What do you believe?

- If you choose to interpret this as strictly applying to the Jews, how would you explain the words or phrases, Eden, forever, everlasting joy, sorrow and mourning shall flee away, never drink it again?
- Why is Rahab mentioned in a negative context in [verse 9](#)? Wasn't she the one who was shown favor and saved from among all the inhabitants of Jericho?
- [Verse 14](#) mentions that the exile will soon be set free. Since the Jews were not in exile in Isaiah's time, when or who do you think this refers to?

## **Chapter 52**

This chapter starts out by speaking of Jerusalem as being a captive, with chains around her neck [[verse 2](#)]. And being sold [[verse 3](#)], and taken [[verse 5](#)]. This sounds a lot like a prediction of their future exile to Babylon. In fact, [verse 4](#) begins by mentioning their time in Egypt, then their oppression by the Assyrians, and finally being taken presumably to Babylon.



There are a number of places that this chapter is quoted in the New Testament. Paul quotes verse 5, saying that God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because the Jews do not obey Him and misrepresent Him.

[Isaiah 52:5](#) Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD, "That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the LORD, "And My name [is] blasphemed continually every day. [Isaiah 52:5 NKJV](#)

[Romans 2:24](#) For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written. [Romans 2:24 NKJV](#)

Then verse 7 is quoted by Paul in his discussion that those who believe will be saved, but how can they believe unless someone tells them. Hence, beautiful are the feet of those who share the good news of salvation which is available to all.

[Isaiah 52:7](#) How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good [things], Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" [Isaiah 52:7 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:15](#) And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" [Romans 10:15 NKJV](#)

Then verse 11 is quoted again by Paul where he is advising the believer to not be bound together with unbelievers. Obviously, he is not referring to speaking or associating with them, otherwise how would the Gospel be shared with them. He must be speaking of a deeper level of association, possibly marriage, or business partnerships, or maybe just hanging out with the wrong kind of people all the time.

[Isaiah 51:11](#) Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean [thing]; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD. [Isaiah 52:11 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:17](#) Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." [2 Corinthians 6:17 NKJV](#)

Verse 14 says that His appearance was marred more than any man. I assume this to be a prophecy of Jesus. On the last night before the crucifixion, Jesus suffered great agony with the weight of the sins of the world on His shoulders and the impending separation from God as a result of taking those sins on Himself. Luke said that He was in such agony that His sweat was like drops of blood.

[Isaiah 52:14](#) Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; [Isaiah 52:14 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:37](#) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. <sup>38</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." [Matthew 26:37-38 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:34](#) Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, [even] to death. Stay here and watch." [Mark 14:34 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:44](#) And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [Luke 22:44 NKJV](#)

The last verse of this chapter is quoted, again by Paul, where I believe he is explaining why he chooses to evangelize among non-believers. This could apply to us today with respect to evangelizing among other Christians.

[Isaiah 52:15](#) So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider. [Isaiah 52:15 NKJV](#)

[Romans 15:20](#) And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,<sup>21</sup> but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand." [Romans 15:20-21 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the Babylonian captivity was predicted so many times?
- Do you think the captivity was a conditional prophecy that would not have happened if the Jews had remained faithful to God?
- Do you think the mention of being lifted up and exalted in [verse 13](#), is a reference to the crucifixion on the cross? [[John 3:14](#); [John 12:32](#)]

## [Chapter 53](#)

This chapter which foretells the suffering and death of Jesus, is the chapter most quoted in the New Testament. It is also quoted extensively in Handel's Messiah, making it perhaps one of the most well-known chapters in Isaiah.

The first verse was quoted by John and Paul regarding the rejection of Jesus by the Jews.

[Isaiah 53:1](#) Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? [Isaiah 53:1 NKJV](#)

[John 12:38](#) that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" [John 12:38 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:16](#) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" [Romans 10:16 NKJV](#)

Then we get into the well-known verses depicting the suffering and death of Christ.

[Isaiah 53:4](#) Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. [Isaiah 53:4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:17](#) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore [our] sicknesses." [Matthew 8:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 53:5](#) But He [was] wounded for our transgressions, [He was] bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace [was] upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. [Isaiah 53:5 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 2:24](#) who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. [1 Peter 2:24 NKJV](#)

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 53:7</a> 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. <sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. <a href="#">Isaiah 53:7-8 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Acts 8:28</a> was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup> And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." <a href="#">Acts 8:28-33 NKJV</a></p>
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<p><a href="#">Isaiah 53:9</a> And they made His grave with the wicked-- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor [was any] deceit in His mouth. <a href="#">Isaiah 53:9 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">1 Peter 2:22</a> "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; <a href="#">1 Peter 2:22 NKJV</a></p>
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<p><a href="#">Isaiah 53:12</a> Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors. <a href="#">Isaiah 53:12 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:28</a> So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors." <a href="#">Mark 15:28 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 22:37</a> "For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." <a href="#">Luke 22:37 NKJV</a></p>
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What do you believe?

- How do you interpret "He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him" from [verse 2](#)?
- What do you think it means in [verse 9](#) when it says "But with the rich at His death"?
- What do you think it means in [verse 12](#) where it says "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong," which happens to be right between "bear their iniquities," and "poured out His soul unto death"?

## [Chapter 54](#)

Matthew Henry's commentary suggests that this chapter begins with what was meant to be encouragement for the Jews when they found themselves in captivity to the Babylonians in the future. It would provide hope that they would be released and allowed to return and rebuild. However, coming on the heels of the chapter of the suffering and death of the Messiah, it would not be out of place to follow the previous chapter with a promise for the church, whose

foundation was Christ and His death and resurrection. I believe that the growth and prosperity predicted could have been the Jewish nation if they had stayed true to God and embraced Jesus as their Messiah, but instead that promise would apply to the Christian church.<sup>88</sup>

This chapter had a couple quotations in the New Testament. The first verse was quoted by Paul in his allegory of Sarah and Hagar, comparing the Church and the Jewish nation. It seems to be a prediction that the Church would outgrow the nation of Israel.

[Isaiah 54:1](#) "Sing, O barren,  
You [who] have not borne!  
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,  
You [who] have not labored with child!  
For more [are] the children of the desolate  
Than the children of the married woman,"  
says the LORD. [Isaiah 54:1 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 4:27](#) For it is written:  
"Rejoice, O barren,  
[You] who do not bear!  
Break forth and shout,  
You who are not in labor!  
For the desolate has many more children  
Than she who has a husband." [Galatians 4:27 NKJV](#)

Verses 9,10 reference a specific promise made by God to the human race after the flood. It was that the entire world would not be destroyed a flood again. These two verses seem to imply that something drastic, like the flood would occur. Could this apply to the rejection of the Jews as God's chosen nation and the subsequent choosing of the Christian church to fill that role? If so, then would this be a promise that God will not need to reject the Christian church and choose another group to keep a live and propagate a knowledge of Him on the earth?

[Isaiah 54:9](#) "For this [is] like the waters of Noah to Me;  
For as I have sworn  
That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth,  
So have I sworn  
That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.  
<sup>10</sup> For the mountains shall depart  
And the hills be removed,  
But My kindness shall not depart from you,  
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,"  
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you. [Isaiah 54:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 9:11](#) "Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."  
[Genesis 9:11 NKJV](#)

The next day after Jesus fed the 5000, when He claimed to be the bread of life, the people were complaining. In responding to them, He quoted from Isaiah. His point being that no one will come to Him unless the father draws them.

[Isaiah 54:13](#) All your children [shall be] taught by the LORD, And great [shall be] the peace of your children. [Isaiah 54:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 6:45](#) "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. [John 6:45 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- "For a mere moment I have forsaken you," in [verse 7](#) seems applicable to the Babylonian exile. Are you comfortable mixing Babylonian exile and release with the prophecies of the Christian church?
- [Verses 11,12](#) seem to indicate that God will enrich His people. This seems very different from the life he lived as our example. How do you think this prophecy is fulfilled?

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<sup>88</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_054.cfm?a=733001](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_054.cfm?a=733001)

- "No weapon formed against you shall prosper," in [verse 17](#) sounds like a wonderful promise, but is it misplaced to take it physically? Or can you take it personally, in reference to your soul and not necessarily your physical body?

## [Chapter 55](#)

The first part of the chapter points out that what God has to offer is good and satisfying and is offered to any and everyone for free. He longs to bless those who choose Him so that He can make them leaders of His people and a witness to the nations as was King David.

Verse 3 was quoted by Paul on his first missionary journey, when he was preaching to the Jews as he gave a brief history of God's leading and blessings. His point being that it is through Jesus, who was crucified and risen from the dead, that the blessings of David would be poured out.

[Isaiah 55:3](#) Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you--The sure mercies of David.  
[Isaiah 55:3 NKJV](#)

[Acts 13:34](#) "And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' [Acts 13:34 NKJV](#)

In verse 5 I believe is a prophecy that the Gentiles, "nations [who] do not know you," will be called and will come.

[Isaiah 55:5](#) Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations [who] do not know you shall run to you, Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you." [Isaiah 55:5 NKJV](#)

The next two verses in the King James Version have been put to tune making a nice little scripture song.

[Isaiah 55:6](#) Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: <sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. [Isaiah 55:6-7 KJV](#)

The chapter ends with a reminder of the superiority of God. In the middle of it is an interesting couple of verses that give an analogy of the power of God's words. It brings to mind the [creation](#) of our world, where God spoke and it was.

[Isaiah 55:10](#) "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,  
And do not return there,  
But water the earth,  
And make it bring forth and bud,  
That it may give seed to the sower  
And bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;  
It shall not return to Me void,  
But it shall accomplish what I please,  
And it shall prosper [in the thing] for which I sent it. [Isaiah 55:10-11 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- It is clear from the beginning of this chapter that God wants to bless those who make a covenant with Him, but is this always a temporal or physical blessing?

- What does abundantly pardon mean to you?
- Do you believe the power of God's words to accomplish His desire are unleashed when we read and share the Bible?

## [Chapter 56-57](#)

Chapter 56 begins with the promise of blessings for those who obey God. And what is obeying the Lord defined as in [verses 1,2](#)? Preserving justice, doing righteousness, keeping the Sabbath and refraining from evil. In fact, it specifically says, in [verse 6](#), that even foreigners who do this and join themselves to the Lord will be accepted in the temple. This point is reiterated by the famous statement quoted by Jesus during the cleansing of the temple, "For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." Jesus was angry because the temple was to be a house of prayer, but the Jewish leaders had turned it into a marketplace where sacrifices were sold and money was exchanged for the sanctuary currency. And to top it off, they were extorting the people in the process.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 56:7</a> Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [Will be] accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." <a href="#">Isaiah 56:7 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 21:13</a> And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" <a href="#">Matthew 21:13 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 11:17</a> 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.'" <a href="#">Mark 11:17 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 19:45</a> Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, <sup>46</sup> saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" <a href="#">Luke 19:45-46 NKJV</a></p>
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In contrast to the blessings for obedience, the [second half of chapter 56](#) and all of [chapter 57](#) is a rebuke to the Jewish leadership for their failure to teach the people the commands of God, or worse yet, actually leading the people into sin. Circling all the way back to the call for justice in [56:1](#), we find " For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; " [57:17](#).

What do you believe?

- Can you name some blessings for those who do as described in the [first half of chapter 56](#)?
- Why do you think eunuchs are mentioned specifically here ([56:3-5](#))?
- Do you think these rebukes in chapter 57 apply to the leaders of the Jews or the Christian church?

## [Chapter 58](#)

Most of this chapter is about the people's attempts to gain God's favor by fasting and calling on His name, but He says that what they really need to do is to do away with wickedness, forgive debts, release slaves, feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, clothe the naked.

[Isaiah 58:5](#) Is it a fast that I have chosen,  
A day for a man to afflict his soul?  
[Is it] to bow down his head like a bulrush,

And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?  
Would you call this a fast,  
And an acceptable day to the LORD?  
<sup>6</sup> "[Is] this not the fast that I have chosen:  
To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the heavy burdens,  
To let the oppressed go free,  
And that you break every yoke?  
<sup>7</sup> [Is it] not to share your bread with the hungry,  
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;  
When you see the naked, that you cover him,  
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?  
<sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the morning,  
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,  
And your righteousness shall go before you;  
The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. [Isaiah 58:5-8 NKJV](#)

The last part of the chapter is the beautiful promise to those who truly keep the Sabbath as God intended.

[Isaiah 58:13](#) "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,  
[From] doing your pleasure on My holy day,  
And call the Sabbath a delight,  
The holy [day] of the LORD honorable,  
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,  
Nor finding your own pleasure,  
Nor speaking [your own] words,  
<sup>14</sup> Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;  
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,  
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.  
The mouth of the LORD has spoken." [Isaiah 58:13-14 NKJV](#)

Keeping the Sabbath holy is the [4th commandment](#), but what does it really mean? Clearly the commandment says to not labor, but what does that mean. These verses in Isaiah say to not pursue your own pleasure. Those are both statements about what not to do, but that doesn't really help in knowing what to do on the Sabbath, because in general you can't really just do nothing. What better example can we have than the life of Jesus Himself. He was often at odds with the religious rulers about the meaning of labor as evidenced by the many times they accused Him of breaking the Sabbath. How Jesus responded to them should give us a clue as to the true meaning of keeping the Sabbath holy.

[Matthew 12:10](#) And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--that they might accuse Him.

<sup>11</sup> Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift [it] out? <sup>12</sup> "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." <sup>13</sup> Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and it was restored as whole as the other. [Matthew 12:10-13 NKJV](#)

The incident just mentioned, which was included in the books of Mark and Luke as well, gives us a good idea of what to do on the Sabbath. In fact, one could infer from this example, and the repeated healings Jesus performed on the Sabbath, that it is permissible to do anything on that day that would relieve the suffering of people and even animals. Not to imply that it would be wrong to relieve your own suffering on the Sabbath, but in the example the focus is not on self. So, putting this together with what God said through Isaiah about not pursuing your own pleasure, maybe it could be said that the Sabbath is a day to focus on others, to do good deeds for the benefit others. Of course, this is not to take away from the fact that it was the custom of Jesus to go to the Synagogue every Sabbath.

[Luke 4:16](#) So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. [Luke 4:16 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Why do you think God keeps stressing the need to care for the underprivileged?
- How would you define, "your own pleasure," in regard to keeping the Sabbath?
- What does it mean to you, to keep the Sabbath holy?

## [Chapter 59](#)

Isaiah is telling the people that their sins are separating them from God, but Paul quoted from this chapter to say that according to the law all the world is guilty. But fortunately, he doesn't stop there, he goes on to say that we are justified by faith in Christ Jesus.

[Isaiah 59:7](#) Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts [are] thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction [are] in their paths. <sup>8</sup> The way of peace they have not known, And [there is] no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace. [Isaiah 59:7-8 NKJV](#)

[Romans 3:15](#) "Their feet [are] swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> Destruction and misery [are] in their ways; <sup>17</sup> And the way of peace they have not known." [Romans 3:15-17 NKJV](#)

The second half of the chapter is about an acknowledgement of the sins and wickedness of the nation, but perhaps because the repentant are few and far between, they moan and long for justice and salvation, but it doesn't seem to come. It even says, those who turn away from evil expose themselves as prey to the wicked.

Then in [verses 16-20](#), we come across what may be a dual prophecy. Cyrus who would conquer the Babylonians and release the captive Jews, but more importantly the Messiah who would symbolically put on His armor and go on a campaign against sin and wickedness. It is interesting how many times prophecies have appeared to apply to both Cyrus and the Messiah.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe that separation from God and hardships or difficulties in life are correlated?
- Do you believe that sin separates us from God?
- What do you think is the result of separation from God?



## [Chapter 60](#)

This chapter begins with mention a light, the glory of the LORD rising.

[Isaiah 60:1](#) Arise, shine;  
For your light has come!  
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.  
<sup>2</sup> For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,  
And deep darkness the people;  
But the LORD will arise over you,  
And His glory will be seen upon you.  
<sup>3</sup> The Gentiles shall come to your light,  
And kings to the brightness of your rising. [Isaiah 60:1-3 NKJV](#)

Comparing these verses to the language Jesus and the apostles used to describe Himself, it is pretty straight forward to apply these verses to the Messiah.

[Matthew 4:16](#) The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." [Matthew 4:16 NKJV](#)

[John 1:9](#) That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. [John 1:9 NKJV](#)

[John 3:19](#) "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [John 3:19 NKJV](#)

[John 8:12](#) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." [John 8:12 NKJV](#)

[John 12:46](#) "I have come [as] a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. [John 12:46 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 5:8](#) For you were once darkness, but now [you are] light in the Lord. Walk as children of light [Ephesians 5:8 NKJV](#)

The first part of this chapter begins with what sounds like days of glory for Israel when the Messiah comes. However, since the Jews rejected Christ, the things described in this chapter would apply to the Christian church. Although, the church of the Middle Ages did not use these blessings to bring honor and glory to God, the power, wealth and prestige among nations was undeniable.

It has always been customary for walled cities to close their gates at night. But verse 11 says that your gates will be open continually.

[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](#)

Matthew Henry explains this to mean that Christ's church is always ready to receive new converts.<sup>89</sup>

I believe that verse 18 moves into the state of the true church of God in the new earth.

[Isaiah 60:18](#) Violence shall no longer be heard in your land,  
Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders;  
But you shall call your walls Salvation,  
And your gates Praise.

<sup>19</sup> "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.

<sup>21</sup> Also your people [shall] all [be] righteous;  
They shall inherit the land forever,  
The branch of My planting,  
The work of My hands,  
That I may be glorified. [Isaiah 60:18-21 NKJV](#)

See how verses 19,20 are reflected in John's description of the new earth in Revelation.

[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](#)

What do you believe?

- Can you come up with any other application of the light and glory in the [first three verses](#) than to the Messiah?
- Do you believe the first half of this chapter could still be fulfilled for the Jews in the future?
- Is it possible to apply [verses 18-21](#) to any time or place this side of the new earth?

## [Chapter 61](#)

Isaiah was quoted many times in the New Testament by the writers as proof that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. However, the following verses were quoted directly by Jesus as a prophecy fulfilled by Himself.

[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;  
<sup>2</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,

[Luke 4:17](#) And He was handed the book of the prophet  
Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He  
found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> "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,

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa\\_060.cfm?a=739011](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_060.cfm?a=739011)

And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn, [Isaiah 61:1-2 NKJV](#)

To proclaim liberty to [the] captives  
And recovery of sight to [the] blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
<sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

<sup>20</sup> Then He closed the book, and gave [it] back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

<sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." [Luke 4:17-21 NKJV](#)

Interestingly, you can see that Jesus left off the last half of verse 2 when He read from Isaiah. That was exactly the part that His listeners would have been receptive to while they would be inclined to ignore the first part. We know that the purpose of the Messiah was to save us from sin, and in retrospect, we can see that He lived a humble self-sacrificing life. So, what do we do with the prophecies that speak of the conquering king and the vengeance of God on His enemies. If I could come up with some general rules, they would be as follows:

- The prophecies of the first coming (life and death of Christ) and those of the second (resurrection of the righteous) or third coming (destruction of sin) are often intermingled.
- Sometimes militaristic language is used symbolically in the battle between good and evil.
- I believe some of these prophecies may have been conditional on the obedience of the Jews and their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

The rest of the chapter I believe is a description of what God has always intended for His chosen people.

- They will stand tall as righteous ([verse 3](#))
- They will rebuild ancient cities ([verse 4](#))
- They would employ strangers and foreigners ([verse 5](#))
- They would be priests and ministers to all people ([verse 6](#))
- They would have plenty to eat ([verse 6](#))
- The land they own or administer would increase ([verse 7](#))
- They would treat all under their power with justice ([verse 8](#))
- Their offspring would be known among the nations as the blessed of the Lord ([verse 9](#))
- Their righteousness should be sown among the nations and spring up as naturally as plants sprout and grow in a garden ([verse 11](#))

So why did God want to bless His people with temporal things such as wealth, administration of cities, plenty to eat. I believe it is because these blessings would attract the attention of people who would then come learn about God. But I also believe that a just administration under righteous rulers would be much preferred, over the corrupt leaders that often rise to power over people.

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What do you believe?

- Since this chapter is clearly about Jesus and He didn't execute any vengeance in His first coming, what do you think the vengeance in [verse 2](#) refers to?

- Can you deny that some of these good things have been part of the history of the United States of America? Is it possible that at one time they were or still are a fulfillment of these promises?
- Do you see a possible fulfillment of [verses 10,11](#) this side of the new earth?

## **Chapter 62**

This chapter definitely sounds like a prophecy of the Messiah. Hence, the new name mentioned could be a reference to Christianity.

[Isaiah 62:2](#) The Gentiles shall see your righteousness,  
And all kings your glory.  
You shall be called by a new name,  
Which the mouth of the LORD will name. [Isaiah 62:2 NKJV](#)

Verses 6,7 mention watchmen who remain vigilant day and night and will never keep silent.

[Isaiah 62:6](#) I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;  
They shall never hold their peace day or night.  
You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,  
<sup>7</sup> And give Him no rest till He establishes  
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. [Isaiah 62:6,7 NKJV](#)

In Ezekiel, God referred to the prophet as a watchmen.

[Ezekiel 3:17](#) "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: [Ezekiel 3:17 NKJV](#)

The prophets were definitely watchmen, but I believe that designation can apply to anyone who allows God to use them as a mouthpiece. It is one who will not be afraid to reprove sin and is always trying to bring people back to the true worship of God.

Continuing the theme of the Messiah, the middle of verse ten sounds very similar to a couple verses which were quoted in the New Testament as fulfilled by John the Baptist.

[Isaiah 62:10](#) Go through,  
Go through the gates!  
Prepare the way for the people;  
Build up,  
Build up the highway!  
Take out the stones,  
Lift up a banner for the peoples! [Isaiah 62:10 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 40:3](#) The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
"Prepare the way of the LORD;  
Make straight in the desert  
A highway for our God.  
<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be exalted  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough places smooth; [Isaiah 40:3-4 NKJV](#)

[John 3:28](#) "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' [John 3:28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 3:3](#) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' " [Matthew 3:3 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:3](#) "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' " [Mark 1:3 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:76](#) "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, [Luke 1:76 NKJV](#)

[Luke 3:4](#) as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. <sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; [Luke 3:4-5 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- What do you think the calling by a new name in [verse 2](#) means?
- In [verse 4](#) when God speaks of the land being married to Him, what do you think that means?
- In [verse 7](#) it says God will take no rest until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Do you believe this to apply to before or after the earth made new?

## [Chapter 63](#)

On reading the first six verses of this chapter, several images come to mind. The first is of the Lord as a warrior with drawn sword appearing on the evening before the Israelites invasion of Jericho, and Joshua asking who he is.

[Isaiah 63:1](#) Who [is] this who comes from Edom,  
With dyed garments from Bozrah,  
This [One who is] glorious in His apparel,  
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?--  
"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." [Isaiah 63:1 NKJV](#)

[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." 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](#)

The next two images that came to mind are from verses 3,6.

[Isaiah 63:3](#) "I have trodden the winepress alone,  
And from the peoples no one [was] with Me.  
For I have trodden them in My anger,  
And trampled them in My fury;  
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,  
And I have stained all My robes. [Isaiah 63:3 NKJV](#)

In the first sentence, I see a picture of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, struggling alone while His disciples slept. Then dying on the cross feeling alone and forsaken.

[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]." <sup>40</sup> Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? [Matthew 26:39-40 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

The next image that came to mind is from the garment sprinkled with blood and the trodden down of the people from verse 3, and also brought down their strength to the earth in verse 6. This picture is also painted in Revelation, which portrays Jesus as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," with his robe dipped in blood, although in this case I believe it is His own blood. It appears that this is His final return to earth when the sinful nations will be struck down.

[Isaiah 63:6](#) I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth." [Isaiah 63:6 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:13](#) 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 19:13-16 NKJV](#)

I believe the first part of this chapter to be a summary of God's campaign to destroy sin. The mention of Bozra, the capital city of ancient Edom, was probably symbolic of Israel's enemies. So, we have God in His interaction with the Jews, and their oppressors. And on a larger scale, God's dealings with His people and their oppressors. Then we have God, in the person of Jesus, giving Himself alone as a sacrifice. Finally, we have God returning to finally put an end to sin. In all the talk of vengeance, don't overlook the fact that it is a day of vengeance but a whole year of redemption.

[Isaiah 63:4](#) For the day of vengeance [is] in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. [Isaiah 63:4 NKJV](#)

Next Isaiah recounts the loving kindness of God to the Jews, then in prophecy, predicts the coming of the Savior and their rejection of Him. Verse 9 and 10 talk about the affliction He would bear and how they would finally grieve the Holy Spirit in their rejection of Jesus.

[Isaiah 63:9](#) In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old. <sup>10</sup> But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, [And] He fought against them. [Isaiah 63:9,10 NKJV](#)

If continuing this thread of the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, then verse 16 could be understood to mean that Abraham and Israel do not recognize "us" because "us" is God's new chosen, the Christian church.

[Isaiah 63:16](#) Doubtless You [are] our Father, Though Abraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, [are] our Father; Our Redeemer from Everlasting [is] Your name. [Isaiah 63:16 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe the “brought down their strength to the earth” in [verse 6](#) has a fulfillment this side of the judgment?
- What do you think the day of vengeance and year of redemption refers to?
- Do you believe [verses 18,19](#) are a prophecy that Israel would lose their status as God's chosen nation.

## [Chapter 64](#)

This chapter seems to be a prayer by Isaiah, or a prayer spoken on behalf of the Jews, for God to manifest Himself as He did during the Exodus. That He would manifest His power to make the nations (their enemies) tremble.

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul quoted from this chapter to support his argument that we cannot understand the ways and plans of God unless we are taught by the Holy Spirit.

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 64:4</a> For since the beginning of the world [Men] have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him. <a href="#">Isaiah 64:4 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">1 Corinthians 2:9</a> But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." <a href="#">1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV</a></p>
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The curious part of this prayer is the end, specifically verses 10, 11.

[Isaiah 64:10](#) Your holy cities are a wilderness,  
 Zion is a wilderness,  
 Jerusalem a desolation.  
<sup>11</sup> Our holy and beautiful temple,  
 Where our fathers praised You,  
 Is burned up with fire;  
 And all our pleasant things are laid waste. [Isaiah 64:10,11 NKJV](#)

This seems to be a prayer of deliverance from Babylonian captivity, after Jerusalem and the temple lay in ruins. However, from [chapter 1](#), we know that Isaiah lived many years before the Babylonian exile. In fact, based on the timeline laid out in [the divided kingdom](#), we know that it was about 110 years between the end of Hezekiah's reign and the Babylonian captivity. So, was this a prophetic prayer, given for the future generations?

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think God seemed so much more interactive with the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, than at other times in their history?
- If ground rules between God and Satan limit their direct intervention with humanity, do you think Moses was the key that allowed God to do all those mighty miracles during the exodus?
- Do you think they really longed for the full interaction from God, or did they just want Him to deal with their enemies as He did with the Egyptians?

## Chapter 65

Possibly in response to the prayer of the previous chapter, which was asking Him to reveal his power to the nations, God responds by saying that He has allowed Himself to be found, even by those who were not looking for Him. He has revealed Himself even to those who did not call for Him.

[Isaiah 65:1](#) "I was sought by [those who] did not ask [for Me]; I was found by [those who] did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation [that] was not called by My name. [Isaiah 65:1 NKJV](#)

I think the problem is that the Jews were looking for God to reveal Himself to the surrounding nations in a way that would frighten and intimidate them so the Israelites could keep them in line. But instead, God said He would reveal Himself to a nation which did not call on His name. In line with the previous chapter, I think this could be a reference to the Him revealing Himself to the Gentiles and allowing them to find Him.

In [Romans 10](#), Paul is explaining how simple salvation is.

[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, you will be saved. [Romans 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:12](#) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. <sup>13</sup> For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." [Romans 10:12,13 NKJV](#)

Finally at the end of the chapter, he quotes the first two verses from Isaiah shown below, to support his point that God revealed Himself to the Gentiles, while the Jews were disobedient and rejected Him.

[Isaiah 65:1](#) "I was sought by [those who] did not ask [for Me]; I was found by [those who] did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation [that] was not called by My name. <sup>2</sup> I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way [that is] not good, According to their own thoughts; [Isaiah 65:1,2 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:20](#) But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." <sup>21</sup> But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people." [Romans 10:20,21 NKJV](#)

Verse 15 seems to carry on this theme of a new name for the chosen people of God, which I believe is a prophecy that Christianity would take the place of the Jews as the nation to represent God to the world.

[Isaiah 65:15](#) You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; For the Lord GOD will slay you, And call His servants by another name; [Isaiah 65:15 NKJV](#)

The last part of this chapter, about the new heaven and earth, at first glance would seem be exactly what it claims to be. However, on closer examination, it cannot simply be taken that way. First there is long life, which even though it is presented as a blessing, has an end at around 100 years of age. We cannot assume this to be after the millennium, because in Revelation we are told that there will be no more death.

[Isaiah 65:20](#) "No more shall an infant from there [live but a few] days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner [being] one hundred years old shall be accursed. [Isaiah 65:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:4](#) "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." [Revelation 21:4 NKJV](#)



Then there is the mention of childbearing, which we understand from Jesus' own words will not take place in the new earth.

[Isaiah 65:23](#) They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they [shall be] the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. [Isaiah 65:23 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:34](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup> "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, 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. [Luke 20:34-36 NKJV](#)

But then what do we do with the last verse of the chapter.

[Isaiah 65:25](#) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,  
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
And dust [shall be] the serpent's food.  
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,"  
Says the LORD. [Isaiah 65:25 NKJV](#)

Back to the topic of lifespan, which was about seventy years at the time of King David:

[Psalm 90:10](#) The days of our lives [are] seventy years;  
And if by reason of strength [they are] eighty years,  
Yet their boast [is] only labor and sorrow;  
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. [Psalm 90:10 NKJV](#)

So, a lifespan of one hundred would be a significant increase. Perhaps a portion of this prophecy is a blessing promised to Israel on condition of their faithfulness to God. The elimination of infant mortality would also seem to fit in the same category. I think these are some of the things God wanted to do for the Jews after their release from captivity. Their temple and city would be made new, and He could restore their nation to prominence, and give them long life at the same time.

But what about the changed nature of even the animals as mentioned in [verse 25](#). I think it is very possible that this portion of the chapter on the new earth is a mixed prophecy, even as that spoken by Jesus Himself in [Matthew 24](#). In that chapter, He intermingled predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

Another possible way to look at this is that if they would be willing to fully obey His commands, they would be shown what to do so they would naturally live longer lives. For example, Seventh-Day Adventists Christians have been shown to have an average lifespan, years longer than their non-SDA counter parts.<sup>90 91 92 93 94</sup> This seems to show that lifestyle changes can have an effect on the aging process. Is it possible that there are ways to reverse the nature of carnivores on this earth? There have obviously been instances of carnivorous animals that have been trained to be tame.

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/what-adventists-mean-to-you>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/2009/04/06/centenarians-exercise-diet-personal-finance-retirement-live-to-100.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2012/03/23/march-23-2012-seventh-day-adventists-and-health/10575/>

<sup>93</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventist\\_Health\\_Studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventist_Health_Studies)

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.oregonlive.com/living/index.ssf/2012/05/seventh-day\\_adventists\\_health.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/living/index.ssf/2012/05/seventh-day_adventists_health.html)

What do you believe?

- Is it possible to find God without looking for Him?
- Do you think [verse 15](#) is literal when it says "the Lord God will slay you?"
- What do you think it means in [verse 20](#) for youth to die at the age of 100?

## **Chapter 66**

The Jews had become so proud of their Temple, they probably felt God was pleased with its grandeur and magnificence. They probably also felt they were pleasing God through the temple services, such as sacrifices, offerings and burning incense. However, God says that earth is merely His footstool, so how could any house or temple be grand enough for Him to want to dwell there. What really pleases Him and attracts Him is when people are humble and respectful of Him. And I add, not because it follows in this chapter but because it was a theme throughout the book, He wants His people to exemplify Him by giving justice to the powerless, taking care of the poor, the widows, and the orphans, and generally having compassion on those less fortunate.

The first two verses of this chapter were quoted by Stephen just prior to his stoning, as he was recounting Israel's history of stubbornness and rebellion against God. I think his point being that having the temple and its services did not make them obedient or acceptable to God.

[Isaiah 66:1](#) Thus says the LORD:  
 "Heaven [is] My throne,  
 And earth [is] My footstool.  
 Where [is] the house that you will build Me?  
 And where [is] the place of My rest?  
<sup>2</sup> For all those [things] My hand has made,  
 And all those [things] exist," Says the LORD.  
 "But on this [one] will I look:  
 On [him who is] poor and of a contrite spirit,  
 And who trembles at My word. [Isaiah 66:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Acts 7:48](#) "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:  
<sup>49</sup> 'Heaven [is] My throne,  
 And earth [is] My footstool.  
 What house will you build for Me? says the LORD,  
 Or what [is] the place of My rest?  
<sup>50</sup> Has My hand not made all these things?' [Acts 7:48-50 NKJV](#)

In the same theme of the Temple discussion in verses 1, 2, verse 3 shows how offensive it is to God to carry on the sacrificial services in the wrong spirit, or without the proper understanding.

[Isaiah 66:3](#) "He who kills a bull [is as if] he slays a man;  
 He who sacrifices a lamb, [as if] he breaks a dog's neck;  
 He who offers a grain offering, [as if he offers] swine's blood;  
 He who burns incense, [as if] he blesses an idol.  
 Just as they have chosen their own ways,  
 And their soul delights in their abominations, [Isaiah 66:3 NKJV](#)

An interesting question for me is who the target audience is for this message? It seems that pre-Babylonian Jews were often in trouble for actual idol worship, but not as much with the post captivity. But in reality, worshipping God hypocritically, has been a problem for professed followers of all time.

[Verses 18-21](#) seem pretty clearly to be a prophecy of the spread of the Gospel to all nations, initially by the apostles and Christians who scattered from Jerusalem, but later on by all who would go throughout the world to share the good news of Christ.

Fittingly, the chapter and book end with the new heaven and earth.

[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](#)

These verses unlike the ones from the previous chapter seem to be only about the new earth after the end of sin. It is notable that we will still keep the Sabbath in the new earth. Only after sin has ended, will ALL mankind (who have been saved) bow down and worship God.

In the very last verse of Isaiah, we have our last phrase quoted in the New Testament, in this case by Jesus Himself. He is talking to His disciples and quotes this phrase to stress the finality of the death at the end of the world (see the discussion on [everlasting torture](#), for more on the fire that is not quenched).

[Isaiah 66:24](#) "And they shall go forth and look  
Upon the corpses 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](#)

[Mark 9:48](#) "where  
'Their worm does not die,  
And the fire is not quenched.'" [Mark 9:48 NKJV](#)

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe it is important to build beautiful and expensive churches and temples to worship God in?
- What do you think it means in [verse 21](#) where God says, "I will also take some of them for priests and Levites?"
- Do you believe [verse 23](#) literally means the weekly Sabbath?

## Summary and highlights

The timeframe that this book was written was of course the life of the prophet Isaiah, which is revealed to us in the first verse of the book, as during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. I think that from a volume perspective this book is a book of prophecy. There are prophecies of doom and destruction for both the Jews and the surrounding nations, and there are prophecies of redemption and salvation primarily focused on four events.

- From the immediate concern of the Assyrians.
- The future release from Babylonian captivity by Cyrus.
- The arrival and work of the Messiah.
- The end of the world and the beginning of a new one.

The first half of the book is primarily focused from the present time and the near future deliverance from Assyria and the destruction of some surrounding nations up through the release from Babylon and its destruction.

The second half of the book starts with some current history, but quickly moves on to contain many prophecies of the Messiah and the end of the world and the beginning of the new world. I believe the latter part of the second half of the book makes it pretty clear that the Messiah will come to save all nations, and that following His ministry, His people will be called by a different name.

I don't know who to credit with being the first to notice this next approach to dividing Isaiah up. It begins with the simple fact that there are 66 chapters in Isaiah and 66 books in the Bible. It actually makes a lot of sense to divide the book into chapters 1-39 which correspond to the Old Testament, and 40-66 which correspond to the New Testament. Some take it a lot further by saying that each chapter in Isaiah corresponds to a book in the Bible, which I have not studied enough to embrace at this point. But it seems more than coincidental that chapter 40's prophecy of John the Baptist would correspond with the first book of the New Testament. I have presented a table with a few of the parallels, including John the Baptist, and I'm sure there are many more.

<a href="#">Isaiah 1:2</a> - Heavens and earth	<a href="#">Genesis 1:1</a> - God created the heavens and the earth
<a href="#">Isaiah 1:2</a> - Sons I have reared and brought up have revolted against Me	<a href="#">Genesis 3</a> - The human race falls into sin when Adam and Eve believe Satan over God
<a href="#">Isaiah 1:7,9</a> - burned with fire, Sodom and Gomorrah	<a href="#">Genesis 19</a> - Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed with fire
<a href="#">Isaiah 40:3</a> - A voice is calling, clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness	<a href="#">Matthew 3:3</a> - the voice of one crying in the wilderness
<a href="#">Isaiah 66:22</a> - new heavens and the new earth	<a href="#">Revelation 21:1</a> - new heaven and a new earth

Finally, scattered throughout the book, God berates His people for their hypocrisy. They think they are pleasing Him with their beautiful temple and by observing the sacrificial services and not worshipping idols. But what He really wants is for them to show compassion on the poor, give justice to the powerless, and help the widows and orphans.

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe it is clear that the Messiah is not just for the Jews?
- What do you believe about the 66-chapter, 66 book parallel with the Bible?
- Why do you think caring and showing compassion for the powerless is repeated so many times?

# The lost tribes

The northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians and dispersed [[2 Kings 18:9-12](#)] and are typically referred to as the “Ten Lost Tribes.” The footnoted Wikipedia article contains a good accumulation of information as well as references to other groups of people who claim to be descended from one or another of the lost tribes.<sup>95</sup> The southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin were conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar and the best and the brightest were taken back with him to Babylon [[2 Kings 24:10-16](#)]. They remained there for 70 years until they were allowed to return home by Cyrus and were the ancestors of the Jews of the New Testament.

There are several instances where we are told that some from the northern kingdom defected to the south. The first of these defections occurred just after the division of the kingdom, when Jeroboam set up the golden calves as substitutes for the true God that Judah was still worshipping.

[2 Chronicles 11:14](#) For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. [2 Chronicles 11:14 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 11:16](#) And after [the Levites left], those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.<sup>17</sup> So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years. [2 Chronicles 11:16-17 NKJV](#)

During the time under Solomon and Rehoboam when idol worship was rampant in the land, I believe there were many in both the northern and southern kingdoms who were fed up with it. In fact I believe there have always been faithful follower of God among the Israelites, and that is why I believe when Asa came along and opened the Temple up again for worshipping God, it was like a breath of fresh air to them. So, when some from the north saw what was going on, they defected to the south.

[2 Chronicles 15:8](#) And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that [was] before the vestibule of the LORD.<sup>9</sup> Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. [2 Chronicles 15:8-9 NKJV](#)

[2 Chronicles 16:1](#) In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. [2 Chronicles 16:1 NKJV](#)

So, the king of the north fortified one of his border cities and probably increased his border patrol to prevent any more of his people from defecting. Isn't it always the sign of an inferior country when you have to use force to keep people in rather than out?

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<sup>95</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten\\_Lost\\_Tribes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Lost_Tribes)

Now this is what the Bible has to say about the end of the northern kingdom of Israel.

[2 Kings 17:5](#) Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. <sup>6</sup> In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. [2 Kings 17:5-6 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 17:24](#) Then the king of Assyria brought [people] from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed [them] in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. <sup>25</sup> And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, [that] they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed [some] of them. <sup>26</sup> So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." <sup>27</sup> Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." <sup>28</sup> Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. [2 Kings 17:24-28 NKJV](#)

Now this is somewhat interesting because the northern kingdom had been worshipping golden calves and other idols and most of the Levites who were true to God had moved south. So, who was this priest and what did he teach the people? Perhaps one of the exiles who had remained true to God jumped at the opportunity to be a missionary, because as we will see, apparently, he did teach them about the God of Israel. But the people did not seem to embrace the idea of one God, because they just added the God of Israel to their list of deities whom they worshipped.

[2 Kings 17:33](#) They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods--according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away. [2 Kings 17:33 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 18:9](#) Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which [was] the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, [that] Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. <sup>10</sup> And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that [is], the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. <sup>11</sup> Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, <sup>12</sup> because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant [and] all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do [them]. [2 Kings 18:9-12 NKJV](#)

Assyrian conquerors invented a new policy towards the conquered: in order to prevent nationalist revolts by the conquered people, the Assyrians would force the people they conquered to migrate in large numbers to other areas of the empire. Besides guaranteeing the security of an empire built off of conquered people of different cultures and languages, these mass deportations of the populations in the Middle East, Mesopotamia, and Armenia, turned the region into a melting pot of diverse cultures, religions, and languages. Whereas there would be little cultural contact between the conquered and the conquerors in early Mesopotamian history, under the Assyrians the entire area became a vast experiment in cultural mixing. It was the Assyrian monarch, Sargon II (721-705 BC), who first forcefully relocated Hebrews after the conquest of Israel, the northern kingdom of the Hebrews. Although this was a comparatively mild deportation and perfectly in line with Assyrian practice, it marks the historical beginning of the Jewish diaspora. This chapter in the Jewish diaspora, however, never has been really written, for the Hebrews deported from Israel seem to have blended in with Assyrian society and, by the time Nebuchadnezzar II conquers Judah (587 BC), the southern kingdom of the Hebrews, the Israelites

deported by Sargon II have disappeared nameless and faceless into the sands of northern Mesopotamia.

[<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Assyrians.html>]

Shortly after the northern kingdom was conquered and dispersed, it appears that king Hezekiah reached out to the remnants, inviting them to come to Jerusalem for the Passover.

[2 Chronicles 30:1](#) And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. [2 Chronicles 30:1 NKJV](#)

Then later, Josiah, the great-grandson of Hezekiah again reached out to the remnant from Manasseh and Ephraim to support the repairs on the Temple in Jerusalem.

[2 Chronicles 34:9](#) When they came to Hilkiyah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and [which] they had brought back to Jerusalem. [2 Chronicles 34:9 NKJV](#)

After the end of the northern kingdom, we have a picture in 2 Chronicles of a remnant of Israelites that were probably left behind, and others who were forced to relocate to other parts of the Assyrian kingdom. Over time, those who were deported and those who were left behind, seemed to have lost their identity as they intermingled and intermarried with others who had been conquered by the Assyrians. The one possible exception to this is a group known as Samaritans, who, in the Bible, are only mentioned by this name in the New Testament.

[John 4:20](#) "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." [John 4:20 NKJV](#)

According to Wikipedia, Samaritans claim descent from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim and some Levites. They also claim that their practices are the true religion of Abraham and that Judaism is the one that has deviated.<sup>96</sup> In New Testament times they were despised by the Jews and there was a continual debate between them about whether the temple on Mount Gerizim or the Temple in Jerusalem was the true place to worship God.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think many of the descendants of the lost tribes know who they are?
- Do you think the lost tribes will be reunited?
- After being conquered, why do you think the southern tribes stayed united and distinct but not the northern tribes?

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<sup>96</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritans>

# Reunification of the 12 tribes of Israel

After talking about the lost tribes, a natural question would be, will the 12 tribes of Israel ever be reunited again? Let's see what the Bible has to say about it.

[Ezekiel 37:15](#) Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>16</sup> "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and [for] all the house of Israel, his companions.' <sup>17</sup> "Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

<sup>18</sup> "And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you [mean] by these?'—<sup>19</sup> "say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which [is] in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand." ' <sup>20</sup> "And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

<sup>21</sup> "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; <sup>22</sup> "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. <sup>23</sup> "They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

<sup>24</sup> "David My servant [shall be] king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. <sup>25</sup> "Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David [shall be] their prince forever. <sup>26</sup> "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. <sup>27</sup> "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>28</sup> "The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." ' " [Ezekiel 37:15-28 NKJV](#)

Obviously at least part of what we just read has to be symbolic, because David was a king from Israel's past glory. Is the talk of the tribes reuniting also symbolic? In fact to me, the statements "they will no longer defile themselves with their idols," and "My sanctuary is in their midst forever" seems to be referring to the new earth when God will make His home with us [[Revelation 21:1-3](#)]. Also, if you read the previous three verses, [Ezekiel 37:12-14](#), it talks about God opening their graves and bringing them back to life, after which they will then inhabit the land that was promised to them. Is this not another indicator that this promise of reunification refers to the new earth?

[Isaiah 11:11](#) It shall come to pass in that day  
[That] the Lord shall set His hand again the second time  
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,



From Assyria and Egypt,  
From Pathros and Cush,  
From Elam and Shinar,  
From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

<sup>12</sup> He will set up a banner for the nations,  
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,  
And gather together the dispersed of Judah  
From the four corners of the earth.

<sup>13</sup> Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart,  
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;  
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,  
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

<sup>14</sup> But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;  
Together they shall plunder the people of the East;  
They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;  
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;  
With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River,  
And strike it in the seven streams,  
And make [men] cross over dryshod.

<sup>16</sup> There will be a highway for the remnant of His people  
Who will be left from Assyria,  
As it was for Israel  
In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

[Isaiah 11:11-16 NKJV](#)

If you read the preceding five verses, [Isaiah 11:6-10](#), it is pretty clear that this is also talking about the new earth. Then [verse 11](#) begins with, "Then it will happen on that day..."

[Zechariah 10:6](#) "I will strengthen the house of Judah,  
And I will save the house of Joseph.  
I will bring them back,  
Because I have mercy on them.  
They shall be as though I had not cast them aside;  
For I [am] the LORD their God,  
And I will hear them.

<sup>7</sup> [Those of] Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,  
And their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.  
Yes, their children shall see [it] and be glad;  
Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

<sup>8</sup> I will whistle for them and gather them,  
For I will redeem them;  
And they shall increase as they once increased.

<sup>9</sup> "I will sow them among the peoples,  
And they shall remember Me in far countries;

They shall live, together with their children,  
And they shall return.

<sup>10</sup> I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt,  
And gather them from Assyria.  
I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon,  
Until no [more room] is found for them. [Zechariah 10:6-10 NKJV](#)

If you look back to the previous chapter:

[Zechariah 9:9](#) "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout,  
O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your King is coming to you;  
He [is] just and having salvation,  
Lowly and riding on a donkey,  
A colt, the foal of a donkey.  
<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
And the horse from Jerusalem;  
The battle bow shall be cut off.  
He shall speak peace to the nations;  
His dominion [shall be] 'from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.' [Zechariah 9:9-10 NKJV](#)

Verse nine is the famous verse that was fulfilled by Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, but the following verse seems to indicate a time of peace and the world dominion of God's kingdom as prophesied in [Daniel 2:44](#).

We have just looked at three of the common Bible passages used to support the promise of reunification of the twelve tribes of Israel. To me it seems pretty clear there will be a reunification, but it will not be until the earth is made new. I have another argument against the promise of reunification before the new earth. The blessings and special treatment for Israel were because they were God's chosen people at the time. I believe that all through history, God has had a chosen or remnant, and it has not been based on genetics but on being faithful and true to Him. Before Israel, there was Noah and Job. After Israel rejected and crucified Jesus, there was the Christian church. When the Christian church became corrupt, there were the Protestant reformers. God can bless a chosen group and give them special treatment because they will use it to bring honor and glory to Him. To think that after all this time that simply because they bear the DNA of Jacob, that God will still give them special treatment would seem to indicate that God is favoring one race over another, which I don't believe God does.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the tribes of Israel will be reunited?
- Do you think God has a chosen or remnant people now?
- Do you think there will be another chosen or remnant before He returns?

# Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar

Story: [Daniel 1:1-4:37](#)

The story of Daniel in the Bible is a very interesting one. I don't really know where the meaning of the name originates, but it is generally acknowledged to mean "God is my Judge."<sup>97</sup> The Bible doesn't give us any details about Daniel's parents or of when he was born. We are simply told that he along with his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were among those taken to Babylon because they fit the following description:

[Daniel 1:3](#) Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, <sup>4</sup> young men in whom [there was] no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who [had] ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. <sup>5</sup> And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of [that time] they might serve before the king. <sup>6</sup> Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. [Daniel 1:3-6 NKJV](#)

From this, we can know the following about Daniel:

1. He was either part of the royal family, or the nobility of Jerusalem
2. He was considered a youth
3. He was without defect
4. He was handsome
5. He was a student who already showed intelligence in every branch of wisdom

This event was actually prophesied by Isaiah.

[Isaiah 39:5](#) Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: <sup>6</sup> 'Behold, the days are coming when all that [is] in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. <sup>7</sup> 'And they shall take away [some] of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' " [Isaiah 39:5-7 NKJV](#)

This prophesy was made after King Hezekiah foolishly showed ambassadors from Babylon all of his treasures [[Isaiah 39:1-4](#)]. It was not uncommon for Eastern monarchs to have eunuchs serving in their court. Since they were often slaves, they did not have loyalties to the military or aristocracy, and they were thought to have less familial loyalties since they did not have families of their own.<sup>98</sup> If a king were bringing in the smartest and best-looking men from surrounding nations to serve in his palace, he would certainly have less to worry about with his harem if he made them all eunuchs. We cannot say for certain whether this is what became of Daniel and his three friends, but there is never any mention of wives or children for them as was the case for [Joseph in the palace in Egypt](#).

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<sup>97</sup> <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4871-daniel>

<sup>98</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eunuch>

We have a pretty well substantiated date of 605 B.C. for this event based on several Bible verses, some Bible timelines, and some historical references.<sup>99</sup> We don't know how old Daniel was at this time, but we do know he was considered a youth. I would guess maybe between 16-20 years of age.

Following are the main stories in the first four chapters of the book of Daniel.

## Daniel and his friends are ten times wiser

[Daniel 1:6](#) Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. <sup>7</sup> To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel [the name] Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

<sup>8</sup> But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. <sup>9</sup> Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. <sup>10</sup> And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who [are] your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king."

<sup>11</sup> So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup> "Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, [so] deal with your servants." <sup>14</sup> So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

<sup>15</sup> And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. <sup>16</sup> Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

<sup>17</sup> As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. <sup>20</sup> And in all matters of wisdom [and] understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians [and] astrologers who [were] in all his realm. <sup>21</sup> Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. [Daniel 1:6-21 NKJV](#)

God rewarded Daniel and his friends with wisdom and knowledge that was judged by Nebuchadnezzar to be ten times greater than anyone else in his kingdom. God was able to bless these faithful Israelites in order to bring an awareness and knowledge of Him to this heathen kingdom. The blessings bestowed on these four men and excellence shown by them is an example of what God wanted for the whole nation of Israel.

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<sup>99</sup> [Daniel 1:1-2](#), [Jeremiah 25:1](#), timeline of the Kings of Judah proposed in The divided kingdom, <http://www.pytlik.com/observe/daniel/timeline.html>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebuchadnezzar\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebuchadnezzar_II)

## Nebuchadnezzar's dream about world kingdoms

[Daniel 2:1](#) Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was [so] troubled that his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

<sup>4</sup> Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

<sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. <sup>6</sup> "However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

<sup>7</sup> They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

<sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: <sup>9</sup> "if you do not make known the dream to me, [there is only] one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has [ever] asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> "[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."

<sup>12</sup> For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise [men] of Babylon. <sup>13</sup> So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise [men]; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill [them].

<sup>14</sup> Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise [men] of Babylon; <sup>15</sup> he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

<sup>16</sup> So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. <sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, <sup>18</sup> that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise [men] of Babylon. <sup>19</sup> Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His.

<sup>21</sup> And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. [Daniel 2:1-23 NKJV](#)

## Daniel Interprets the Dream

[Daniel 2:24](#) Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise [men] of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise [men] of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

<sup>25</sup> Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

<sup>26</sup> The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name [was] Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

<sup>27</sup> Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise [men], the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. <sup>28</sup> "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: <sup>29</sup> "As for you, O king, thoughts came [to] your [mind while] on your bed, [about] what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. <sup>30</sup> "But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for [our] sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

<sup>31</sup> "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor [was] excellent, stood before you; and its form [was] awesome. <sup>32</sup> "This image's head [was] of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> "its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> "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.

<sup>36</sup> "This [is] the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. <sup>37</sup> "You, O king, [are] a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; <sup>38</sup> "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. <sup>39</sup> "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. <sup>40</sup> "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, [that kingdom] will break in pieces and crush all the others. <sup>41</sup> "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. <sup>42</sup> "And [as] the toes of the feet [were] partly of iron and partly of clay, [so] the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. <sup>43</sup> "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. <sup>44</sup> "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 2:24-45 NKJV](#)

### **Nebuchadnezzar Rewards Daniel**

[Daniel 2:46](#) Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. <sup>47</sup> The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God [is] the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." <sup>48</sup> Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise [men] of Babylon. <sup>49</sup> Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel [sat] in the gate of the king.

[Daniel 2:46-49 NKJV](#)

This story is very self-explanatory, but what is interesting is the parallel dreams and visions that Daniel will receive later in life. Those dreams and visions will be aligned with chapter 2 and discussed together in [Daniel's dreams of world kingdoms](#). Clearly, we are continuing the theme of God blessing Daniel and his friends to bring a knowledge of Him to the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar.

## The fiery furnace

### Nebuchadnezzar's Gold Statue

[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." [Daniel 3:1-18 NKJV](#)

## The Blazing Furnace

[Daniel 3:19](#) 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 3:19-30 NKJV](#)

In defiance of the dream God gave him that showed that another kingdom would follow his, Nebuchadnezzar built an image like the one in his dream, except he made it entirely of gold. It is interesting that Daniel was not present at this event which included, high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials [[Daniel 3:2](#)]. I wonder if Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel would not bow down to his image and arranged for him to be absent.

## Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and subsequent insanity

### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream about a Tree

[Daniel 4:1](#) Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. <sup>2</sup> I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. <sup>3</sup> How great [are] His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion [is] from generation to generation. <sup>4</sup> I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. <sup>5</sup> I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. <sup>6</sup> Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise [men] of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. <sup>7</sup> Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the



soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. <sup>8</sup> But at last Daniel came before me (his name [is] Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him [is] the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, [saying]: <sup>9</sup> "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God [is] in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation. <sup>10</sup> "These [were] the visions of my head [while] on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great. <sup>11</sup> The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. <sup>12</sup> Its leaves [were] lovely, Its fruit abundant, And in it [was] food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it. <sup>13</sup> "I saw in the visions of my head [while] on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. <sup>14</sup> He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches. <sup>15</sup> Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, [Bound] with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, And [let] him graze with the beasts On the grass of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Let his heart be changed from [that of] a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him. <sup>17</sup> 'This decision [is] by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.' <sup>18</sup> "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise [men] of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you [are] able, for the Spirit of the Holy God [is] in you." [Daniel 4:1-18 NKJV](#)

### Daniel Explains the Dream

[Daniel 4:19](#) Then Daniel, whose name [was] Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. [So] the king spoke, and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, [may] the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies! <sup>20</sup> The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which [could be] seen by all the earth, <sup>21</sup> whose leaves [were] lovely and its fruit abundant, in which [was] food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home—<sup>22</sup> it [is] you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth. <sup>23</sup> And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, [bound] with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him'; <sup>24</sup> this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump [and] roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. <sup>27</sup> 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 4:19-27 NKJV](#)

### The Dream's Fulfillment

[Daniel 4:28](#) All [this] came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup> 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?" <sup>31</sup> While the word [was still] in the king's mouth, a voice

fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! <sup>32</sup> And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling [shall be] with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." <sup>33</sup> That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' [feathers] and his nails like birds' [claws]. [Daniel 4:28-33 NKJV](#)

### Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

[Daniel 4:34](#) And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom [is] from generation to generation. <sup>35</sup> All the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And [among] the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" <sup>36</sup> At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. <sup>37</sup> Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works [are] truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down. [Daniel 4:34-37 NKJV](#)

An interesting question I had after reading this story was: who was in charge of the kingdom during this time? In [chapter 2:48](#), it says that Daniel had been made ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief over all the wise men. If he still held this high position at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, perhaps Daniel was in charge at this time. After all, if some other ambitious person was in charge, would Nebuchadnezzar have been kept alive to retake his throne at the end of the seven years?

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Daniel was just extraordinarily smart or do you think God blessed him with supernatural wisdom?
- Do you think Nebuchadnezzar eventually became a true follower of God and will be resurrected with the righteous at the second coming of Christ?
- Do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego ever got jealous of Daniel?

# Daniel in his old age

Story: [Daniel 5:1-6:28](#)

[Daniel 1:21](#) Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. [Daniel 1:21 NKJV](#)

The book of Daniel tells us that he survived the remainder of the Babylonian empire and into the first year of Cyrus, the Persian king. I will discuss his probable age below.

## The hand writing on the wall

[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.

<sup>5</sup> In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. <sup>6</sup> Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. <sup>7</sup> 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." <sup>8</sup> Now all the king's wise [men] came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. <sup>9</sup> Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

<sup>10</sup> The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. <sup>11</sup> "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. <sup>12</sup> "Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation." [Daniel 5:1-12 NKJV](#)

## Daniel Explains the Writing

[Daniel 5:13](#) Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "[Are] you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? <sup>14</sup> "I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God [is] in you, and [that] light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. <sup>15</sup> "Now the wise [men], the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. <sup>16</sup> "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."

<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. <sup>18</sup> "O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. <sup>19</sup> "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. <sup>20</sup> "But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. <sup>21</sup> "Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling [was] with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

<sup>22</sup> "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. <sup>23</sup> "And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who [holds] your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

<sup>25</sup> "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. <sup>26</sup> "This [is] the interpretation of [each] word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; <sup>27</sup> "TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; <sup>28</sup> "PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." <sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. <sup>31</sup> And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, [being] about sixty-two years old. [Daniel 5:13-31 NKJV](#)

This chapter refers to Nebuchadnezzar as the father of Belshazzar, but it probably meant forefather. History tells us that he was the son of Nabonidus, who was the last king of Babylon.<sup>100 101</sup> Belshazzar was probably co-regent or the substitute king in his father's absence. [Daniel 5:29](#) says that Belshazzar made Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom, probably because his father and him were number one and two.

The fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians under the command of Cyrus is a well-documented historical event, dated at 539 B.C.<sup>102 103</sup> This was about 66 years after Daniel was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. If we add 16-20 for the age of his youth when he was first taken to Babylon, he would have been well over 80 years of age at this time.

## Daniel in the lion's den

[Daniel 6:1](#) It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; <sup>2</sup> and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel [was] one, that the satraps might give account to

<sup>100</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belshazzar>

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2846-belshazzar>

<sup>102</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonia#Neo-Babylonian\\_Empire\\_.28Chaldean\\_Era.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonia#Neo-Babylonian_Empire_.28Chaldean_Era.29)

<sup>103</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nabonidus>, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/cyrus-iii>

them, so that the king would suffer no loss. <sup>3</sup> Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit [was] in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. <sup>4</sup> So the governors and satraps sought to find [some] charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he [was] faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. <sup>5</sup> Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find [it] against him concerning the law of his God." <sup>6</sup> So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! <sup>7</sup> "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. <sup>8</sup> "Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." <sup>9</sup> Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

<sup>10</sup> Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

<sup>11</sup> Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. <sup>12</sup> And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing [is] true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

<sup>13</sup> So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

<sup>14</sup> And the king, when he heard [these] words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set [his] heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. <sup>15</sup> Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that [it is] the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

<sup>16</sup> So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast [him] into the den of lions. [But] the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." <sup>17</sup> Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

<sup>18</sup> Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. <sup>19</sup> Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. <sup>20</sup> And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup> Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup> "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

<sup>23</sup> Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

<sup>24</sup> And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast [them] into the den of lions--them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

<sup>25</sup> Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. <sup>26</sup> I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom [men must] tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He [is] the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom [is the one] which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion [shall endure] to the end. <sup>27</sup> He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

<sup>28</sup> So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. [Daniel 6 NKJV](#)

In the new kingdom the elderly Median king Darius, prefers Daniel over the other members of the court, and appoints him administrator over all of them. Out of jealousy, these subordinates entice Darius to make a decree which will result in Daniel being thrown into the lion's den. But when Daniel is miraculously unharmed by the lions, he is given yet another opportunity to explain his faith in the one true God. It is interesting to note that this Median king Darius is not mentioned outside of the Bible.<sup>104</sup> <sup>105</sup> Historically, we know that Cyrus the Great was currently the reigning king of the Persian Empire and was also the conqueror of Babylon.<sup>106</sup> The Medes and the Persians were allied, so perhaps Cyrus appointed this Darius the Mede as a temporary ruler of the former Babylonian kingdom until he sorted everything out.

[Daniel 9:1](#) In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans-- [Daniel 9:1 NKJV](#)

In fact, the book of Daniel specifically states that this Darius was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans, not the Persian kingdom.

## Israelite captivity ends after 70 years

[Daniel 9:1](#) In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years [specified] by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. [Daniel 9:1-3 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](#)

[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." '

<sup>104</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darius\\_the\\_Mede](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darius_the_Mede)

<sup>105</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_kings\\_of\\_Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_kings_of_Persia)

<sup>106</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus\\_the\\_Great#Neo-Babylonian\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great#Neo-Babylonian_Empire)

[Isaiah 45:1](#) "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held--To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: <sup>2</sup> I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. <sup>3</sup> I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call [you] by your name, [Am] the God of Israel. <sup>4</sup> For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. <sup>5</sup> I [am] the LORD, and [there is] no other; [There is] no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, [Isaiah 44:28 - 45:5 NKJV](#)

Knowing the time for their release was near, Daniel prayed for forgiveness for the sins of his people and asked for God's mercy on them. He probably also prayed that somehow Cyrus would either come to know of the prophecy and fulfill his role in it or would find it in his own heart to release the Jews from captivity. Many people make the assumption that with the high position Daniel was given under Darius the Mede, that he would have had access to Cyrus, and would have told him about Isaiah's prophecy. This conversation must remain speculation because there is no record of it in the Bible. Cyrus did somehow at least become aware of Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy and willingly fulfilled his role exactly as predicted by Isaiah.

[2 Chronicles 36:22](#) Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also [put it] in writing, saying, <sup>23</sup> Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who [is] among you of all His people? May the LORD his God [be] with him, and let him go up! [2 Chronicles 36:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Ezra 6:1](#) Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. <sup>2</sup> And at Achmetha, in the palace that [is] in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record [was] written thus: <sup>3</sup> In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree [concerning] the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits [and] its width sixty cubits, <sup>4</sup> [with] three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. <sup>5</sup> Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which [is] in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which [is] in Jerusalem, [each] to its place; and deposit [them] in the house of God"-- [Ezra 6:1-5 NKJV](#)

Not only did Cyrus release the Jews as predicted, but he also commissioned the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and even paid for its construction. He even went as far as to return all the precious temple utensils that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar before the temple was destroyed.

It is generally believed that Daniel, at his advanced age did not go back to Jerusalem with the released captives. The following verses contribute to this belief.

[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, [Daniel 10:1-4 NKJV](#)

If the Jews were sent back to Jerusalem in the first year of Cyrus' reign, and in his third year Daniel was by the Tigris River, it would seem to indicate that Daniel stayed behind.

[Daniel 8:2](#) I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I [was] in Shushan, the citadel, which [is] in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. [Daniel 8:2 NKJV](#)

This verse leads some to believe that perhaps Daniel moved to Susa and lived the remainder of his life there. According to history, Susa was an important city which became one of four capitals in the Achaemenid Persian Empire during the reign of Cyrus' son Cambyses II.<sup>107</sup> So it is possible that Daniel's move there was professional and not merely for retirement purposes.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Daniel continued to serve as a key advisor and administrator under Cyrus the Great?
- How do you think Cyrus discovered the prophecy in Jewish scripture about himself?
- How long do you think Daniel lived?

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<sup>107</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susa#Achaemenid\\_period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susa#Achaemenid_period)



# Daniel's dreams of world kingdoms

Story: [Daniel 2:31-45](#), [Daniel 7:1 – 8:25](#), [Daniel 11:3-](#)

In addition to being a very influential man in the courts of multiple kings, Daniel received several important messages from God concerning the history of our world. Many of these predicted events have come to pass, giving us faith to believe the rest if we can figure out what they mean. In chapters seven and eight, we have two dreams or visions which overlap each other in their interpretations, so I will look at them together. Interestingly the first dream that Daniel interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar also contains overlapping information, so it will be presented here as well. Following the telling of each of these visions is some amount of interpretation, so I have chosen a multi column presentation where the telling of the dream is in one column and the interpretation given in the same chapter is in the next column to the right.

<a href="#">Daniel 2:31 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 2:36 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:1-3 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:15-18 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 8:1-2 NKJV</a>	
<sup>31</sup> "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor [was] excellent, stood before you; and its form [was] awesome.	<sup>36</sup> "This [is] the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.	<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head [while] on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. <sup>2</sup> Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup> "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.	<sup>15</sup> "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within [my] body, and the visions of my head troubled me. <sup>16</sup> "I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: <sup>17</sup> "Those great beasts, which are four, [are] four kings [which] arise out of the earth. <sup>18</sup> "But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'	<sup>1</sup> In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared [to] me--to me, Daniel--after the one that appeared to me the first time. <sup>2</sup> I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I [was] in Shushan, the citadel, which [is] in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.	

## Babylon

<a href="#">Daniel 2:32 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 2:37-38 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:4 NKJV</a>			
<sup>32</sup> "This image's head [was] of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,	<sup>37</sup> "You, O king, [are] a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; <sup>38</sup> "and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the	<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			

	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.	heart was given to it.			
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The first kingdom that was represented by gold and a lion, was the kingdom of Babylon. This was unambiguously stated in [Daniel 2:37-38](#). This symbolism is probably mostly associated with its most famous king Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps eagle's wings were symbolic of the speed with which the kingdom rose to prominence. The loss of wings could refer to the time when Nebuchadnezzar went insane for seven years [[Daniel 4](#)]. It could also apply to the kings who followed him who were weak and ineffective, leading to the decline of the kingdom. The human mind that was given to the lion could have something to do with the weakening of the empire under subsequent kings, or it could possibly symbolize Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgement and acceptance of God through the influence of Daniel. The lion as a symbol for Babylon is far from coincidental. It was one of the symbols for the goddess Ishtar and is depicted on the famous Ishtar gate of Babylon.<sup>108</sup>

## Medo-Persia

<a href="#">Daniel 2:32 NKJV</a> ... its chest and arms of silver, ...	<a href="#">Daniel 2:39 NKJV</a> <sup>39</sup> "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; ...	<a href="#">Daniel 7:5 NKJV</a> <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!'		<a href="#">Daniel 8:3-4 NKJV</a> <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.	<a href="#">Daniel 8:20 NKJV</a> <sup>20</sup> "The ram which you saw, having the two horns--[they are] the kings of Media and Persia.
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The second kingdom represented by silver, a bear, and a ram, was clearly identified in [Daniel 8:20](#) as the allied kingdoms of Media and Persia that conquered the city of Babylon. The bear being bigger and stronger on one side, and the ram having one horn that was longer than the other were most likely symbolic of the dominance of Persia in this alliance. The three directions, north, west, and south that the ram pushed literally represented the directions this kingdom expanded as it conquered the kingdom of Babylon to its west and then proceeded to push north and south. The three ribs in the bear's mouth possibly represented the expansion of this kingdom into three continents.<sup>109</sup> Eating lots of meat

<sup>108</sup> Koldewey, Robert. *The Excavations at Babylon*. London, Macmillan and Co. 1914, p46.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=YbdtAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA46>

<sup>109</sup> Williams, Henry Smith. *The Historian's History of the World*. New York, J. J. Little & Co., 1904. p 613.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=BKQ-AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA613>

could mean that the empire was greatly enlarged from what was controlled by the Babylonian empire. At the time of Queen Esther, under Ahasuerus, the empire spanned 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia [[Esther 1:1](#)].<sup>110</sup>

## Greece

<a href="#">Daniel 2:32 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 2:39 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:6 NKJV</a>		<a href="#">Daniel 8:5-8 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 8:21-22 NKJV</a>
<sup>32</sup> ... its belly and thighs of bronze,	<sup>39</sup> ... then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.	<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>5</sup> And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat [had] a notable horn between his eyes. <sup>6</sup> Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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.	<sup>21</sup> "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.

The third kingdom represented by bronze, a four-headed four-winged leopard, and a goat, was clearly identified in [Daniel 8:21](#) as the kingdom of Greece. By far the primary driving force behind the rise of this kingdom, and one of the most successful military geniuses of all time, was Alexander the Great. Four wings on the leopard represented the speed and efficiency with which Alexander conquered nations. He is known to have never lost a battle, despite being constantly outnumbered in many battles he fought.<sup>111</sup> The single horn between the eyes is clearly stated to be the first

<sup>110</sup> Masson, David Mather; Edited by William & Robert Chambers; *Ancient History - Chamber's education course*. Edinburgh, William & Robert Chambers, 1851, p145. <http://books.google.com/books?id=6oEDAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA156>

<sup>111</sup> Wheeler, Benjamin Ide. *Alexander the Great*. New York & London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902, p436. <https://books.google.com/books?id=MuxOAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA436>

king, Alexander the Great, who defeated Darius III and took over the entire Persian Empire.<sup>112</sup> When Alexander died suddenly at a young age, he had not produced an obvious or legitimate heir. Eventually the kingdom was broken down into four parts:<sup>113 114 115</sup>

1. Ptolemaic kingdom to the south which consisted of Egypt and neighboring regions
2. Seleucid empire to the east which included present day Iran, Iraq, Syria, and parts of central Asia
3. Lysimachus to the north which included Lydia, Ionia, Phrygia, and other parts of present day Turkey
4. Cassander to the west which included Macedonia, most of Greece and parts of Thrace

These four kingdoms are clearly represented by four heads of the leopard and the four horns on the goat that replaced the one that broke.

## Debates about the meaning of the little horn

Up to this point there is hardly room for any dispute about the meaning of these visions. However, looking a few verses ahead beginning with [Daniel 7:8](#) and also [Daniel 8:9](#) the unanimity of interpretations vanishes. Here we are introduced to a new power called the little horn. Some have assumed the little horn in both cases are the same power. Many believe the horn represents the Antichrist including some who believe it represented Antiochus Epiphanes. In chapter 7, Daniel saw the little horn come up among the ten horns of the fourth beast. In chapter 8, he saw four horns which grew in four directions and a little horn came out of one of them. But does the statement *out of one of them* tell us where this horn came from? The answer to this question may depend on what you believe the little horn represents.

First, I would like to present some of the reasons that many people believe the little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes. I believe it has a lot to do with the chapter 11 beginning with verse 21, and some parallels to the little horn in chapters 7, 8.

[Daniel 11:28](#) "While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be [moved] against the holy covenant; so he shall do [damage] and return to his own land.

<sup>29</sup> "At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. <sup>30</sup> "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. <sup>31</sup> "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. <sup>32</sup> "Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out [great exploits]. <sup>33</sup> "And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet [for many] days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. <sup>34</sup> "Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. <sup>35</sup> "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 11:28-35 NKJV](#)

<sup>112</sup> Abbott. p128. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HcgVAAAAAJ&pg=PA128>

<sup>113</sup> Masson. p174. <https://books.google.com/books?id=6oEDAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA174>

<sup>114</sup> *An Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time to the Present - Volume III*. London, 1738, p414. <http://books.google.com/books?id=BvVSAAAAAJ&pg=PA414>

<sup>115</sup> World Digital Library. <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/11739/>

During the second invasion of Antiochus into Egypt, a revolt broke out in Jerusalem as a result of false rumors of his death. Antiochus immediately left Egypt and marched on Jerusalem to put down the revolt. He had been especially enraged because he had been told that the inhabitants of Jerusalem had celebrated the news of his death. It is recorded that in the span of three days, he killed 40,000 Jews and sold as many more into slavery. Next, to show his contempt for their God, he entered the temple and plundered it of its consecrated utensils and treasures and then desecrated it by sacrificing a pig on the altar. He also boiled part of the pig and sprinkled the water all over the Temple. Two years later when Antiochus was turned back from attacking Egypt, by Rome, he again took his rage out on the Jews on his way back home. He ordered his general to attack Jerusalem on Saturday when he figured they would not fight back, and men, women, old and young were massacred without discretion. He then set the city on fire and took over the temple and used it as a store house for his armaments, thus putting a stop to the sacrificial services. Antiochus Epiphanes was still not satisfied. Attempting to entirely put an end to the religion of the Jews, he decreed that all people in his dominion should worship his gods, giving him even more license to persecute and kill them. All who were caught keeping the laws given to them by Moses were mercilessly killed. Written copies of the law were sought out and destroyed. In spite of the attempts of Antiochus, to eradicate their religion, there were still faithful, God fearing Jews. One of these was a priest named Matthias who had five sons, one of whom was Judas Maccabeus. They escaped to the wilderness where they gathered other faithful and zealous Jew to them. After his father died, Judas successfully led his highly outnumbered band of warriors to defeat the armies Antiochus sent against them. Eventually they were able to drive the forces out of Jerusalem, and clean and reopen the Temple.<sup>116 117 118 119</sup> It is not difficult to see the parallels between this history and the vision recorded by Daniel. Next let's look back to chapters 7 & 8 to see what is written about the little horn.

[Daniel 8:9](#) And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious [Land].<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> He even exalted [himself] as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily [sacrifices] were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.<sup>12</sup> Because of transgression, an army was given over [to the horn] to oppose the daily [sacrifices]; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did [all this] and prospered. [Daniel 8:9-12 NKJV](#)

With the statements, *daily [sacrifices] were taken away, sanctuary was cast down, and cast truth down to the ground*, one could see how the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes could be said to be a fulfillment of these prophecies.

[Daniel 7:24](#) The ten horns [are] ten kings [Who] shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first [ones], And shall subdue three kings.<sup>25</sup> He shall speak [pompous] words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then [the saints] shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. [Daniel 7:24-25 NKJV](#)

Likewise in Daniel 7, *persecute the saints of the Most High*, could be seen to refer to the persecution of the Jew by Antiochus Epiphanes.

<sup>116</sup> Hale, William Hale. *The History of the Jews - From the time of Alexander the Great to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus*. London, John Joseph Griffen and Co. 1850, p22. <https://books.google.com/books?id=bBpCAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA22>

<sup>117</sup> Raphall, Morris J. *The Hebrew Review and Magazine of Rabbinical Literature - Vol I*. London, Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Hall Court, 1835, p205. <https://books.google.com/books?id=ZgjOpY-YhOsC&pg=PA205>

<sup>118</sup> *An Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time to the Present - Volume III*. London, 1738, p576. <https://books.google.com/books?id=BvVSAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA576>

<sup>119</sup> Hale. p31. <https://books.google.com/books?id=bBpCAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA31>

Having presented these beliefs, I must say that I do not believe the little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes nor do I believe it represents the same entity in chapters 7 & 8. Here are the primary reasons for both of these beliefs:

1. In chapter 7, the little horn came out among ten horns of the fourth beast. Antiochus Epiphanes was a Greek king of the Seleucid Empire, one of the four sub kingdoms of Greece. If he was part of the vision, he should have been represented in the time of one of the four heads of the leopard and not in the time of the next beast which assumed world dominance from the Greeks.
2. In chapter 8, Antiochus Epiphanes should have been in the line of one of the four horns and not a new horn on his own. He did not grow exceedingly great as stated in verse 9 and was not even as great as his father who was known as Antiochus the Great. I also believe the commander of the host and the prince of princes are references to Jesus who came during the time of the Roman Empire and not the time of Antiochus Ephiphanes.
3. The little horn appeared among the ten horns of the fourth beast in chapter 7 and among the four horns of the goat in chapter 8. Based on the parallels of chapter 2, 7 and 8, I believe the two beasts represent different world empires and hence a different time in history. Consequently, I do not believe the little horn represents the same entity in both chapters.

These and other arguments explain why I believe Antiochus Epiphanes is not represented by the little horn in Daniel 7 & 8.<sup>120 121</sup> It does not particularly say anything about whether he is represented in [Daniel 11:28-35](#).

If not Antiochus Epiphanes, then who or what is represented by the little horn. In chapter 7 the little horn is preceded by the next world power which is unquestionably Rome. Since these visions have all been sequential, then the little horn of [Daniel 7:24-25](#) must be something that comes out of Rome, in fact it appears during the time when the focus has shifted from the Roman empire to the ten horns representing the kingdoms that followed Rome. In this chapter, I believe the little horn represents the Roman Catholic Church which was related to Rome because it grew out of it. Additional reasoning will be presented later on in the section [The Little Horn](#).

Chapter 8 is different from chapter 7 because the goat representing Greece, is not followed by another beast. The unified kingdom under Alexander the Great had given way to the four subdivisions discussed already in [Greece](#). This little horn is brought to light after those kingdoms had been in existence. If we don't go with Antiochus Epiphanes, there is no other Greek king that even comes close. With the new horn, consider the transition from one kingdom or empire to the next, Rome was without question the next world power to follow Greece. If we go with Rome, since we know it didn't grow out of one of the four sub-kingdoms of Greece, the statement, "out of one of them" must simply mean that the little horn came from one of the four winds of heaven. Additional reasoning will be presented next when we discuss [Rome](#).

## Rome

<a href="#">Daniel 2:33 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 2:40 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:7 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:23 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 8:9-11 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 8:23-25 NKJV</a>
<sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, ...	<sup>40</sup> "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, [that kingdom] will break	<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	<sup>23</sup> "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,	<sup>9</sup> And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious [Land]. <sup>10</sup> And it grew up to the host of	<sup>23</sup> "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/qod/q28.htm>

<sup>121</sup> Smith. 2005. pp156-162 <https://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA156>; 1907. pp198-205 <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA198>

	in pieces and crush all the others.	trampling the residue with its feet. It [was] different from all the beasts that [were] before it, and it had ten horns.	Trample it and break it in pieces.	heaven; and it cast down [some] of the host and [some] of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. <sup>11</sup> He even exalted [himself] as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily [sacrifices] were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.	schemes. <sup>24</sup> His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and [also] the holy people. <sup>25</sup> "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt [himself] in his heart. He shall destroy many in [their] prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without [human] means.
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Rome obviously existed before it defeated Greece and the transition from a world dominated by the weakening Greek empire to one dominated by Rome was one that took place over time.<sup>122 123 124 125 126</sup>

In [Daniel 7](#), the fourth beast, indescribable as like any known animal, represented Rome. It was notably frightening as well as being big and strong. Iron, the symbol for Rome in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, was what the beast's teeth were made of. The breaking down with iron teeth followed by pulverizing into the ground with its feet could symbolize a two-step process in Rome's conquering and subduing nations, perhaps the military conquest followed by the colonization and allowing the conquered people to become Roman citizens. This beast is mentioned as being very different from the others. One way that it was different was that for a large portion of its history, Rome was a republic as opposed to an empire such as the previous three world kingdoms had been.<sup>127 128 129 130</sup> Another way in which this fourth beast could be said to be very different is that it was a religious power in the later portion of its history.

The vision recorded in [Daniel 8](#) goes on to say that this little horn would grow exceedingly great to the South (Egypt), the East (Syria, the Seleucid Empire), and the beautiful land (Israel). Next, let's examine the use of the word 'host' in verses 10, 11. The word host finds its primary application to armies, including many references to the armies of Israel. Next the

<sup>122</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian\\_Wars#Fourth\\_Macedonian\\_War\\_.28150\\_to\\_148\\_BC.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian_Wars#Fourth_Macedonian_War_.28150_to_148_BC.29)

<sup>123</sup> Mahaffy, John Pentland & Gilman, Arthur. *Alexander's Empire - Second edition*. London, T Fisher Unwin, 1887, p264. <https://books.google.com/books?id=OjOAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA264>

<sup>124</sup> Mahaffy, John Pentland. *Empire of the Ptolemies*. London: Macmillan and Co. and New York, 1895, p392. <https://books.google.com/books?id=3PhAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA392>

<sup>125</sup> Shuckburgh, Evelyn Shirley. *A History of Rome to the Battle of Actium*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1902, p763,781. <http://books.google.com/books?id=A-DQAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA763>, <https://books.google.com/books?id=A-DQAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA781>

<sup>126</sup> Mahaffy, Gilman. p276. <https://books.google.com/books?id=OjOAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA276>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.forumromanum.org/history/morey06.html>

<sup>128</sup> Heitland, William Emmerton. *A Short History of the Roman Republic*. London, Cambridge University Press, 1911, p12. <https://books.google.com/books?id=hXpoAAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA12>

<sup>129</sup> Botsford, George Willis & Lillie M. Shaw. *The Story of Rome as Greeks and Romans tell it*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1903, p84. <http://books.google.com/books?id=YLk9AAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA84>

<sup>130</sup> Botsford. p127. <http://books.google.com/books?id=YLk9AAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA127>

word star could refer to the leaders of the Israelite people. In 63 B.C. Pompey dismantled Jerusalem and made Judea tributary to the Romans.<sup>131</sup> In 37 B.C. after a short siege and the ensuing massacre, Herod took the throne on behalf of Rome, thus ending the Asmonean dynasty after 126 years.<sup>132</sup> This change of dynasty to a Roman appointed king, effectively threw down part of the Jewish leadership, with the priesthood and the Sanhedrin continuing to function. In this way, *some of the hosts and stars were cast down*. Next, *exalted [himself] as high as the Prince of the host* is thought to be a reference to the crucifixion of Christ by Rome. *daily [sacrifices] were taken away* could refer to the end of the need for the Jewish sacrificial system after the death of Christ. And *the place of His sanctuary was cast down*, can most definitely apply to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Rome in the year 70.<sup>133</sup>

The interpretation in [Daniel 8:23-25](#) doesn't name the little horn again, but by parallel, this king that will arise in the later part of the rule of the four kingdoms must be the little horn which we have said is Rome. The words *fierce features* are translated from the Hebrew words [אָז, 'az]<sup>134</sup> [פָּנִים, pānîm]<sup>135</sup> which is also used in [Deuteronomy 28](#) where Moses is describing what will happen to the Israelites if they do not obey God. In verse [50](#) he says a nation of fierce [אָז, 'az]<sup>136</sup> countenance, will attack them and lay siege to their cities. In verse [49](#), Moses says this nation with a fierce face will speak a language the Jews didn't understand. In [Daniel 8:23 KJV](#), the words *dark sentences* could be translated *riddle or dark obscure saying*<sup>137</sup> which could be a reference to a language not understood. The phrase *mighty, but not by his own power* could refer to the Roman practice of staffing their military with recruits from conquered nations, also known as Roman provinces. One of the incentives was that military recruits were given immediate citizenship, thus maintaining the illusion that the Legions were composed of Roman citizens.<sup>138</sup> As for destroying mighty men and the holy people, it is estimated that one to one and a half million Jews were killed at the time of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in the year 70.<sup>139</sup> <sup>140</sup> Opposing the prince of princes is easily fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ by Rome. And finally, *broken without [human] means* could be a parallel to the destruction of the statue by the stone *cut out without hands* in [Daniel 2:34](#). If so, this last statement would really belong in the later section on the [Judgment](#), which could mean that some of the verses in this section could also find application to a later stage of the little horn.<sup>141</sup> I see the little horn in chapter 8 as having two related but different phases. Both are related to Rome, with the first phase being the Roman Empire equated with the terrible beast with iron teeth, and the second is equated with the little horn that came up among the ten in chapter 7.

Much has been written about the fall of the Roman Empire. It is difficult to actually select a date without having to explain reasons for the choice. Probably the most common date is 476 when Odoacer, a barbarian who had served as a general in the Roman military, led a revolt and deposed the last emperor of the Western empire. He did not begin another united world empire as the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans had been, in fact he validated his position as king or viceroy of Italy by deferring to the emperor of the Eastern empire. In 493, after several military

<sup>131</sup> Hale. p57. <https://books.google.com/books?id=bBpCAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA57>

<sup>132</sup> Hale. p63. <http://books.google.com/books?id=bBpCAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA63>

<sup>133</sup> Hale. p106. <https://books.google.com/books?id=bBpCAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA106>

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5794/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6440/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5794/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>137</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2420/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>138</sup> Breasted, James Henry. *A Short Ancient History, Part 1*. Boston, The Athenæum Press, Ginn & Company, 1915, p276.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=RoY-AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA276>

<sup>139</sup> Hale. p108. <https://books.google.com/books?id=bBpCAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA108>

<sup>140</sup> Tappan, Eva March. *The Story of the Roman People - An Elementary History of Rome*. Boston, New York, Chicago, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1910, p192. <https://books.google.com/books?id=FV4AAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA192>

<sup>141</sup> Smith. 2005. pp189-191 <http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA189>; 1907. pp231-232

<http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA231>



defeats, Odoacer was murdered and Theodoric king of the Ostrogoths proclaimed himself king of Italy and severed the connection to the Eastern empire in his successful 33-year reign.<sup>142 143 144 145 146</sup>

## Divided kingdoms

<p><a href="#">Daniel 2:33 NKJV</a>  <sup>33</sup> ... its feet partly of iron and partly of clay</p>	<p><a href="#">Daniel 2:41-43 NKJV</a>  <sup>41</sup> "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. <sup>42</sup> "And [as] the toes of the feet [were] partly of iron and partly of clay, [so] the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. <sup>43</sup> "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.</p>		<p><a href="#">Daniel 7:24 NKJV</a>  <sup>24</sup> The ten horns [are] ten kings [Who] shall arise from this kingdom. ...</p>		
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The iron and clay and the ten horns represent multiple kingdoms that will never be united as a single power. Were there literally ten kingdoms or were the ten horns symbolic of many. The many kingdoms occupying the land formerly controlled by Rome have changed over the centuries, fulfillment of the dream given to Nebuchadnezzar that the people would not be able to unite after the fall of the Roman Empire.<sup>147</sup> Following are several different lists of the invaders who contributed to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

In his Dictionary of the Holy Bible, John Brown compiled several lists under the definition of horn.

- Bishop Chandler: Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Suevior Alans, Vandals, Franks, Burgundi, Heruli & Thuringi, Saxons & Angles, Huns, Lombards.
- Mede's list: Britons, Saxons, Franks, Burgundians, Visigoths, Suevi & Alans, Vandals, Alemans, Ostrogoths, Greeks.
- Bishop Lloyd's list: Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Burgundians, Heruli, Rugians, Longobards.

<sup>142</sup> Gibbon, Edward; Smith, William. *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire - abridged*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1857, p272. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA272>

<sup>143</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odoacer>

<sup>144</sup> Joy, James Richard. *Rome and the Making of Modern Europe*. New York, Flood and Vincent The Chautauqua Century Press, 1893, p198. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ps26AAAAIAAJ&pg=PA198>

<sup>145</sup> Goodrich, Samuel Griswold. *History of all Nations, from the earliest periods to the present time*. Auburn, J. C. Derby N. C. Miller, 1851, p770. <http://books.google.com/books?id=pgi-i1oljjcC&pg=PA770>

<sup>146</sup> Goodrich, Samuel Griswold. *A Pictorial History of Ancient Rome*. Philadelphia, E. H. Butler and Co., 1864, p262. <http://books.google.com/books?id=0ejQAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA262>

<sup>147</sup> <http://www.euratlas.net/history/europe/index.html>

- Sir Isaac Newton's list: Vandals, Alans, Suevians, Visigoths, Burgundians, Franks, Britons, Huns, Lombards, exarchate of Ravenna.
- At the time of this publication, Brown proposed the modern list: Italy, Sicily, Portugal, France, Spain, Britain, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary.<sup>148</sup>

Uriah Smith's proposed the list: Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, Lombards.<sup>149</sup>

There are many more lists that have been proposed, but upon examination of these, I have several observations. There are instances where two people groups have been combined on one list and are separate on another. For example, the Suevi and Alans are combined on most lists, but were counted separately by Isaac Newton. The Angles and Saxons were counted as one on most lists but seemed to be counted individually by Mede. There is a common set of names that appeared in all lists: Visigoths, Vandals, Burgundi, Franks. What I am beginning to think is that the ten is not a literal number but is symbolic of multiple kingdoms which will occupy the territory of Rome over time but will never be united as one. In fact, I don't know why these toes and horns couldn't represent all the kingdoms of the world which will never be united into a single world power.

## The Little Horn

	<a href="#">Daniel 7:8 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:24-25 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 8:12 NKJV</a>	
	<p><sup>8</sup> "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, [were] eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.</p>	<p><sup>24</sup> ... And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first [ones], And shall subdue three kings.   <sup>25</sup> He shall speak [pompous] words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then [the saints] shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.</p>	<p><sup>12</sup> Because of transgression, an army was given over [to the horn] to oppose the daily [sacrifices]; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did [all this] and prospered.</p>	

Daniel 7 is actually the only one of the three visions that shows this to be a new phase in the prophecy. Daniel 2 doesn't mention it and Daniel 8 has it as a continuation or overlap of the little horn that we determined began as the Roman Empire. So, we should consider there to be some connection from the prior kingdom or phase of the prophecy to this one. Let us start by examining these three horns that were subdued or pulled up and by whom this was done. After the Western empire had given way to the many horns/kingdoms that would replace it around 476, Justinian I aka Justinian

<sup>148</sup> Brown, John. *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible - Volume I*. Pittsburgh, Ecclesiastical and Literary Press of Zadok Cramer, 1808, p658. <http://books.google.com/books?id=irBUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA658>

<sup>149</sup> Smith. 2005. p 58 <http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA58>; 1907. pp150 <http://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA150>

the Great, Emperor of the Eastern (Christian) Empire from 527 to 565,<sup>150</sup> would attempt to restore the empire's greatness.<sup>151 152</sup>

1. In 488, the Eastern Roman emperor Zeno either accepted the proposal or commissioned Theodoric king of the Ostrogoths to attack Italy, which had been under the control of Odoacer and the Heruli since the fall of the Western empire in 476. In 493 after the death of Odoacer and the end of the Heruli kingdom, Theodoric was proclaimed King of Italy.<sup>153 154</sup>
2. In 533/534 under Justinian the Great, Belisarius conquered the Vandal kingdom in North Africa.<sup>155</sup>
3. In 538/539, Belisarius next delivered Italy and Rome from the occupation of the Ostrogoth barbarians, but when he was called back east, they quickly fell into chaos.<sup>156</sup> In 552, Prompted by Pope Vigilius, Justinian sent the eunuch Narses to resume the conquest and deliverance of Italy from the Ostrogoths.<sup>157</sup>

These campaigns re-established Roman control over the western Mediterranean. But these campaigns were not just about empire building. Uriah Smith also points out that these three horns or kingdoms held Arian beliefs<sup>158</sup> and were hence at odds with the main body of the Christian Church.<sup>159</sup> [Daniel 8](#) doesn't really seem to mention it as a different power either, so why did I separate [8:12](#) from the prior verses describing the little horn? There are several reasons. Uriah Smith says, "an army was given over to the horn," refers to the conversion of some of the barbarian conquerors of the Roman Empire to Christianity, thus contributing to the power of the church.<sup>160</sup> I would add, that if the "daily sacrifice" represented worship or religion to the Jews, then this power had control over religion or worship in whatever its new context was. It would fling truth to the ground and would wield a lot of power. If we assert that this horn is the civil power of the Christian church, we can trace it in the following manner. There are actually three dominant Christian powers that partially overlapped.

1. Constantine I (324-327) became the first Christian emperor of Rome and made Christianity the religion of the state.<sup>161</sup> In 380, Theodosius was the first emperor baptized in the faith of the Trinity after which he began persecuting Arianism.<sup>162</sup> Theodosius I (379-395) was the last emperor to rule over both the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire.<sup>163</sup> This Eastern Roman empire could be said to have officially started with the successors of Theodosius in 395 and continued in a state of perpetual decay from 395 to 1453.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justinian\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justinian_I)

<sup>151</sup> Gibbon, Edward; Smith, William. *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire - abridged*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1857, p309. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA309>

<sup>152</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, p117. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA117>

<sup>153</sup> Gibbon. p281. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA281>

<sup>154</sup> Joy, James Richard. *Rome and the Making of Modern Europe*. New York, Flood and Vincent The Chautauqua Century Press, 1893, p218. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ps26AAAIAAJ&pg=PA218>

<sup>155</sup> Gibbon. p311. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA311>

<sup>156</sup> Gibbon. p316-320. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA320>

<sup>157</sup> Gibbon. p330-331. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA330>

<sup>158</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism>

<sup>159</sup> Smith. pp 110-111 <http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA110>

<sup>160</sup> Smith. pp 57-63 <http://books.google.com/books?id=b1n7CNubUDsC&pg=PA57>

<sup>161</sup> Gibbon. p122. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA122>

<sup>162</sup> Gibbon. p211. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA211>

<sup>163</sup> Platts, John. *A New Universal Biography*. London, Sherwood Jones & Co., 1825, p253.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=x05LcArWCWAC&pg=PA253>

<sup>164</sup> Gibbon. p240. <http://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA240>

2. In the year 800 Pope Leo crowned Charles or Charlemagne as the first Emperor in the west since the last Caesar had resigned his power to the senate and the Eastern Empire, 324 years earlier.<sup>165</sup> In 962, after a series of weak and ineffective successor to Charles, Otto the great was crowned emperor by Pope John XII. The German was the founder of a new dynasty and an empire which became known as the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>166</sup> This empire continued until 1806, when Francis II resigned the crown.<sup>167</sup> This empire was really the Christian successor to the Western Roman Empire.
  
3. The third is the religious power represented by the head of the church. The Chief Elder of the Church at Rome claimed special dignity from the position of that city as the metropolis of the civilized world.<sup>168</sup> As the Christian church grew and became the official religion of the Roman Empire, there were power struggles between the leader of the church and the emperor of Rome. After Constantine professed himself a Christian, since the Emperors had always presided over the Pagan system, the same patronage was now transferred to Christianity.<sup>169</sup> In fact the reign of Constantine is generally thought to be the beginning of the decline of Christianity in spiritual things and the beginning of its rise in temporal grandeur. It is said that the property of orphans was tampered with and no wealthy penitent was allowed to die in peace in Rome until the church was assured a large share of his land and possessions.<sup>170</sup> 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>171</sup> We have already mentioned the mutually beneficial but often antagonistic relationship the Popes had with the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. 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>172</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>173</sup> <sup>174</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>175</sup> Towards the close of the fifteenth

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<sup>165</sup> Bryce, James. *The Holy Roman Empire*. London, Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1899, p44,50.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=O8cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA44>, <http://books.google.com/books?id=O8cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA50>

<sup>166</sup> Bryce. p80, 87. <http://books.google.com/books?id=O8cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA80>,

<http://books.google.com/books?id=O8cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA87>

<sup>167</sup> Bryce. p1. <http://books.google.com/books?id=O8cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA1>

<sup>168</sup> Legge, Alfred Owen. *The Growth of the Temporal Power of the Papacy*. London, Macmillan & Co., 1870, p10.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA10>

<sup>169</sup> Legge. p11. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA11>

<sup>170</sup> Legge. p14-15. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA14>

<sup>171</sup> Legge. p23. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA23>

<sup>172</sup> Clare. p161. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA161>

<sup>173</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>174</sup> Legge. p36. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA36>

<sup>175</sup> Vincent. p396-397. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA396>

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>176</sup> 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>177 178 179 180 181</sup> Its temporal power effectively ended on 20 September 1870 when the Papal States were annexed to the kingdom of Italy.<sup>182 183 184 185</sup>

These three powers had their differences, and there were power struggles, but one thing they had in common was that they restricted their citizens' freedoms in favor of a corrupted version of Christianity. There was a great divide between the Eastern and Western factions of the church in 1054, with the Eastern Church becoming known as the Eastern or Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>186 187 188</sup>

As for uttering great boasts in [Daniel 7:8](#), the relationship between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire was once described by the arrogant assertion of Hildebrand, 'The Pope is the sun, the Emperor the moon which shines with borrowed light.'<sup>189 190 191</sup> And regarding changing times and laws mentioned in [Daniel 7:25](#), while not necessarily the Papacy, the leadership of the early Christian church changed the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. This was a change involving time and one of the Ten Commandments.<sup>192 193</sup> They teach the honoring and even praying to images of the saints even though the making of images and bowing down to them is forbidden by the third commandment.<sup>194</sup> In some cases, they even justify it by removing the third commandment.<sup>195</sup> The old canon law was gradually modified and

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<sup>176</sup> Legge. p98. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA98>

<sup>177</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>178</sup> Legge. p150. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA150>

<sup>179</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>180</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>181</sup> Clare. p327. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA327>

<sup>182</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>183</sup> Clare. p413. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA413>

<sup>184</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>185</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>186</sup> Cole, F. G. *Mother of all Churches - a brief and comprehensive handbook of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Church*. London, Skeffington & Son, 1908, p31-32. <https://books.google.com/books?id=EMOP9fB0AoC&pg=PA31>

<sup>187</sup> Schaff, Phillip. *History of the Christian Church - Volume 4*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908, p320.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ilzYAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA320>

<sup>188</sup> Attia, Maged. *The Coptic Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement*. Egypt, Bishopric of Youth Affair, 2001, p6.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=KRcytT-OIJYC&pg=PA6>

<sup>189</sup> Bryce, James. *The Holy Roman Empire*. London, Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1899, p115.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=O8cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA115>

<sup>190</sup> Vincent. p312. <https://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA312>

<sup>191</sup> Legge. p2. <https://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA2>

<sup>192</sup> Deharbe, Joseph; translated by Fander, John. *A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion*. New York, Catholic School Book Co. 1876, p73. <https://books.google.com/books?id=J749AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA73>

<sup>193</sup> Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *From Sabbath to Sunday*. Rome, Italy, The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977, p312.

[http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/Further\\_Research/SDAs/sab2sun.pdf](http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/Further_Research/SDAs/sab2sun.pdf)

<sup>194</sup> Deharbe. p177. <http://books.google.com/books?id=J749AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA177>

<sup>195</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/command.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/command.htm)

to some extent displaced by the new papal claims founded upon these fictions. The Decretals were intermingled with the canons and acquired equal authority with them.<sup>196</sup>

Finally, I will not provide references again for historical facts and figures repeated in this summary and conclusion. Let's start by focusing on the last part of [Daniel 7:25](#), "the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time." In trying to understand this, I see four questions:

1. Who is the "his," whose hand they are given into?
2. Who are "the saints" that are given into his hand?
3. How long is a "time, times and half a time?"
4. When does this period begin and end?

The first two questions really go hand in hand. I think the main focus of this section has been to identify who the little horn is, whose hand "the saints" are given into. I would say that the evidence points to the power that had the ability to persecute true followers of God. In this case, following the timeline of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, the next major power, which was also related to Rome, was the Roman Catholic Church. As I have shown, this power persecuted anyone who didn't believe as they did, including true followers of God. They have also been shown to have participated in the destruction of three horns, changed times and laws, persecuted the saints, uttered great boasts, and performed its will and prospered. See [Appendix B](#) for a discussion on the length of time represented by the "time, times and half a time," where time=1 year, times=2 years, giving us a total of 3.5 years and using 360 days/year, 1260 days. Next, applying the prophetic day/year principle, this gives us 1260 literal years. Lastly, is it possible to find a beginning and end for this power that would span 1260 years? To me, the two main candidates for the end for the period are 1798 when Pope Pius VI was taken captive by Napoleon's general Berthier, and died in France, and 1870 when the Papal States were taken and annexed to the kingdom of Italy. So, if we subtract 1260 from these two dates, we have 538 and 610. Neither year stands out in history as the beginning of Papal power, but one could argue that 538 was when the third of three horns was plucked up which was the first action mentioned for the little horn in [Daniel 7:8](#), [7:24](#). In the absence of a better alternative, I choose the 538-1798 as the 1260-year reign of the little horn.

## Judgment

	<a href="#">Daniel 7:9-12 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:26 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 8:13-14 NKJV</a>	
	<p><sup>9</sup> "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment [was] white as snow, And the hair of His head [was] like pure wool. His throne [was] a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; <sup>10</sup> 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</p>	<p><sup>26</sup> 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy [it] forever.</p>	<p><sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking; and [another] holy one said to that certain [one] who was speaking, "How long [will] the vision [be, concerning] the daily [sacrifices] and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" <sup>14</sup> And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."</p>	

<sup>196</sup> Vincent. p429. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA429>

		<p>court was seated,          And the books were          opened. <sup>11</sup> "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. <sup>12</sup> "As for the          rest of the beasts,          they had their          dominion taken          away, yet their lives          were prolonged for          a season and a time.</p>		
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There is clearly a judgment scene in heaven pictured here. The end of [verse 10](#) tells us that the court was seated and books were opened. At first glance, it would be easy to just lump this judgment in with the return of Christ to earth. But after the judgment scene, [verse 11](#) says the beast was still uttering pompous words. Then later on in [verse 11](#) the beast was slain. It is interesting to note that it is the beast, not just the little horn that was uttering pompous words. Finally, I think what [verse 12](#) is saying about the prior three beasts is that, when their dominion was taken away, the people and kingdoms continued, but under different rulers. The fourth beast is slain and thrown into the fire to be followed by the everlasting kingdom of God on earth. So, it seems that between the fourth beast and the kingdom of God, people and cities and kingdoms will not continue as they did during the transition from Babylon to Medo-Persia to Greece and finally Rome. This is because God will destroy sin and sinners on this earth and will then re-create the earth and establish His kingdom here forever.

So, when and where does this judgment take place? It seems that it must take place before the second coming of Christ, because the little horn is still speaking boastful words and the fourth beast is still alive. We will see that the legs and toes from the image in [Daniel 2](#), which represented the last world kingdom and the divided kingdoms which followed it, covers the time of earth's history until Christ returns and establishes His kingdom on earth. So, this fourth beast with horns representing the divided kingdoms, and the little horn, must also represent this same time period. It makes sense that this judgment should take place before the return of Christ because at the time of his return, it seems that everyone will be sentenced according to the outcome of their judgment. Let's take a look at what Jesus Himself said about this judgment and the carrying out of that judgment in relationship to the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

[John 5:25](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup> "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, <sup>27</sup> "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> "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 5:25-29 NKJV](#)

In addition to this statement of Jesus, we have another description of these two resurrections in the book of Revelation.

[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](#)

So, it seems that the sentencing of the judgment will be carried out at the time of the resurrection. The righteous will be resurrected to live forever with Christ, but the wicked will receive their sentence which is death. From Revelation, we see that these two resurrections do not take place at the same time. In fact, there are 1000 years between them, when the righteous will be in heaven with Christ. The judgment by Christ must be complete by the time of the resurrection of the righteous, otherwise how will it be known who should be resurrected and taken to heaven, and who should be left for the second resurrection?

## Sanctuary

Let's take a look at 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 believe this sanctuary referred to here is the [sanctuary in heaven](#). But how long is the 2300 days and when does it begin and end. Since we are talking about a prophecy here, we need to apply biblical rules for understanding the duration. In [Appendix B](#) we show that a day of prophetic time is a year of real time. Determining the start of this 2300-year period is a little more tricky. Let's look a little ahead to the next chapter in Daniel.

[Daniel 9:20](#) Now while I [was] speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, <sup>21</sup> yes, while I [was] speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. <sup>22</sup> And he informed [me], and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. <sup>23</sup> "At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell [you], for you [are] greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: <sup>24</sup> "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. [Daniel 9:20-25 NKJV](#)

In order to understand this, it helps to look at the original language. A good friend of mine named Keith Bowman, shared the following, which he learned in one of his graduate study classes at Andrews University in Michigan. In verse 21, Daniel speaks of a vision he had previously seen. The word he used for *vision* is [חֲזוֹן, hāzôn](#)<sup>197</sup>, which from Strong's concordance, we can see has the meaning *a vision from God respecting future events, or a divine revelation*. In verse 23,

<sup>197</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2377/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>



the word the angel used that was translated to *vision* is [מַרְאֵה, mar'ê](#)<sup>198</sup>, which according to Strong's concordance primarily has to do with sight or what is seen, but also can refer to a vision. This whole chapter has been about the dreams of world kingdoms, which covers history from Daniel's time to the end of the world and the creation of the new world. The all-encompassing visions and prophecies are what Daniel was calling the *chazown*. The other word, *mar'eh*, refers to what he was being shown in verse 24. Next let's look at the word *determined* in verse 24. It is translated from the Hebrew [חָתַק, hātak](#)<sup>199</sup>, which according to Strong's has the primary definition to divide or determine. If we take the meaning to divide, then you can think of dividing a larger time into chunks. Now as Daniel was being given the interpretation for the *chazown* he recorded in chapter 8, the angel didn't explain the meaning of the 2300 evenings and mornings.

[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]." <sup>27</sup> And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it. [Daniel 8:26-27 NKJV](#)

Now, in [Daniel 9:20-22](#) which we just read above, the angel Gabriel is returning to give him more information about the *chazown*. So, in verse 24, he begins by telling Daniel about another prophetic time period, a smaller one, which is divided from the larger one. Hence, the assumption that the 2300 prophetic days and the seventy prophetic weeks begin at the same time. The starting event is clearly given in verse 25 as the command to rebuild Jerusalem. The interpretation of [prophetic time](#), as well as the [starting point](#), the command to rebuild Jerusalem are discussed in detail in [Appendix B](#).

I believe the event prophesied at the end of the 2300 years [beginning in 457 B.C.](#) has to do with the Jewish [Day of atonement](#). I believe it has to do with the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven and the Judgment which I have just discussed. Doing the math, -457 + 2300 (+1 because there is no year zero) = 1844. I believe this to be the start of the real Day of Atonement in heaven of which the annual one in the Jewish religion was a copy. Studying the copy of the sanctuary and its services will give some insight into what is happening in heaven.

## Christ establishes His kingdom on earth

<a href="#">Daniel 2:34-35 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 2:44-45 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:13-14 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 7:27 NKJV</a>		
<sup>34</sup> "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> "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	<sup>44</sup> "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	<sup>13</sup> "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. <sup>14</sup> 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	<sup>27</sup> Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'		

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4758/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>199</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2852/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.	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."	[the one] Which shall not be destroyed.			
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This last segment of Daniel's dreams and visions appears to be referring to a time, when God will come and set up His kingdom on earth. The following verses in Revelation add some detail to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

[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.

<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 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."

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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 20:7-21:27 NKJV](#)

There doesn't seem to be a need to go any further for these visions. They covered from Daniel's time all the way down through the end of the world, and the beginning of the new one. At that time, God will be with us, everything will be made perfect and those who are saved will live forever.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think God gave so much information to Daniel about future events?
- Why do you think so much of the same information was given or shown multiple times?
- How do you think this information is relevant to your life?

# The Gospel

Gospel is translated from the Greek word [εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)<sup>200</sup>, which in this context has the meaning “glad tidings”, or more specifically, “glad tidings of the kingdom of God”, or “glad tidings of salvation.” The Greek word is used 77 times in the KJV translations of Matthew and Mark, but surprisingly not at all in Luke and John. The word “gospel” is used 15 times in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but not at all in John. It is most often used together with a form of the word preach.

My goal is to cover the life of Jesus in a chronological order, using all four of the gospels. This is by no means a new approach to discussing the life of Christ, and I intend to lean heavily on the work of others in ordering the events, primarily the book “[A New Harmony and Exposition of the Gospels](#),” by James Strong.<sup>201</sup> Prior to moving onto the events associated with the life of Jesus Christ, I will briefly discuss the four books, their authors and target audiences.

First, I would like to share an observation that has been made and is shared by most scholars. The content and composition of the first three books, Matthew, Mark and Luke share so much in common that it seems unlikely that they were written independently. The predominant view now is that Mark was written first and was used as a source for Matthew and Luke. Because of their similarities, they have, since the 1780’s been known as the synoptic Gospels.<sup>202</sup> Wikipedia has a nice graphic in the right margin showing the relationship between the three books, with 76% of Mark’s content appearing in both Matthew and Luke.<sup>203</sup>

A side note is that a resource that I found very useful in my study of the Gospels was a website that cross linked Old Testament quotations with the New Testament.<sup>204</sup>

## Matthew

The content of the book of Matthew does not identify its author, but tradition is that this first book of the New Testament is the Gospel as told by Matthew, one of Jesus' twelve disciples.<sup>205</sup> The target audience is widely accepted to be the Jews.<sup>206 207 208 209</sup> One of Matthew's goals was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah that was prophesied about in their holy scriptures, which for the most part is our Old Testament. In fact he included up to 67 Old

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<sup>200</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2098/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>201</sup> Strong, James. *A New Harmony and Exposition of the Gospels*. New York, Carlton & Phillips, 1852.

<https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro>

<sup>202</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Synoptic-Gospels>

<sup>203</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Matthew#Setting\\_and\\_date](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew#Setting_and_date)

<sup>204</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Quotations-NT-OT.htm>

<sup>205</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Matthew#Author](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew#Author)

<sup>206</sup> Monser, Harold E (Editor). *Cross=Reference Bible*. New York, Chicago, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901, p1751.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=It7AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1751>

<sup>207</sup> Bland, Rev. M. *Annotations on the Gospel of St. Matthew*. Cambridge, J. Smith, 1878, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=X8LM165r68oC&pg=PA5>

<sup>208</sup> Tarbell, Martha. *Tarbell's Teacher's Guide*. New York, Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919, p32.

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

<sup>209</sup> Robertson, A.T. *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. New York, Macmillian Company, 1911, p27.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=1dKsbMPkOhwC&pg=PA27>

Testament quotations<sup>210</sup>, in 56 different statements, most of which were words spoken by Jesus.<sup>211</sup> To re-enforce this assertion, Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham the forefather of the Jews and David their greatest king [[Matthew 1:1](#)].

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>212</sup> in which along with her booklet, made some very interesting points. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *Matthew - Prophecy Fulfilled*.<sup>213</sup>

- (4:43) The Gospel of Matthew has as a main premise, that God has the ability to re-route even though Israel took bad turns.
- (9:59) Matthew's audience [as Jews], liked the law, and kept the law, but now needed to understand what it had to do with Christ.
- (16:28) While Matthew's primary audience may have been the Jews, he also made it clear that everyone is included in the Messiah's blessing. Abraham is specifically mentioned in the genealogy and recall that it was through the covenant with Abraham that all the world was to be blessed. He also repeats, the phrase "from the east and the west," such as the story of the Magi from the east which is only found in Matthew. p17,27
- (15:45) Matthew's main title for Jesus is son of David. p13,14
- (11:15) Matthew wants us to understand that all the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were about Jesus Christ. He was the fulfillment of what the prophets had foretold. p10,12
- (33:34) Jesus will live a perfect life where Israel failed; Jesus re-lives Israel's history and becomes victorious in every place Israel failed. p33
- (36:55) Jesus is called the Son of God because in the Old Testament Israel was called the son of God, and now Jesus in Israel's place is also called the Son of God.
- (44:26) In wrapping up her lecture, she asserts: Jesus re-lives our lives and perfectly prepares a record for us so that whenever we fall, He has the ability to re-route us. It's not cheap grace, that covers everything, and God doesn't care. It's that He personally would come and pay your ransom. He came and lived a perfect life, death, resurrection so that when we fall, He has the ability and authority to re-route us [to get us back on track].

What do you believe?

- How does Talbot's point about God being able to reroute directly relate to your life?
- If the target audience is the Jews, how is this book relevant to you?
- If you believe that Jesus is an equal member in the Trinity, does it bother you that he is called the Son of God?

## Mark

The book of Mark does not identify its author, other than the name of the book itself. Church tradition has long held that this book was written by John Mark, cousin of Barnabas [[Colossians 4:10](#)]. It is also assumed that this is the same

<sup>210</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Matthew-OTQuotations.htm>

<sup>211</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/matthew.cfm>

<sup>212</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXw9AlkeiBQ>

<sup>213</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2009.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=1](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=1)

Mark who worked closely with Peter [[1 Peter 5:13](#)], and hence this book could in a sense be considered the Gospel according to Peter.<sup>214</sup> More recently, some modern scholars have proposed a different Mark as the author<sup>215</sup>, but many people still hold to the traditional views. It has not always been so, but it is now a widely held view that the book of Mark was the first of the Gospels to be written. As such, it is also now thought that the authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source.<sup>216</sup> Few references to the Old Testament<sup>217</sup> and explaining Jewish customs<sup>218</sup> are just some of the reasons that many believe that Gentiles are the target audience of the book of Mark.

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>219</sup> in which along with her booklet, she made some very interesting points. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *Mark - Good News!*<sup>220</sup>

- (9:50) Mark is the only one of the four to call his narrative the Gospel. The general consensus is that this is first of the four Gospels that was written. p8
- (11:03) Mark's challenge is: how do you break through to a people who thought the Messiah would come with an army to save their nation alone, that there was a much bigger picture that was more inclusive.
- (13:30) The pivot point of the book of Mark is the middle, [chapter 8:31](#), out of the 16 chapters. The first half will answer the question: who is He? Answer: the Son of God. The second half will concentrate on why He had to die. p9,10
- (14:40) In [Mark 8:31](#) Jesus makes a revelation that nobody has heard before: that the authoritative Son of God had to die. A dying Messiah was an oxymoron to the Jews. The second half question: why does he have to die? He is the suffering Son of Man. p10
- (15:50) Three predictions that He would die. Chapter [8:31](#), [9:31](#), [10:33](#). p11
- (16:22) The climactic verse of Mark is chapter [10:45](#) which answers the question: why He has to die; to give His life a ransom for many. p41
- (18:55) Chapters 6-8 uses bread to reveal the shocking truth, that the Messiah came not just for the Jews but for everybody, even those who don't think like we do. p33
- (20:55) A series of two step teachings where He will show that that they only understood part, but that there was more that they didn't understand. p35

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/mark.cfm>

<sup>215</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Mark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark)

<sup>216</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Mark#Place\\_in\\_the\\_Christian\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark#Place_in_the_Christian_Church)

<sup>217</sup> Smith, William (editor). *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1863, p238.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=3hBUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA238>

<sup>218</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Mark#Composition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark#Composition)

<sup>219</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc9CnjzT0A4>

<sup>220</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Mark Good News*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2012.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=14](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=14)

- (20:14) Three stories about bread. The word bread was used 19 times in chapters 6-8.

This column is what the disciples expected	This is the result	This is what they didn't expect
Miraculously multiplying bread to feed large crowds of people		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (22:10) <a href="#">Mark 6:33-44</a> feeding in Jewish territory. p33</li> <li>▪ 5 loaves of <u>bread</u></li> <li>▪ Took, blessed, broke, gave</li> <li>▪ They all ate and were <u>satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ 12 baskets left</li> <li>▪ Word used for basket was <a href="#">κόφινος, kophinos</a><sup>221</sup></li> <li>▪ 5000 men besides women and children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Bread</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (31:24) <a href="#">Mark 8:1-9</a> feeding in Gentile territory [the "other side"] p34</li> <li>▪ 7 loaves of <u>bread</u></li> <li>▪ Took, blessed, broke, gave</li> <li>▪ They all ate and were <u>satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ 7 baskets left</li> <li>▪ Word used for basket was <a href="#">σπυρίς, spyris</a><sup>222</sup></li> <li>▪ 4000 men besides women and children</li> </ul>
(28:14) Jesus steps into unclean territory and meets a Syrophenician woman who asks for healing of her daughter. Jesus carries on a conversation with her about bread. <a href="#">Mark 7:24-30</a>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is not right to take the children's <u>bread</u> and give it to the dogs</li> <li>▪ Let the children be <u>satisfied</u> first</li> <li>▪ The Jews were considered the children in this case and this statement was in line with their expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Bread</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the eyes of the disciples, this woman was not worthy of receiving a miracle from Jesus</li> <li>▪ After all she was a woman, a gentile, and from the region of Tyre and Sidon where the wicked Queen Jezebel came from</li> <li>▪ She answered, even the dogs under the table feed on the children's <u>bread</u> crumbs</li> <li>▪ Jesus healed her daughter and she was <u>satisfied</u></li> </ul>
(35:20) Summary <a href="#">Mark 8:18</a> Jesus asked the disciples; how much was left after feeding the 5000? They answered 12. Then He asked, how much was left after feeding the 4000? They answered 7. p35		
(36:52) Jesus heals a blind man in two steps <a href="#">Mark 8:22-25</a> p36		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jesus partially healed the man and asked if he could see anything</li> <li>▪ He answered yes, but people looked like trees walking around</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ He saw everything clearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Then Jesus touched him again</li> </ul>
(37:33) This two-step healing was an enacted parable. After the first touch, he could partially see. This was like the disciples partial vision of who Jesus was and what His mission was. They understood from the Old Testament that Jesus would come, but they didn't understand that He would suffer and die. p37		
(38:10) <a href="#">Mark 8:27-31</a> The pivotal moment in the book of Mark comes. Jesus asked the disciples, "who am I?" Peter answers, you are the Christ. This was true, but they didn't see clearly, they were seeing the first half, they were seeing men like trees walking. Then in verse 31, Jesus tells them the Son of Man must be rejected by the leaders, killed, and in three days be resurrected. p38-39		

- (39:15) In [Mark 14:22](#) once again Jesus took, blessed, broke & gave the bread. The He said, take, this is My body. The He elaborates, there is enough bread for Jews & Gentiles, for those on this side & those on that side, those

<sup>221</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2894/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4711/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

who worship with hands down & those with hands up, those who like classical music & those who don't, there is enough bread for everybody. p35

- (42:25) This brings us to perhaps the most important verse in [Mark 10:45](#), the climax, where Jesus explains that His death will pay a ransom for us. He was our goel, our kinsman redeemer [and you can see a summary of the roles of the goel at the end of my chapter on [Ruth](#).] p41

What do you believe?

- Have you taken the time to understand the concept of the goel, the kinsman redeemer, and then to understand how God is filling those roles for you?
- Why do you think the Jews were so blinded to the true mission of the Messiah?
- Does the message of enough bread for everyone, change your idea of who will be saved?

## Luke

Even though the book doesn't explicitly identify its author, there is virtually no debate that this book along with its companion volume, Acts, were written by the physician Luke, who was also a missionary with the Apostle Paul. The target audience is explicitly given in the first four verses, as "most excellent Theophilus," [[Luke 1:1-4](#)] who was also addressed at the beginning of Acts. [[Acts 1:1](#)]

Sir William Ramsay called Luke a first rate historian,<sup>223</sup> which fits in with his style of giving historical context such as in [Luke 1:5](#), [Luke 2:1-2](#), [Luke 3](#), [Acts 5:37](#). Another interesting fact is that despite the quantity of books written by Paul and John, assuming the book of Acts was also written by him, Luke was the biggest contributor to the New Testament in terms of volume or words written.<sup>224</sup>

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>225</sup>, in which along with her booklet, she made some very interesting points. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *Luke - Salvation for All*.<sup>226</sup>

- (6:43) The book of Luke is the one which uses the words salvation and Savior the most of the four Gospels. p7
- (8:04) The Gospel of Luke is so inclusive that he writes: p7
  - A story of a man, followed the story of a woman, ...
  - A story of a Jew, followed by a story of a Gentile
  - A story of a Jew, followed by a story of a prostitute
  - A story of a Jew, followed by a story of a tax collector
- (9:14) 40% of the content in Luke is not found in any of the other Gospels
- Pieces of the puzzle laid out in the shape of a cross:

<sup>223</sup> Ramsay, Sir William Mitchell. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. London, New York, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915, p222. <https://books.google.com/books?id=NC9VAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>224</sup> <http://overviewbible.com/word-counts-books-of-bible/>

<sup>225</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3gbXD0Zslc>

<sup>226</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Salvation for All*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2011.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=5](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=5)



	(12:12) The first big prophesy of promise is in <a href="#">Genesis 3:15</a> . There would be a descendant of the woman, who would be a Savior, that would come to the world and do for us what we could not do for ourselves.	
(15:04) One piece of the puzzle that only Luke brings, <a href="#">Micah 5:2</a> . The Savior would be born in Bethlehem.	(12:42) The second is <a href="#">Genesis 12:3</a> . God makes a covenant with Abraham and told him that the Savior would come through his lineage. Through him all the world would be blessed.	(14:02) Another is <a href="#">Isaiah 7:14</a> . A virgin will be with child.
	(13:24) The third is <a href="#">2 Samuel 7:11</a> . God makes a covenant with David that he would have a descendant who would have the throne forever.	

- (15:37) Six main people in the covenant line: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus
- (18:53) Let's talk about the name Caesar Augustus mentioned in [Luke 2:1](#). Luke is going to contrast this narrative with Caesar Augustus, who was a beloved Emperor.
  - His official name was *Imp(erator) Caesar divi f(i)lius* ("son of a god") *Augustus*. p13
  - During his rule there was great peace (pax romana). He built 50,000 miles of road (common saying: all roads lead to Rome). With peace and roads, it made it easier for people to travel.
  - He was venerated for his achievements and was referred to as "the savior of the world." This was the same word used in the Bible for Jesus.
  - His birthday was called the gospel [[εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)]<sup>227</sup>, meaning "good news."
  - At the time, there were emperor cults, and sometimes big choirs would travel with him.
- (26:14) The first thing the angels said to the shepherds was "do not be afraid." This is the most common exhortation in all of scripture. p14
- (26:55) Now we are ready to understand what the angel choir will announce to the shepherds in [Luke 2:10-14](#). Everything they said sounded like they were announcing the emperor. p14
  - "I bring you good news," which the shepherds had heard before, but the angel added, "of great joy"
  - "For all the people," not just Romans.
  - The good news is that, "there has been born to you a Savior," which the shepherds had heard before, but the angel adds, "who is Christ the Lord."
  - Then the angel choir sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men..."

<sup>227</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2098/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

- (32:26) This good news of the Savior will be the most important interpretive tool for understanding the Old Testament. From now on, we should interpret the entire Old Testament as pointing toward Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer.
- (33:06) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is what the Savior has done for you 2000 years ago. If you believe, God will do things in you and through you for His glory. What God, through the Holy Spirit does in and through you is not the Gospel, it is the result of your acceptance of the Gospel. This was a big part of the divergence between the Protestants and the Catholics. One of the five Solas of the Protestant movement stated the belief that we are saved by faith, but the Catholic Church said no, it is by faith and works.
- (40:00) In [Luke 24:13-27](#), Jesus teaches the disciples on the road to Emmaus, how to interpret the Bible in light of the cross. In [verse 27](#), it says beginning with Moses and the prophets, He explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. When they understood this, their hearts were burning within them, and they had to share it [[verse 32-33](#)]. Then Jesus appeared before the disciples in the upper room and repeated His teaching to the larger group, that the things written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms about Him were fulfilled. p59
- (51:01) There is an inclusio in the Gospel of Luke. At the beginning, [Luke 2:10](#), the angels proclaimed “good news of great joy,” and in [Luke 24:52](#), in the next to the last verse of the book, it says the disciples returned to Jerusalem with “great joy.”
- (53:53) There were two groups of people that were not allowed to be witnesses in court because they were considered too low. They were shepherds and women. The shepherds were the first witnesses of Jesus’ birth, and women were the first witnesses of His resurrection. Salvation is for all. p12

What do you believe?

- If you believe the good news of salvation is available to all, does this affect how you think or feel about the people who are down and out in society?
- Where do you stand on the idea that the good news of the Gospel is what Jesus accomplished on the cross for you 2000 years ago, not what He can do in and through you today?
- In your understanding, what is the relationship between what you do and your salvation?

## John

The authorship of the book of John is traditionally credited to the disciple and apostle John. He is also one of the three, Peter, James & John, who seemed to form an inner circle. But in addition to that he often referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. This book is generally considered to be the last of the four Gospels written but does not rely on the other three as sources. The target audience stated in [John 20:31](#) appears to be Christians, with its purpose being to secure and strengthen their faith. Some believe that John wrote with the purpose of filling in the blanks left by the other three Gospels.<sup>228</sup> This book is the only one that mentions more than the final Passover in Jesus’ ministry. In fact, without John, which mentions Jesus’ attendance at three Passover’s specifically, it would be difficult to know that His ministry spanned more than two years. Modern scholars have gravitated away from the traditional authorship<sup>229</sup>, but probably most people still hold the traditional views.

<sup>228</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/john.cfm>

<sup>229</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John)

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>230</sup>, in which along with her booklet, she made some observations and highlights from the book of John. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *John – God Became Flesh*.<sup>231</sup>

- (6:40) The Gospel of John was the last written and is very different from Matthew, Mark & Luke, which are called synoptic (same optic) because they share a lot of common content and point of view. John uses different material and methods to present his portrait of Jesus. 92% of John is unique from the synoptic Gospels.
- (7:45) John's purpose and reason for writing are found in [John 20:30-31](#). It was not his purpose to write everything Jesus did.
 

[John 20:31](#) but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. [John 20:31 NKJV](#)

John used the word "believe" 97 times in his Gospel, and he shows that Jesus is always trying to bring people from knowledge to belief. p63
- (10:27) The Gospel of John is written in two levels. Every story is written in two levels, the level you see and the level you can only enter if you believe. John does not record any of Jesus' parables. p7
- (12:18) Matthew started his genealogy with Abraham, Luke began with Adam, but John starts in the beginning. He wants the reader to know that Jesus is God, that he existed from the beginning, and that He created all things. [John 1:1-3](#)
- (13:08) In John, the phrase used for the cross is "the hour" or "My hour," and when the hour finally comes, it is only John which records the words, "it is finished." p12
- (13:48) In [John 4:4](#) where it says "He had to pass through Samaria," it had nothing to do with geography. The Jews made sure there were roads so that they would never have to pass through Samaria. He "had to pass through Samaria" because He had to find the Samaritan woman. p21
  - (18:06) Samaritans got very confused and when they finally chose to worship the same God as the Jews, they only accepted the Pentateuch. They did not accept the Psalms and the Prophets as inspired scripture. p21
  - (18:56) She had married five times.
  - (19:20) She came to the well alone and at noon because she had no friends.
  - (20:08) In that society, if you had more than three divorces, you became an outcast. You could not enter the synagogue, nobody could invite you to dinner, and no reputable person would be seen with you.
  - (20:31) In the first century, a woman could not initiate divorce. The fact that she was divorced five times meant that she was rejected by every man who knew her intimately.
  - (22:20) There were five obstacles, layers, Jesus had to get through to reach the woman's heart. They are the same layers we use today to protect ourselves from hurt.
    - (23:46) The first obstacle was prejudice. Jesus asked the woman for a drink. She asked Jesus, how is it that you, a Jew, are talking to me, a Samaritan and a woman [[v9](#)]. She tried to use this to keep Jesus from getting too close. Jesus ignores her attempt to raise this layer and pushes on. p22

<sup>230</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml7YdkKubiw>

<sup>231</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *God Became Flesh*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010.  
[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=3](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=3)

- (25:35) The second was religious superiority. Jesus starts hinting about who He is as He starts talking about living water [v10]. She thinks He is talking about literal water and asks if He is greater than Jacob [v11-12]. Again, Jesus ignores her next layer and pushes on. p23
- (29:00) The next layer is superficial truth. Jesus asks her to call her husband [v16]. She responds, I have no husband [v17]. Jesus saw right through her superficial response [v17-18]. She had never met a man that knew everything about her and would keep talking to her. p24
- (35:27) The fourth layer was religiosity. It is about rules and regulations, do's and don'ts, lists, but no joy or Jesus. It's about thinking your religious preferences are principles. She said our fathers worshiped on this mountain and you Jews worship on that mountain. Who is right? [v20] p25
- (43:21) The last layer was procrastination. She said, one day the Messiah will come and He will explain everything [v25]. Then Jesus told her directly, I who speak to you am He. This is the only time prior to His crucifixion that He made this declaration of who He really was. p26
- (44:50) The woman took a sip of Jesus' water and got so excited she forgot her own pot [v28-29]. She went back to the city and told them that she had found a man who knew everything about her [and talked to her], is this not the Christ? Jesus knows all our shortcomings and secret sins and still wants us to come to Him and drink the water of life he offers. In describing this water to the woman, Jesus said, "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](#). p26

What do you believe?

- If you believe God has no beginning, as many Christians do, what does John mean with the phrase "in the beginning," in [John 1:1](#)?
- Do you take [John 1:3](#) to mean that Jesus and not God the Father created our world in seven days?
- In his purpose statement in [John 20:31](#), he wrote that you may believe. If you truly believe and it's not just knowledge, how would it be apparent in your life?

## Introduction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

[Luke 1:1-4](#), [John 1:1-14](#), [Mark 1:1](#)<sup>232</sup>

[Luke 1:1](#) Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. [Luke 1:1-4 NKJV](#)

[John 1:1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

<sup>232</sup> Strong. p1. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n53/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. [John 1:1-14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:1](#) The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. [Mark 1:1 NKJV](#)

Luke's Gospel was addressed to a Theophilus. There are numerous theories about who Theophilus was, six of which were listed on wikipedia.<sup>233</sup>

- Coptic – a person from Alexandria, a person of eminent quality, perhaps a Jew
- Roman official – mostly because he was referred to as “most excellent”
- Honorary title – meaning “friend of God,” and hence addressed to anyone who fit the title
- Lawyer – of Paul during his trial in Rome
- Jewish priest – possible the High Priest and son of Annas
- Titus Flavius Sabinus – former prefect and older brother of future Roman Emperor Vespasian

From other sources, the title “most excellent,” leads many to believe that he was a Roman government official or influential citizen who had been converted. It has also been suggested that perhaps he published the writings of Luke.<sup>234 235 236 237</sup>

John's introduction gives us several interesting points which I will list in my own words.

- Jesus was with God, He is God, has always existed with God
- Jesus was the creator of all things
- He gave life to man and He also gave light (I believe to mean hope)
- He became flesh

I believe it is abundantly clear in the Bible that Jesus and the Father are not the same person or being. This introduction along with other things Jesus would say lead me to believe that He, and not the Father, is the one who created and spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

[Genesis 1:1](#) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [Genesis 1:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>233</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus\\_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus_(biblical))

<sup>234</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/luke.cfm>

<sup>235</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke)

<sup>236</sup> Robertson, A.T.. *Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=P9oJAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA5>

<sup>237</sup> Clarke, Adam. *Commentary and Critical Notes on the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. New York, Waugh and T. Mason, 1833, p333. <https://books.google.com/books?id=BGICAQAIAAJ&pg=PA333>

[Genesis 3:8](#) 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?" [Genesis 3:8-9 NKJV](#)

The One who spoke to Noah before the flood.

[Genesis 6:13](#) And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. [Genesis 6:13 NKJV](#)

The One who spoke to Abraham and even appeared to him in human form.

[Genesis 12:1](#) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." [Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 18:1](#) Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw [them], he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, [Genesis 18:1-2 NKJV](#)

[John 8:54](#) Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. <sup>55</sup> "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. <sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw [it] and was glad." <sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." <sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. [John 8:54-59 NKJV](#)

The One who spoke to Isaac, Jacob and Moses.

[Genesis 26:2](#) Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. <sup>3</sup> "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. [Genesis 26:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 28:13](#) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I [am] the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. <sup>15</sup> "Behold, I [am] with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." [Genesis 28:13-15 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 3:13](#) Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, [when] I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What [is] His name?' what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup> And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " <sup>15</sup> Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This [is] My name forever, and this [is] My memorial to all generations.' [Exodus 3:13-15 NKJV](#)

I believe Jesus was the public image of the Father. I don't think we can ever really understand what Jesus gave up to take human form and how much if any of it was permanent. Which brings us to the statement, "The Word became flesh." Four simple words with meaning so deep we will probably never fully understand them. Ellen White wrote the following in the *Desire of Ages*.

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,— God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. [Desire of Ages, p19-20](#).<sup>238</sup>

What do you believe?

- If you believe that God has always existed, what does John mean by "in the beginning?"
- Do you believe the God of the Old Testament was Jesus?
- Did God have to become flesh to save us?

## Miraculous birth of John the Baptist

[Luke 1:5-25](#), [Luke 1:57-80](#)<sup>239</sup>

[Luke 1:5](#) There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife [was] of the daughters of Aaron, and her name [was] Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw [him], he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

<sup>238</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p19-20.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=19>

<sup>239</sup> Strong. p4. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n57/mode/2up>

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

<sup>16</sup> "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> "He will also go before Him in the spirit 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."

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

[Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

<sup>19</sup> And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. <sup>20</sup> "But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

<sup>21</sup> And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. <sup>22</sup> But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

<sup>23</sup> So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. <sup>24</sup> Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, <sup>25</sup> "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on [me], to take away my reproach among people." [Luke 1:5-25 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:57](#) Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. <sup>58</sup> When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

<sup>59</sup> So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. <sup>60</sup> His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

<sup>61</sup> But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." <sup>62</sup> So they made signs to his father--what he would have him called.

<sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. <sup>64</sup> Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue [loosed], and he spoke, praising God. <sup>65</sup> Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. <sup>66</sup> And all those who heard [them] kept [them] in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>67</sup> Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

<sup>68</sup> "Blessed [is] the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited and redeemed His people,

<sup>69</sup> And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,

<sup>70</sup> As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who [have been] since the world began,



71 That we should be saved from our enemies  
 And from the hand of all who hate us,  
 72 To perform the mercy [promised] to our  
 fathers  
 And to remember His holy covenant,  
 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:  
 74 To grant us that we,  
 Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
 Might serve Him without fear,  
 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.  
 76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;  
 For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,  
 77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people  
 By the remission of their sins,  
 78 Through the tender mercy of our God,  
 With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;  
 79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,  
 To guide our feet into the way of peace."  
 80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.  
[Luke 1:57-80 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 106:10](#) He saved them from the hand of him who hated [them],  
 And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. [Psalm 106:10 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 3:1](#) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will  
 prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek,  
 Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of  
 the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,"  
 Says the LORD of hosts. [Malachi 3:1 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 107:10](#) Those who sat in darkness and in the  
 shadow of death, ... [Psalm 107:10 NKJV](#)

Luke is the only one who gives us the miraculous circumstances of the birth of John the Baptist, the Messiah's herald. In fact, it is interesting to learn that the pregnancies of Jesus and John overlapped, and that their mothers were related.

[Luke 1:36](#) "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. [Luke 1:36 NKJV](#)

Before John was even born, the angel announcing his birth drew a parallel to Elijah, a well-known prophet from the Old Testament.

[Luke 1:17](#) "He will also go before Him in the spirit 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](#)

This leads to the topic of John's destiny in life. In ancient times when a king would travel somewhere, forerunners would be sent ahead of the king to fill in the potholes and smooth the road, thus reducing some of the obstacles. There would also be heralds who would announce the coming of the king so that the people could be prepared to receive and honor him when he arrived. John was called the "forerunner" of Jesus, because his life's mission was to prepare the people and announce the arrival of the Messiah. I believe Zacharias and Elizabeth did an amazing job of teaching their son not only what was expected of him but instilling in him a desire to fulfill his life's destiny.

This is not the first instance of miraculous birth in old age recorded in the Bible. The birth of Isaac, the father of Israel (Jacob) was foretold to Abraham and Sarah but did not occur until they were 100 and 90 years of age.

[Genesis 17:15](#) Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah [shall be] her name. <sup>16</sup> "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be [a

mother of] nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall [a child] be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear [a child]?" <sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" <sup>19</sup> Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his descendants after him. [Genesis 17:15-19 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 21:1](#) And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. <sup>2</sup> For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac. <sup>4</sup> Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup> Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, [and] all who hear will laugh with me." <sup>7</sup> She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne [him] a son in his old age." [Genesis 21:1-7 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- There are additional instances of miraculous births in the Bible. How do you think God chose when to use this approach and why?
- Do you feel like Zacharias was being punished by losing his voice for his understandable doubt, or do you feel this was just another miracle to help the people believe?
- If John had been unfaithful in fulfilling his mission, similar to how Sampson made bad choices [[Judges 13-16](#)], could that have altered not the outcome, but the course of Jesus' ministry?

## Birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary

[Luke 1:26-56](#), [Luke 2:1-7](#), [Matthew 1:18-25](#)

[Matthew 1:18](#) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: ...

[Luke 1:26](#) Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, [Matthew 1:18](#) ... After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, ... of the house of David. The virgin's name [was]

Mary. <sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored [one], the Lord [is] with you; blessed [are] you among women!"

<sup>29</sup> But when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

<sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said to her, "[The] Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> "For with God nothing will be impossible."

<sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Matthew 1:18 ... before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man], and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." [Isaiah 7:14](#) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

Luke 1:39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, <sup>40</sup> and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed [are] you among women, and blessed [is] the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> "But why [is] this [granted] to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> "For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. <sup>45</sup> "Blessed [is] she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

<sup>48</sup> For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;  
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For He who is mighty has done great things for me,  
And holy [is] His name.

<sup>50</sup> And His mercy [is] on those who fear Him  
From generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with His arm;  
He has scattered [the] proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has put down the mighty from [their] thrones,  
And exalted [the] lowly

<sup>53</sup> He has filled [the] hungry with good things,  
And [the] rich He has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped His servant Israel,  
In remembrance of [His] mercy,

<sup>55</sup> As He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and to his seed forever."

[Psalm 103:17](#) But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting  
On those who fear Him,  
And His righteousness to children's children, [Psalm 103:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 107:9](#) For He satisfies the longing soul,  
And fills the hungry soul with goodness. [Psalm 107:9 NKJV](#)

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house. [Luke 1:39-56 NKJV](#)

[Luke 2:1](#) And it came to pass in those days [that] a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and [Matthew 1:25](#) and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. there was no room for them in the inn. [Luke 2:1-7 NKJV](#) [Matthew 1:25 NKJV](#)

The story in Matthew is mostly a story from Joseph's perspective, which should not be surprising because the genealogy is traced to him. Luke's account of the virgin birth is much more detailed with respect to Mary, and not surprisingly, his genealogy is traced to Mary. But Luke being the historian that he is, provides us with additional geographical and historical details. He first tells us that Joseph and Mary live in Nazareth in Galilee. Then he informs us of the census which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Tony Moore, in his presentations and workbooks for the video series titled, "[Tracing the footsteps of Jesus](#)," brings a unique perspective to the statement, "there was no room for them in the inn." He first suggests that as descendants of David, Joseph and Mary would most likely have had relatives that they could stay with. Next, he points out that in that culture and geography, homes usually began with a cave or below ground component. Then upper rooms or guest rooms would be built on top. The basement if you can call it that would also be the place where the family's livestock would be brought in for the night or from the cold weather. He suggests that the "inn" which had no room likely referred to the upper rooms, which were full of relatives, so they went down to the basement with the animals for some privacy when it was time for Jesus to be born.<sup>240</sup>

I find it interesting that often, other religions or mythology have parallels to what is written in the Bible. In this case specifically, Greek Mythology contains instances of heroes being born from the union of a god with a human. I can't help but feel these myths that parallel the Bible are Satan's attempt to dilute real truth.

The third of three major proposals that Talbot says Matthew makes, is that Jesus will re-live Israel's history. This is where the name, "Son of God" derives from. In the Old Testament, God called Israel His son, and now that Jesus is re-living Israel's history, He is also called the "Son of God."<sup>241</sup> These parallels begin even before Jesus is born. Joseph had a dream [[Matthew 1:20](#)], and if you will recall, before the nation of Israel came out of Egypt, another Joseph had dreams [[Genesis 37:5,9](#)].

Lastly, I can see how Matthew would point to [Isaiah 7:14](#) as a fulfillment of the virgin birth in hindsight, but I don't see how one would have read the story from that chapter and understand it to be a prophecy.

[Isaiah 7:10](#) Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" <sup>13</sup> Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! [Is it] a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.** <sup>15</sup> "Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> "For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. [Isaiah 7:10-16 NKJV](#)

<sup>240</sup> Moore, Tony R. *Tracing the Footsteps of Jesus – Volume 1*. Chino Hills, The Biblical World, 2011.

[http://footstepsofjesus.org/study\\_guides.html](http://footstepsofjesus.org/study_guides.html)

<sup>241</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p33. (36:55 in the [lecture](#))

In fact Jews have refuted this claim by saying [Isaiah 7:14](#) was not a Messianic prophecy and furthermore, it doesn't necessarily imply virgin birth.<sup>242</sup> But I would say that many of the claimed prophecies fulfilled by Jesus are similar in nature. In retrospect we see things which were written in the Old Testament that occurred in the life of Christ, hence we call them fulfilled prophecy, but in fairness to the Jews many of these would not have been considered predictions in advance. But I have no problem with this since I believe the primary purpose of prophecy is assurance and confirmation and not prediction.

[John 16:4](#) "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. [John 16:4 NKJV](#)

[John 13:19](#) "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am [He]. [John 13:19 NKJV](#)

As a general rule, Jesus said the scriptures which at the time were just the Old Testament, all testify of Him.

[John 5:39](#) "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. [John 5:39 NKJV](#)

So even if things written in the Old Testament didn't seem like predictions, if they were inspired by the Holy Spirit with the primary purpose being to testify of Jesus, I have no problem calling them fulfilled prophecies.

What do you believe?

- Do you feel it was necessary for both Joseph and Mary to be descendants of David for Jesus to have been considered the son of David?
- Why did the angel specifically make a point of Jesus receiving the throne of His father David, and what did he mean?
- Reading the context of the prophecy in [Isaiah 7:10-16](#), do you think this was a sign that actually happened at the time? If so, do you think that was not a virgin birth?

## Genealogy of Jesus

[Matthew 1:2-16](#), [Luke 3:23-38](#), [John 1:1-2](#)

Genealogy was very important to the Jews. For example, only descendants of Aaron could be priests. Proof of your ancestry was essentially the deed for your land. Tracing ancestry was also important in determining the closest of kin when someone was in need of a kinsman redeemer. Benham offered some other reasons genealogy was important. The fundamental law given to Adam ([Genesis 1:28](#)), Noah ([Genesis 9:7](#)), and Jacob ([Genesis 35:11](#)) was to "be fruitful and multiply." A large family gave importance to its chief ([Psalm 127:5](#)). Promises were made that all the families of the earth would be blessed through a Messiah that would be born to them.<sup>243</sup>

One of the first questions that people might have if they closely examined the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, is, why are they different? Of course, one big difference is that Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham, while Luke goes all the way back to Adam. But they differ in another major way. Matthew traces the lineage from David

<sup>242</sup> <https://outreachjudaism.org/dual-prophecy-virgin-birth/>

<sup>243</sup> Benham, Daniel. Reflections on the Genealogy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. London, John Cochran, Strand., 1836, p2. <https://books.google.com/books?id=eSxBAAAcAAJ&pg=PA2>

through the entire line of Jewish kings, while Luke immediately diverges from the monarchical line beginning with Nathan, the son of David. But perhaps more importantly, how do they both seemingly end up with Joseph following different lines from David? The most common answer to this is that Eli, in [Luke 3:23](#), is the father-in-law of Joseph rather than his biological father.<sup>244</sup> Benham, agreeing with this even goes a little further, showing several other common relatives in the divergent lines.<sup>245</sup>

#### Genealogy from [Matthew 1:2-16 NKJV](#)

Abraham	Amminadab	Solomon (by Bathsheba)	Jotham	Shealtiel	Eliud
Isaac	Nahshon	Rehoboam	Ahaz	Zerubbabel	Eleazar
Jacob	Salmon	Abijah	Hezekiah	Abihud	Matthan
Judah	Boaz (by Rahab)	Asa	Manasseh	Eliakim	Jacob
Perez (by Tamar)	Obed (by Ruth)	Jehoshaphat	Amon	Azor	Joseph (Mary)
Hezron	Jesse	Joram	Josiah	Zadok	Jesus
Ram	David	Uzziah	Jeconiah	Achim	

#### Genealogy from [Luke 3:23-38 NKJV](#)

Jesus	Nahum	Zerubbabel	Jorim	Mattatha	Ram	Reu	Enoch
Joseph	Hesli	Shealtiel	Matthat	Nathan	Hezron	Peleg	Jared
Eli	Naggai	Neri	Levi	David	Perez	Heber	Mahalaleel
Matthat	Maath	Melchi	Simeon	Jesse	Judah	Shelah	Cainan
Levi	Mattathias	Addi	Judah	Obed	Jacob	Cainan	Enosh
Melchi	Semein	Cosam	Joseph	Boaz	Isaac	Arphaxad	Seth
Jannai	Josech	Elmadam	Jonam	Salmon	Abraham	Shem	Adam
Joseph	Joda	Er	Eliakim	Nahshon	Terah	Noah	God
Mattathias	Joanan	Joshua	Melea	Amminadab	Nahor	Lamech	
Amos	Rhesa	Eliezer	Menna	Admin	Serug	Methuselah	

#### Genealogy from [John 1:1-2 NKJV](#)

[John 1:1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. [John 1:1-2 NKJV](#)

You could consider the first two verses of John to be a genealogy as well. Luke's begins with God and ends with Jesus, but John intends to show that Jesus (the Word), existed with God from the beginning and was in fact God.

There are several other points to be made of the genealogy in Matthew, some of which were already mentioned in the overview of his Gospel. First, I would like to make the observation that according to most biblical timelines, it was about 2000 years from Abraham to Christ [see [Appendix - The age of the world](#)]. Matthew begins the genealogy with Abraham, but also adds that Jesus was the son of David, arguably two of the most important figures in Jewish ancestry. David was their greatest king and there were numerous prophecies that the Messiah would be a son of David. The Jews were known to call Abraham their father [[John 8:39](#), [Matthew 3:9](#)], even though he was the ancestor of other nations as well. Abraham was the first and original recipient of the promise of their blessings, and through his grandson Jacob the nation was born. Matthew traces the lineage through the entire line of Jewish kings, down to Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. Though he was not the biological father, in the eyes of the law, he was considered the legal father of Jesus. In fact, in

<sup>244</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy\\_of\\_Jesus#Maternal\\_ancestry\\_in\\_Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy_of_Jesus#Maternal_ancestry_in_Luke)

<sup>245</sup> Benham. p88. <https://books.google.com/books?id=eSxBAAAACAAJ&pg=PA88>

Jewish law there is precedent for a legal heir to be fathered by a kinsman redeemer, in this case the Holy Spirit [see discussion on goel at the end of the chapter on [Ruth](#)].

Let's look at a few numbers. Matthew lists the genealogy in three sets of 14 generations. From Abraham to David, David to the Babylonian exile, and from the exile to Jesus. You actually need to count Jeconiah who existed right at the start of the exile in the third subdivision as well to get 14 generations. Dividing 2000 years / 41 yields 48.8 years. It seems unlikely that the average age at the birth of first-born sons would be that old. It also seems unlikely that there were exactly 14 generations in each sub-division. In fact, Luke lists 42 generations from David to Jesus. The well accepted explanation is that there are generations that were not listed, which is fine as long as the line was unbroken. Upon looking at the list of the kings of Judah, we can quickly see that there were three kings that were left out of the list [[Matthew 1:8, The divided kingdom](#)]. This allowed Matthew to make a point with the numbers. The name David, in Hebrew is דָּוִד, *dāvid*<sup>246</sup>, which when broken down according to the number of the consonants adds up to 14. To illustrate this, see the first 6 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Position in the alphabet	Hebrew letter	English word for the Hebrew letter
1	א	Aleph
2	ב	Beth
3	ג	Gimel
4	ד	Daleth
5	ה	He
6	ו	Waw

6= ו, 4= ד; so 4 + 6 + 4 = 14. Talbot points out that the reason for this is to show that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the One like David, who would establish the everlasting kingdom of God.<sup>247</sup>

Another point to be made of Matthew's genealogy is the inclusion of women, specifically four mothers were mentioned. Tamar [[Matthew 1:3, Genesis 38](#)] posed as a prostitute so she could become pregnant by her father in law. Rahab [[Matthew 1:5, Joshua 2,6](#)] was a prostitute, from Jericho, the first city overthrown when the Israelites entered Canaan. In the same verse, [Ruth](#), though a woman of noble character, came from the idolatrous nation of Moab. And finally, Bathsheba [[Matthew 1:6, 2 Samuel 11](#)], who committed adultery with King David. Matthew wanted his readers to understand that all nations, all people, regardless of what you have done, will be blessed through Jesus Christ.<sup>248</sup>

What do you believe?

- Does the genealogy of Jesus have significance for you or is it mostly for the benefit of the Jews?
- Why do you think Matthew and Luke traced a different genealogy?
- Do you think Luke skipped some generations as well, or do you think his was generationally complete?

## Dating the birth of Jesus

Having just mentioned the birth of Jesus, this might be a good time to ask when it occurred. It is probably worth pointing out that the year in our current widely accepted dating system was originally established to mark the years from the time Jesus was incarnated. This dating system was devised five centuries after the time of Christ by [Dionysius Exiguus](#)<sup>249</sup>

<sup>246</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1732/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>247</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p14. (15:00 in the [lecture](#))

<sup>248</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p17, 21.

<sup>249</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius\\_Exiguus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius_Exiguus)

for the purpose of specifying Easter dates,<sup>250</sup> but it was not widely used until after A.D. 800.<sup>251 252</sup> Even then the [Julian calendar](#), which was introduced by [Julius Caesar](#)<sup>253</sup> in 46 B.C. was the predominant calendar throughout western civilization. In fact, it was not until 1582 that Pope [Gregory XIII](#)<sup>254</sup>, using the Dionisius year and a slight modification to the Julian months, introduced what is probably now the most widely used calendar ever.<sup>255 256</sup> There was no single year numbering system used in conjunction with the Julian calendar. The principal method was to specify the year or the years elapsed from when two named consuls took office.<sup>257</sup> I believe it was common throughout history to mark the passage of time in this way as well as from significant events, such as the founding of an empire or nation. In the following verse, often used to date the baptism of Jesus, Luke used the start of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, but also added some consuls currently in office:

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [Luke 3:1 NKJV](#)

In addition to dating from its emperors, some events were dated from the start of the Roman Empire. Dating from the start of an empire, is usually done after the fact and can at times be a bit ambiguous. It would not be surprising that Christians would consider the incarnation, conception or birth of Jesus as a significant event for dating purposes. But as mentioned above, this was done more than five centuries after the fact, and although there is no universally accepted date for the birth of Christ, the one our common dating system is based on is off by a few years.<sup>258</sup> The designation for this dating system is Anno Domini, which is Latin for: *In the year of our Lord*.

Probably the primary event that pushes birth of Jesus into the B.C. years is the death of Herod the Great, who is a key character in [Matthew 2](#). It is pretty widely accepted that Herod the Great died in the year 750 of Rome which corresponds to the year 4 B.C.<sup>259 260 261</sup> If this date is correct, then the birth of Jesus must have occurred in or before the year 4 B.C. The Bible doesn't tell us how much time elapsed between the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi and Herod's killing of the children in Bethlehem. Considering that he chose to kill boys up to two years of age leads many to speculate that there was up to two years between the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi.

Another historical event associated with the birth of Jesus is the census mentioned Luke 2, which was responsible for bringing Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.

[Luke 2:1](#) And it came to pass in those days [that] a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.<sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.<sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered,

<sup>250</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno\\_Domini#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini#History)

<sup>251</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno\\_Domini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini)

<sup>252</sup> Bond, John James. *Handy-Book of Rules and Tables For Verifying Dates with the Christian Era*. London, George Bell & Sons, 1875, p10. <https://books.google.com/books?id=F3mcB6GnOtlC&pg=PR10>

<sup>253</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius\\_Caesar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Caesar)

<sup>254</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Gregory\\_XIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XIII)

<sup>255</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian\\_calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar)

<sup>256</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar)

<sup>257</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_calendar#Year\\_numbering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar#Year_numbering)

<sup>258</sup> Gilbert, George Holly. *The Student's Life of Jesus*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1900, p19.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=FDANAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

<sup>259</sup> Gilbert. p19. <https://books.google.com/books?id=FDANAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

<sup>260</sup> Morrison, William Douglas. *The Story of the Jews Under Roman Rule*. New York & London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895, p90.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=U18NAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA90>

<sup>261</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_the\\_Great#Death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great#Death)



everyone to his own city. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, [Luke 2:1-4 NKJV](#)

In these verses two names are mentioned, the first of which, Caesar Augustus, is no problem because he was known to have lived until A.D. 15.<sup>262</sup> Quirinius as governor of Syria, however is a bit problematic.<sup>263</sup> It has been historically documented that he did not become governor of Syria until the year A.D. 6, at which time Herod was already dead.<sup>264 265</sup> So, instead of using this to reinforce the date, we need to find a way to explain the apparent contradiction. Luke actually mentions two census', this one, which he designates the first, and one in [Acts 5:37](#). The latter is supposed to be the census of A.D. 7 during the well-known governorship of Quirinius, hence the mention of "the first" in [Luke 2:2](#).<sup>266</sup> It seems that much of the writing I came across addressing this subject referenced the research and writings of William Ramsay. In a book published by him, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*,<sup>267</sup> he mentions two of his earlier books with these comments. In the first, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*,<sup>268</sup> he wants to show that the book of Acts is a trustworthy historical document. In the second, *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*,<sup>269</sup> he aims to show that Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; but he is possessed of the true historic sense. Ramsay's general approach to explaining this apparent contradiction seems to be to find weaknesses in the arguments. Secondly, to show that Luke is credible and accurate as a historian, implying that his writings can be treated as a historical source. Finally, to use new archaeological findings, such as the mounting evidence that Quirinius was likely a co-governor of Syria at the time of the "first census" when Herod was still alive. What all this means is that there is no undeniable evidence of the truth of Luke's statement, but neither is there undeniable proof that he was wrong.

The death of Herod places a limit on how late you can set the date of Jesus' birth. On the other side, [Luke 3](#) places a limit on how early you can set the birth of Jesus.

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [Luke 3:1 NKJV](#)

[Luke 3:23](#) Now Jesus Himself began [His ministry at] about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) [the] son of Joseph, [the son] of Heli, [Luke 3:23 NKJV](#)

The date of the baptism which coincides with the start of the ministry of Jesus will be discussed in greater detail in, [Dating the baptism of Jesus](#), and is also scrutinized in [Appendix B in Daniel's seventy week prophecy](#). So, when Luke says Jesus was about thirty years of age, one must decide what qualifies as "about thirty." Is thirty-one about thirty? Is thirty-

<sup>262</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>263</sup> Gilbert. p14-18. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FDANAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA14>

<sup>264</sup> Morrison. p121. <http://books.google.com/books?id=U18NAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA121>

<sup>265</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>266</sup> Sweet, Louis Matthew. *The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*. London, Paris, New York and Melbourne, Cassell & Company, Limited, 1907, p334-343. <https://books.google.com/books?id=P8cOAAAIAAJ&pg=PA334>

<sup>267</sup> Ramsay, Sir William Mitchell. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. London, New York, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915, p222. <https://books.google.com/books?id=NC9VAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>268</sup> Ramsay, Sir William Mitchell. *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170, Seventh Edition*. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1903. <https://books.google.com/books?id=tj5AAAAAYAAJ>

<sup>269</sup> Ramsay, William Mitchell. *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1898.

<https://archive.org/stream/stpaultraveller01ramsgoog>

two about thirty? So, if we are able to choose the year A.D. 27 for the baptism, then thirty would place the birth at 4 B.C., thirty-one would place it at 5 B.C., etc... This is how the A.D./B.C. math works:  $27 - 30 - 1$  (because there is no year zero) = -4 which is 4 B.C. Based on this logic, I wouldn't want to go earlier than 6 B.C.

Considering what has been presented, I am comfortable placing the birth of Jesus between 6 and 4 B.C., which agrees with many scholars and historians.<sup>270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278</sup> The conversion between Julian Period (J.P.), Dionysian era (B.C./A.D.) and "ab urb condita" (A.U.C.) "founding of the city of Rome," are as follows:

Julian day 0 = January 1, 4713 B.C.<sup>279</sup>

1 A.U.C. = 753 B.C.<sup>280</sup>

Hence, 4709 J.P. would be 4 B.C. and 750 A.U.C would be 4 B.C. Of the material I referenced, I found Christopher Benson's book the most thorough and objective.

What do you believe?

- Why didn't Christians get their act together right away and document the exact birthdate of Jesus?
- In light of [Daniel 7:25](#) which speaks of one who will "intend to change times and law," do you find it of any significance that a Pope is responsible for the current dating system we use?
- Does the fact that our current widely accepted dating system, which counts years from the birth of Christ, add to the credibility of the Gospel or not?

## Announcement to the shepherds

[Luke 2:8-20](#)<sup>281</sup>

[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

<sup>270</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Anno\\_Domini#Historical\\_birth\\_date\\_of\\_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Anno_Domini#Historical_birth_date_of_Jesus)

<sup>271</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology\\_of\\_Jesus#Date\\_of\\_birth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Jesus#Date_of_birth)

<sup>272</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>273</sup> Strong. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n67/mode/2up>

<sup>274</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>275</sup> de Pressensé, Edmond. *Jesus Christ: His Times, Life, and Work*. London, Jackson, Walford, & Hodder, 1866, p210.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=tcYOAAAIAAJ&pg=PA210>

<sup>276</sup> Townsend, George. *The New Testament Arranged in Historical & Chronological Order*. Boston, Crocker & Brewster, 1844, p51.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=1uUsAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA51>

<sup>277</sup> Mann, Nicholas. *Of the True Years of the Birth and Death of Christ*. London, printed for J. Wilcox at Virgil's-Head, overagainst the New-Church in the Strands, 1733. <https://books.google.com/books?id=YapCAQAAMAAJ>

<sup>278</sup> Ferguson, James. *Astronomy Explained Upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles*. Philadelphia, printed for and published by Matthew Carey, 1809, p423. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iLkNAQAIAAJ&pg=PA423>

<sup>279</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_day)

<sup>280</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ab\\_urb\\_condita#Relationship\\_with\\_Anno\\_Domini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ab_urb_condita#Relationship_with_Anno_Domini)

<sup>281</sup> Strong. p18. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n73/mode/2up>

Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> "And this [will be] the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

<sup>15</sup> So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

<sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> Now when they had seen [Him], they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all those who heard [it] marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup> But Mary kept all these things and pondered [them] in her heart. <sup>20</sup> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. [Luke 2:8-20 NKJV](#)

Luke's Gospel is the only one that brings us the story of the announcement of the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. The angel announcement you just read stated that "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior." Taking that literally, with the announcement being at night and the Jewish day beginning at sunset, Jesus should have been born in the last twelve hours. I wonder how the shepherds actually found what they were looking for considering that Bethlehem must have been quiet with most people asleep.

In her overview of the book of Luke, Talbot brought out some very interesting parallels between the emperor Caesar Augustus and the announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds.<sup>282</sup>

- His official name was *Imp(erator) Caesar divi f(ilius)* ("son of a god") *Augustus*. p13
- During his rule there was great peace (*pax romana*). He built 50,000 miles of road (common saying: all roads lead to Rome). With peace and roads, it made it easier for people to travel.
- He was venerated for his achievements and was referred to as "the savior of the world." This was the same word used in the Bible for Jesus.
- His birthday was called the gospel [[εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)]<sup>283</sup>, meaning "good news."
- At the time, there were emperor cults, and sometimes big choirs would travel with him.

So, the angel announcement sounded very familiar to them, but the angel added some superlatives. This was not just good news; this was good news of great joy for all the people. This is not just the savior, but the Savior who is Christ the Lord. And it's a sure bet that after hearing the angel choir, nothing they would ever hear would measure up.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the angel announcement was made to shepherds, one of the lowest of professions?
- How do you think the shepherds actually found Mary and the Baby when they went into Bethlehem?
- Can you do a word search in the Bible to discover how many times the greeting "fear not," "do not fear," or "do not be afraid," is used? And who is the speaker in most cases?

<sup>282</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Salvation for All*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2011.

<sup>283</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2098/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

## Dedication at the Temple

[Luke 2:21-39](#)<sup>284</sup>

[Luke 2:21](#) And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. <sup>22</sup> Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present [Him] to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male [Exodus 13:2](#) "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), among the children of Israel, [both] of man and beast; it is Mine." [Exodus 13:2 NKJV](#)"),

<sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name [was] Simeon, and this man [was] just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

[Leviticus 12:8](#) 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons--one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.' "[Leviticus 12:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,

According to Your word;

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation

<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> A light to [bring] revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

[Isaiah 42:6](#) "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, [Isaiah 42:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 49:6](#) Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' "[Isaiah 49:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of

Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this [Child] is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

<sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup> and this woman [was] a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served [God] with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their [own] city, Nazareth. [Luke 2:21-39 NKJV](#)

<sup>284</sup> Strong. p19. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n73/mode/2up>

The practice of circumcision was first given to Abraham [[Genesis 17:11](#)], then later given as a Law to Moses directly from God. At the time of Jesus, they apparently had a tradition of naming the child in the same ceremony, which many Jews still observe today. The full reading of the sacrificial law given to Moses follows:

[Leviticus 12:1](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. <sup>3</sup> 'And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> 'She shall then continue in the blood of [her] purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

<sup>5</sup> 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of [her] purification sixty-six days.

<sup>6</sup> 'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>7</sup> 'Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This [is] the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

<sup>8</sup> 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons--one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'

" [Leviticus 12 NKJV](#)

At least thirty-three days after the naming and circumcision, Jesus was taken to the Temple and dedicated. We know this because Mary could not have appeared there to offer the sacrifice for her cleansing before the days of her purification were completed. The fact that they used two birds instead of a lamb and a bird showed their poverty.

Luke doesn't mention it, but the dedication of Jesus would have been accompanied by the payment of redemption money. This law had its beginnings from the time of the Exodus from Egypt.

[Exodus 13:2](#) "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, [both] of man and beast; it is Mine." [Exodus 13:2 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 13:12](#) "that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males [shall be] the LORD's. <sup>13</sup> "But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem [it], then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. <sup>14</sup> "So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What [is] this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>15</sup> 'And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' [Exodus 13:12-15 NKJV](#)

But what did this mean that the firstborn belonged to God and that they needed to be redeemed? The firstborn of clean livestock was offered as a sacrifice, symbolizing the death the firstborn of God would suffer for our sins. Firstborn of unclean livestock would be killed as had happened in Egypt, or a substitute sacrifice could be offered in its place. I would take the latter to be a symbol of us, unclean human beings, who would either die or accept the substitute sacrifice of the Lamb of God and live.

[Numbers 3:11](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>12</sup> "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, <sup>13</sup> "because all the firstborn [are] Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I [am] the LORD." [Numbers 3:11-13 NKJV](#)

We didn't really get a chance to know what it would look like for the firstborn of every family to be dedicated to the Lord's service, because not too much later, the tribe of Levi were chosen by God instead. This is where we actually learn the redemption price for a firstborn male child. In [Numbers 3](#), the males of the tribe of Levi were counted to be 22,000 [[Numbers 3:43](#)] and the firstborn of Israel from the age of one month and older was 22,273.

[Numbers 3:46](#) "And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites, <sup>47</sup> "you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take [them] in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs. [Numbers 3:46-47 NKJV](#)

I assume that Joseph and Mary must have paid the five shekel redemption price when Jesus was dedicated because in [Luke 2:39](#), it says they performed everything according to the law of the Lord. However, I believe that technically this price need not have been paid for Jesus, because not only was His life given in service to God, but he also fulfilled the substitutionary sacrifice for unclean humanity. Joseph and Mary may have wondered if they should reveal who Jesus was, or why the priest didn't realize who it was he registered and accepted the redemption money for. Had the priest known and acknowledged who Jesus was he probably should have refused the money. But there were at least two people in the temple who, in spite of His poor Galilean parents, did recognize who Jesus.

The words of Simeon must have seemed very strange to Joseph and Mary. We can't really know if his words were rehearsed or if they were spontaneously inspired by the Holy Spirit. A light of revelation to the Gentiles, was most likely a reference to the prophecies in [Isaiah 42:6](#), [49:6](#), which I included in parallel with the words of Simeon in [Luke 2:32](#). But they must have wondered why the Messiah would bring light to the Gentiles. Then, what about the statement: "a sword piercing her own soul?" Being the mother of the long looked for Messiah was something that every believing woman, beginning with Eve, longed for. If the Messiah was to sit on David's throne and make their nation prosperous and free, why would this be like a sword piercing her soul?

Then there was Anna, who was an interesting character. First, note that she was a woman prophet which was pretty uncommon in the Bible. Next, she was from the tribe of Asher which was one of the northern tribes which were dispersed. Then we are told that she was old and had been married for only seven years. Finally, that she served in the temple night and day, and never left. I wonder if the reason Luke has this much detail about her is because Mary gave him these details. I think Mary must have had a million questions, and how could she pass up on the opportunity to talk to a prophet. [Luke 2:41](#) tells us that it was the custom of Jesus' parents to go to Jerusalem for Passover every year. If there was at least one Passover trip before the flight to Egypt, I could imagine Mary going in search of her? In either case, I can envision Mary sitting down with her and getting to know her personally, and talking to her about what she might expect or do as the mother of the Messiah? She would most likely have been one of very few people Mary could truly confide in at that time.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Mary and Joseph expected some sort of reception at the Temple when they brought Jesus for dedication?
- Considering how unaware most people were, do you think Joseph and Mary ever had any doubts about who Jesus was?
- Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be the parents of baby Jesus?

## Visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt, and the return to Nazareth

[Matthew 2](#)<sup>285</sup>

[Matthew 2:1](#) Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> 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.' "

[Micah 5:2](#) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
[Though] you are little among the thousands of Judah,  
[Yet] out of you shall come forth to Me  
The One to be Ruler in Israel,  
Whose goings forth [are] from of old, From everlasting." [Micah 5:2 NKJV](#)

<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. <sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

<sup>285</sup> Strong. p21. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n75/mode/2up>

<sup>14</sup> When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, [Hosea 11:1](#) "When Israel [was] a child, I loved him, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

And out of Egypt I called My son. [Hosea 11:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>16</sup> 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."

[Jeremiah 31:15](#) Thus says the LORD:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation [and] bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted for her children,  
Because they [are] no more." [Jeremiah 31:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>19</sup> Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." [Matthew 2:1-23 NKJV](#)

Matthew is the only one of the four Gospels that gives us the story of the Magi and Herod's slaughter of the babes in Bethlehem. The inclusion of this story supports the proposal that Matthew wanted his readers to understand that Jesus was not just a Messiah for the Jews. The prophecy the Magi were most likely following was uttered by Balaam and occurred just prior to the Israelites crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. King Balak of Moab had seen what the Israelites did to the Amorites and feared that they would do the same to him. Afraid that military might alone would not be sufficient to overcome the Israelites, he resorted to sorcery and requested the Magi, Balaam, to come curse the Israelites. Instead, Balaam uttered the following famous prophecy, which has a whole story which you can read in [Numbers 22-24](#).

[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](#)

Perhaps having the writings of Balaam, but not the rest of the Jewish scriptures, the Magi went to the capital of Israel, which was Jerusalem. Interestingly, when they asked for the newborn King of the Jews, Herod interpreted that to mean the Messiah. When Herod asked the Jewish religious leaders where the Messiah would be born, they quoted the



prophecy from Micah which is included in parallel above. Talbot points out that Matthew purposely alters the verse from Micah, by saying "by no means least," where the original quote was "too little."

[Matthew 2:6](#) '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.' " [Matthew 2:6 NKJV](#)

Now that Jesus has been born there, he will not call the birthplace least or little.<sup>286</sup> Why does Matthew also alter it to say Bethlehem of Judah, where Micah says Bethlehem Ephrathah? In the story of Rachel's death, the names are equated. The Hebrew word in both cases was the same.

[Genesis 35:19](#) So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that [is], Bethlehem). [Genesis 35:19 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 35:16](#) says that they were on their way from Bethel to Bethlehem when Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. In the book of Ruth (the grandmother of David), the same Hebrew word is used.

[Ruth 4:11](#) And all the people who [were] at the gate, and the elders, said, "[We are] witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. [Ruth 4:11 NKJV](#)

I would guess that the name Ephrathah was probably derived from the name of the person who founded the town. Bethlehem and Ephrathah were used interchangeably and simultaneously, and using the two names together was possibly done to distinguish it from any other Bethlehem. Perhaps Matthew wanted to be sure to distinguish it from the Bethlehem in Galilee<sup>287</sup>, hence he referred to it as Bethlehem in the land of Judah.

Herod felt threatened in more ways than one. A rival king would be a threat to his dynasty, and secondly, if this was the Messiah, He would be a threat to Rome, and Herod received his kingship and authority from Rome. Herod decided that he could nip this threat in the bud, by simply killing the baby, so he thought to cunningly use the Magi to help him locate the child. This leads to the next instance where the life of Jesus mirrors the experience of Israel and is also quoted by Matthew as a fulfillment of prophecy.

[Matthew 2:12](#) Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. <sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." <sup>14</sup> When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> 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 2:12-15 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 45:6](#) "For these two years the famine [has been] in the land, and [there are] still five years in which [there will be] neither plowing nor harvesting. <sup>7</sup> "And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> "So now [it was] not you [who] sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. [Genesis 45:6-9 NKJV](#)  
[Hosea 11:1](#) "When Israel [was] a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. [Hosea 11:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>286</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p30. (27:21 in the <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXw9AlkeiBQ>)

<sup>287</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem\\_of\\_Galilee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem_of_Galilee)

So, in both cases, Joseph, warned by God through a dream, brought his family to Egypt. When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious and his action fulfilled another prophecy, this one from [Jeremiah 31:15](#), also included in parallel above.

Following the death of Herod, Joseph was instructed to bring Jesus from Egypt back to the land of Israel. Joseph assumed that meant Bethlehem, but when he learned that Archelaus had succeeded Herod the Great to the throne, he thought it safer to take Jesus back to their hometown of Nazareth.

The last two verses of the chapter included here again for reference state the fulfillment of another prophecy.

[Matthew 2:22](#) But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." [Matthew 2:22-23 NKJV](#)

Interestingly there is no single Old Testament quotation that specifically prophesied that Jesus would come from Nazareth. So, what do we make of this statement by Matthew? There are several explanations that have been proposed.<sup>288</sup>

1. One of the prophecies of Jesus in Isaiah states:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,  
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. [Isaiah 11:1 NKJV](#)

The word translated branch is [נֶשֶׁר](#), *nēṣer*<sup>289</sup>, which obviously sounds a little like Nazareth. Does being known as from Nazareth, declare Him to be that Branch?

2. While not strictly speaking a Nazarite because He drank wine and touched dead bodies, it might be said that they were types or figures of Jesus. Nazarites were to be holy, dedicated and set apart for a specific task. Jesus was all of these to the fullest extent. I know Nazarite and Nazarene are not the same word but this is one of the explanations people have come up with.
3. Finally, at the time, being known as from Nazareth was meant to show contempt and reproach. Philip asked, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" [\[John 1:46\]](#) Isaiah prophesied that He would not be desired, and that He would be despised and rejected [\[Isaiah 53:2,3\]](#).

Finally, I would add that perhaps this was a fulfillment of the writings of one of the prophets that was not included in our current Old Testament.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the star that led the Magi was a naturally occurring phenomena, such as a comet or conjunction of planets, or do you think it was something else? Do you think they might have started their journey, following the star, before Jesus was actually born?
- How long do you think it was between the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem?

<sup>288</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_002.cfm?a=931023](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_002.cfm?a=931023)

<sup>289</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5342/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

- What do you think Matthew meant when he said that Jesus being known as a Nazarene was a fulfillment of prophecy?

## Childhood of John and Jesus

[Luke 1:80](#), [Luke 2:40-52](#) (full text follows interspersed with comments)

It is unfortunate that so little is known of the childhood of Jesus and John. After his birth, no details of the childhood of John are known except for the brief statement in Luke.

[Luke 1:80](#) So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel. [Luke 1:80 NKJV](#)

As a child, he became strong in the spirit. And from the angel's announcement to Zacharias, we know that John was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born.

[Luke 1:15](#) "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. [Luke 1:15 NKJV](#)

But the statement that he became strong in the spirit tells us that he was open to allowing the Holy Spirit to influence his life and to teach him. So, as he grew in age, he grew in the spirit as well.

We don't know much more of the childhood of Jesus. Luke gives one story from the childhood of Jesus, when He was twelve years old.

[Luke 2:40](#) And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

<sup>41</sup> His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup> When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know [it]; <sup>44</sup> but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among [their] relatives and acquaintances. <sup>45</sup> So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. <sup>46</sup> Now so it was [that] after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. <sup>48</sup> So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

<sup>49</sup> And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

<sup>50</sup> But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

<sup>51</sup> Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. [Luke 2:40-51 NKJV](#)

We don't know when Jesus first became aware of who He really was. But from His use of "My Father's house," in His response to Mary, it seemed to indicate that He knew at least something at that time. With the knowledge of who He was, the fact that He went home and lived in subjection to His parents, should be an example to all young people. It must have been a little strange for Mary and Joseph to instruct and train Jesus, knowing what they knew. The chapter ends with a statement similar to the summary of John's childhood years.

[Luke 2:52](#) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. [Luke 2:52 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Why do you think so little was written of the childhood of Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus could remain perfect, even as an infant and toddler?
- Since we know so little of His childhood and even young adulthood, why did Jesus have to be born, rather than just appearing as an adult for the start of His ministry?

## Preaching of John the Baptist

[Matthew 3:1-12](#), [Mark 1:3-8](#), [Luke 3:1-23](#)<sup>290</sup>

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,<sup>2</sup> while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

<sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,<sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

[Matthew 3:1](#) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,<sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"<sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

[Mark 1:4](#) John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.

[Matthew 3:3](#) ... "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "

[Mark 1:3](#) "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "

[Isaiah 40:3](#) The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough ways smooth;  
<sup>6</sup> And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

[Isaiah 40:4](#) Every valley shall be exalted  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough places smooth;<sup>5</sup> The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see [it] together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." [Isaiah 40:3-5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 3:4](#) Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

[Mark 1:6](#) Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

<sup>290</sup> Strong. p27. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n83/mode/2up>

Luke 3:7 Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ...

Matthew 3:5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him<sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark 1:5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ...

Luke 3:7 ... "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup> "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as [our] father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.<sup>9</sup> "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Matthew 3:7 ... "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup> "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,<sup>9</sup> and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as [our] father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.<sup>10</sup> "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup> So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."

<sup>12</sup> Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

<sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you."

<sup>14</sup> Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

<sup>15</sup> Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ [or] not,<sup>16</sup> John answered, saying to all,

"I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>17</sup> "His winnowing fan [is] in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>12</sup> "His winnowing fan [is] in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." [Matthew 3:11-12 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:8 "I indeed baptized you with water, ... —<sup>7</sup> ... "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.—<sup>8</sup> ... but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." [Mark 1:3-8 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. [Luke 3:1-18 NKJV](#)

Right from the start, John started saying controversial things. He preached to his listeners that even though they were Jews and children of Abraham, they needed to repent of their sins and be baptized. He also rebuked the religious leaders, calling them a "brood of vipers." He implied that even though they were children of Abraham and chosen by

God, they were in danger of being rejected for not bearing good fruit. He added that they, the chosen, the only ones who could be saved as far as they were concerned, would be sorted as a farmer separates the wheat from the chaff.

Ultimately the purpose of John's mission, in fact his whole reason for existence, was to prepare people for and announce the arrival of the Messiah.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think people were drawn to John, that seemingly rough, uncivilized person, who even insulted them by implying that they needed to repent in order to be saved?
- What do you think John meant when he said, "the axe is already laid at the root of the trees?"
- Do you think John had the freedom to choose not to fulfill his life's mission?

## Baptism of Jesus

[Matthew 3:13-17](#), [Mark 1:9-11](#), [Luke 3:21-22](#)<sup>291</sup>

[Matthew 3:13](#) Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> And John [tried to] prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit [it to be so] now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

<sup>16</sup> When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. <sup>17</sup> And suddenly a voice [came] from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Matthew 3:13-17 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:9](#) It came to pass in those days [that] Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

[Mark 1:10](#) And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mark 1:9-11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 3:21](#) When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. <sup>22</sup> And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." [Luke 3:21-22 NKJV](#)

Strong places the baptism of Jesus in August of A.D. 25. The date I lean toward is the one argued by Benson in the next chapter, [Dating the baptism of Jesus](#), which is November A.D. 27. After thirty years of living life as a normal human being, Jesus was ready to step out of the shadow. His baptism marks the start of his public ministry.

But why did Jesus ask to be baptized? To me baptism is a symbol of washing away your sins, but also of ending your former life and being resurrected to a new life with Christ.

As Jesus was coming out of the water, two unusual things happened. I believe the Spirit of God that descended on him was the Holy Spirit. I don't think this means that the Holy Spirit was not with Jesus before this, but there was a visible manifestation which either took the form of a dove or descended on Him as a dove. The second thing that happened was that the voice of the Father was audibly heard, for the first of three times that we know of, speaking to the bystanders in the presence of Jesus. Another was at the transfiguration, when Moses and Elijah came down to talk to

<sup>291</sup> Strong. p30. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n87/mode/2up>

Jesus [[Matthew 17:5](#)]. And the third was when some Greeks (from the East) wanted to meet and speak to Jesus [[John 12:28](#)].

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in obscurity, living and working as a humble carpenter in Nazareth?
- What does baptism mean to you?
- What do you think the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus as a dove meant?

## Dating the baptism of Jesus

The reason why the date of this event is interesting was mentioned when we discussed the birthdate of Jesus. The two are intertwined, and one must at the very least, not conflict with the other. The date of the baptism, which most agree is the start of the public ministry of Jesus, plays a pivotal role in [Daniel's seventy week prophecy](#). I will lean heavily on the work of Christopher Benson<sup>292</sup> which was also used in the discussion dating the birth of Jesus. Since he so thoroughly and convincingly argued the birth of Jesus to have occurred in April J.P. 4709 which is April 4 B.C., he uses that as a starting point for dating the baptism. His first step is to use the somewhat vague statement of Luke.

[Luke 3:23](#) Now Jesus Himself began [His ministry at] about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) [the] son of Joseph, [the son] of Heli, [Luke 3:23 NKJV](#)

Benson agrees that the statement is somewhat vague but argues, assuming that Luke knew exactly how old Jesus was, that he wouldn't have said thirty if he knew Jesus to be twenty-nine or thirty-one. So, he begins with the assumption that Jesus was baptized some time during his thirtieth year of life. That would be between April J.P. 4739 and April J.P. 4740, or A.D. 27 – 28.<sup>293</sup> [Recall from [Dating the birth of Jesus](#), we determined that 0 J.P. = 4713 B.C., remembering to account for the fact that there is no year zero between B.C. and A.D.] Then he proceeded check whether there were conflicts with other historical events such as:

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [Luke 3:1 NKJV](#)

The primary date given here is the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. The death of his predecessor, Augustus Caesar, is known to be the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, J.P. 4727. Adding fifteen years to that would yield J.P. 4741, which is a year or two past 4739-4740 that was asserted. Right away this seems like a non-starter, except for the fact that there is plenty of evidence that Tiberius was a co-regent with Augustus for a couple years before he became sole emperor.<sup>294</sup>

Providing the reference, but not repeating Benson's extensive and thorough analysis of the subject, I will state that he believed the most likely date for the baptism of Jesus was in November J.P. 4739,<sup>295</sup> also known as A.D. 27. If you are interested in reading some of the dates proposed by other scholars, see the references provided in my discussion of Daniel's [seventy week prophecy](#).

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<sup>292</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, p55. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA175>

<sup>293</sup> Benson. p178-181. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA178>

<sup>294</sup> Benson. p189. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA189>

<sup>295</sup> Benson. p188. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA188>

What do you believe?

- Do you think that maybe the disciples and early Christians documented some of these important dates and facts but they have been lost to us now?
- Do you think it's important to know the year Jesus was baptized?
- Do you think Jesus explained the [seventy week prophecy](#) to the disciples after His resurrection? If so why didn't one of the Gospels include it?

## Forty days fasting in the wilderness, and being tempted by Satan

[Matthew 4:1-11](#), [Luke 4:1-13](#), [Mark 1:12-13](#)<sup>296</sup>

[Matthew 4:1](#) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

[Luke 4:1](#) Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

[Mark 1:12](#) Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; ...

<sup>3</sup> Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." <sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

[Luke 4:3](#) And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." <sup>4</sup> But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' "

[Deuteronomy 8:3](#) ... man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every [word] that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. [Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

[Luke 4:9](#) Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. <sup>10</sup> "For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,' <sup>11</sup> "and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

[Psalm 91:11](#) For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. <sup>12</sup> In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

[Psalm 91:11-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

[Deuteronomy 6:16](#) "You shall not tempt the LORD your God ... [Deuteronomy 6:16 NKJV](#)

<sup>296</sup> Strong. p32. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n91/mode/2up>



<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to Him,

"All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

[Matthew 4:1-11 NKJV](#)

Luke 4:5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for [this] has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. <sup>7</sup> "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

<sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Luke 4:13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. [Luke 4:1-13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 6:13](#) "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. [Deuteronomy 6:13 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:13 ... and the angels ministered to Him. [Mark 1:12-13 NKJV](#)

The three gospels which mentioned this all say that Jesus was led or drove by the Spirit, and that He was in the wilderness for forty days. Matthew is the only one of the three which says, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." I do not literally understand it to mean that He was led by the Spirit [in order] to be tempted by the devil." The other two do not say this and I do not believe God leads us into temptation.

As I just read this today, I realized for the first time that the order of the temptations is different in Matthew and Luke. The other thing I noticed is that it doesn't really say what Jesus did when He was in the wilderness, but Matthew and Luke tell us what He didn't do, eat! I believe that along with the fasting, Jesus was praying, to prepare Himself for His ministry. I think most people have a picture of Satan showing up at the end of the forty days when Jesus is physically weak and hungry. But Mark and Luke both imply that Jesus was tempted the entire forty days, then Matthew and Luke mention that at the end of the time, the devil came to Him (in person).

Before beginning any discussion on the temptations, recall that Talbot made the assertion that Jesus would re-live the experience of Israel but would succeed where they failed.<sup>297</sup> I wanted to point out another parallel between the life of Jesus and the Israelite nation.

[Number 14:33](#) 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. <sup>34</sup> '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 14:33-34 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 8:2](#) "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you [and] test you, to know what [was] in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. <sup>3</sup> "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every [word] that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. [Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NKJV](#)

<sup>297</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2009, p33

While Jesus did not go into the wilderness because of His own failing, He was victorious over temptation, overcoming where Israel had failed. In fact, this discussion leads very nicely into the quotation from the Old Testament Jesus made as He resisted the devil's first temptation. Notice the similarity of the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, where Satan succeeded.

[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. [Genesis 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

Satan tempted Eve to eat in order to become like God, and he tempted Jesus to eat to prove He was God. I don't know whether Jesus had any doubt about who He was, but He could easily satisfy His hunger and prove His divinity at the same time. I'm pretty sure that Satan didn't appear to Jesus looking like the stereo typical images we have of the Devil. I think he did his best to make it appear as if their positions were reversed. Satan clearly is a supernatural being of great power, and Jesus, not exuding His divinity, was in extreme physical weakness after His fast. This first temptation was not only about appetite, but clearly, that aspect of it alone is something that humanity struggles with on a daily basis. From Eve's and our perspective, the other aspect of this temptation is about whether we will trust God's word, that He is who and what He claims to be and not try to put ourselves in His position. I think it is difficult to put ourselves in Eve's or Jesus' place, but we can say that where Eve failed, Jesus succeeded.

I will not debate which temptation came next. I will simply discuss the second temptation as written by Matthew. Satan quoted Psalms and Jesus quoted Moses from the time just after the Exodus before Israel was actually condemned to spend the forty years in the wilderness. Let's look at some reasons why this would have been a temptation to Jesus. I think He already realized how much of an uphill battle it was going to be to get the Jews to accept that He was their long looked for Messiah. Look at one of the arguments the people reasoned for not believing in Jesus as the Messiah.

[John 7:27](#) "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." [John 7:27 NKJV](#)

The idea of descending in a glorified body with angel escort into the temple courtyard must have made some sense to Jesus. Just think of the uphill battle He could avoid if he could get the belief and support of Jewish leaders from the start. Let's turn our focus to "testing the Lord." Is this the same thing as asking God for a sign? Does it show a lack of faith to ask for a sign as Gideon did [[Judges 6](#)]? Hezekiah asked for a sign that God was really going to heal him [[2 Kings 20:8-9](#)]. I think this temptation was not really about asking for a sign. I think this was partly about trusting God to accomplish things His way and not trying to force His hand to do it your way. I think it was also a temptation to do something the easy way instead of the right way. But all this is assuming you know the right way or God's way of doing something. I think in Israel's case, it was a defiant challenge to God who had already proved Himself to them.

In the last temptation according to Matthew, Satan no longer tried to mask his identity. He made the offer that he has made to many throughout the history of the world. Serve me and I will give you great power. I think this temptation was again partly about doing it the easy way, rather than the right way or God's way. I believe Jesus knew that he had come to earth to live a trying life, in fact to risk His eternal oneness with God, to redeem our world from the clutches of Satan. Here Satan is offering to simply give it back to Jesus if He will simply bow down and worship him. But with Satan, the

master deceiver and manipulator, nothing is as it seems. We may wonder how Jesus could have been tempted to bow down and worship Satan, yet most every day, each of us has our own idols that we bow down and worship. By prioritizing things above our relationship with God and doing His work, we are in a sense bowing down to those things and worshipping them.

What do you believe?

- How do you feel the temptation over appetite or the turning stones into bread relates to you?
- How does the temptation of leaping off the building or testing God relate to you?
- How does the temptation of bowing down and worshipping something other than God relate to you?

## The first disciples

### [John 1:19-51](#)

[John 1:19](#) Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said: "I [am] 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," ' as the prophet Isaiah said." [Isaiah 40:3](#) The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. [Isaiah 40:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> "It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose." <sup>28</sup> These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. <sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' <sup>31</sup> "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

<sup>35</sup> Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John [speak], and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

<sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

<sup>43</sup> The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

<sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

<sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

<sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [John 1:19-51 NKJV](#)

As will often be the case as we go through the four Gospels, John will not just repeat the other three, but will fill in the gaps. In this case, he didn't even mention the baptism, but gives us details about how the Baptist recognized Jesus and pointed his disciples toward Him. "The next day," in verse 29 refers to the day after the Pharisees questioned why he was baptizing if he wasn't the Christ or Elijah, in [John 1:24-25](#).

We don't really know exactly when these three days took place, but I am pretty certain they were after the forty day fast and temptation in the wilderness, which was most likely in the fall, and the first Passover of Jesus' ministry, which would be in the spring. They appear to be three consecutive days, which is why I place the dialog with the Priests and Levites after the baptism and temptation.

Of the two disciples of John that followed Jesus in [verse 37](#), one is said to be Andrew and the other is not named but many speculate it was the author, John. It was his practice to not mention himself or any other family member by name in the Gospel written by him. So, I would like to believe that John and James along with Andrew and Peter who were specifically mentioned, were the first disciples of Jesus. It would not be surprising if these four were the first disciples, after all Peter, James and John were frequently mentioned as the disciples who were the closest to Jesus. Whether Jesus asked them to follow Him or not that day, we are not told. From what we are told, the distinction of being the first disciple Jesus called to follow Him probably belonged to Phillip. John says, the next day Jesus called Philip to follow Him. Whatever their status as disciples at this time, we will see later that Andrew, Peter, James and John did not quit their jobs to follow Jesus full time.

I have puzzled over the timing and geography of these verses in John. The Baptist was said to be in Bethany beyond the Jordan. I believe that means he was baptizing near a town called Bethany, but it was distinguished from the well-known Bethany near Jerusalem [where Lazarus, Martha and Mary lived,] by the description "beyond the Jordan." I also take the

wording to mean across the Jordan from Jerusalem, or the east bank of the Jordan. There are traditional sites<sup>298</sup> which have been commercialized as the location where Jesus was baptized, but through history, many factors could have altered the selection of sites attended by pilgrims. The Jordan River is a meandering river which is known to choose a different path from time to time. There were also concerns in selecting a site for pilgrims, such as the inconvenience of crossing rivers, or whether one site or another is under the control of unfriendly powers. In his doctoral dissertation, Carl Laney did a nice job of analyzing and critiquing the common or traditional sites for the baptism.<sup>299</sup> Predominantly, the sites are near the southern end of the Jordan River (red circle on the map), meaning that it could be as much as 60-80 miles from there to Bethsaida (orange ellipse) where Andrew and Phillip lived.<sup>300</sup> This presents a problem if one were to assume that Jesus met Andrew, the other disciple, Phillip and Nathanael near their home town of Bethsaida. The two most likely options I see are that at that time John had moved his preaching and baptizing up closer to the Sea of Galilee and that the “next day” occurrences all happened in the region of Galilee. Or that John was still baptizing south in the region of Judea and that the disciples mentioned had been close by because they were either disciples of John, or since the baptism, had been hanging around near John in case Jesus came back. I currently lean toward the latter because I think there was more evidence that the baptismal location is in the south. In addition to that, verse 43 says that Jesus was purposing to go to Galilee when he met Phillip. I take that to mean that He was about to start His journey to Galilee, probably to attend the wedding in Cana which had no doubt been in planning for a long time.



There is another location where John was said to be baptizing. The green circle on the map is thought to be the location mentioned in [John 3:23](#) where the Baptist relocated after the incidents in the first chapter I have been discussing. It is clearly distinguished from the other location because of the comments “He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified.”

[John 3:22](#) After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. <sup>23</sup> Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

<sup>25</sup> Then there arose a dispute between [some] of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified-- behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" [John 3:22-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>298</sup> [https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Baptismal+Site+\(Bethany+beyond+the+Jordan\)/@31.8375119,35.5478025,17z](https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Baptismal+Site+(Bethany+beyond+the+Jordan)/@31.8375119,35.5478025,17z)

<sup>299</sup> Laney, J. Carl. *Selective Geographical Problems in the Life of Christ*. Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977.

[http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification\\_of\\_Bethany\\_Beyond\\_the\\_Jordan,\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification_of_Bethany_Beyond_the_Jordan,_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf) [if not available there

[http://btlb.org/Identification\\_of\\_Bethany\\_Beyond\\_the\\_Jordan,\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://btlb.org/Identification_of_Bethany_Beyond_the_Jordan,_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf)]

<sup>300</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/maps/images/Map-Israel-New-Testament-Times.gif>

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think John said he was not the Elijah that was prophesied to come, when Jesus later said that he was [[Matthew 11:14](#)]?
- Do you think John really understood what it meant to call Jesus the Lamb of God?
- Why did John's disciples ask where Jesus stayed?<sup>301</sup> Whose house do you think He took them to?

## The first Miracle

### [John 2:1-11](#)

[John 2:1](#) On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

<sup>4</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do [it]."

<sup>6</sup> Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And He said to them, "Draw [some] out now, and take [it] to the master of the feast." And they took [it]. <sup>9</sup> When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. <sup>10</sup> And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the [guests] have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

<sup>11</sup> This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

[John 2:1-11 NKJV](#)

The usage of the phrase "on the third day," immediately begs the question, from when? Some of the possible options people have mentioned in no particular order are:

- The third day after calling Phillip to follow Him
- The third day after returning to Galilee
- The third day after leaving Judea for Galilee
- The third day of the week
- The third day of the wedding

The author of the articles on [3amthoughts.com](#) [may no longer exist] mentioned something I found very interesting regarding this third day statement. In my words, if this was referring to the third day of the week, is it coincidence that the third day of creation week involved water? He also mentioned that if it was the third day of the wedding feast, recall that he told His mother "My hour has not yet come." Then later on, in reference to His death, Jesus said that on the

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<sup>301</sup> Strong, James. *Questions on the Gospel History*. New York, Carlton & Phillips, 1853, p 42.  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=m6kMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA42>

third day He would be raised up [[Matthew 16:21](#), [Matthew 17:23](#), [Matthew 20:19](#), [Luke 9:22](#), [Luke 18:33](#), [Luke 24:7](#)]. The resurrection on the third day was the culmination of “His hour” which came when Jesus died on the cross.<sup>302</sup>

Since I lean toward the events of [John 1](#) occurring to the south in Judea, I believe it would have taken several days to walk all the way up to the region of Galilee. Recall in chapter 1 that it said:

[John 1:43](#) The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." [John 1:43 NKJV](#)

This verse clearly indicates that Jesus was planning on going to Galilee. I think this was most likely because He had been invited to the wedding, and probably being close family (because His mother was helping), was planning on being there. It could easily take three days of travel to reach the wedding and His newly acquired disciples went with Him. I again mention Laney, who in the same dissertation also discussed the possible locations for the wedding in Cana. He leans toward an archeological site called Khirbet Kana.<sup>303</sup> See also known as Khirbet Qana<sup>304</sup> or Khirbet Cana.<sup>305 306</sup>

It was customary for Jewish weddings to take multiple days, even as many as seven.<sup>307</sup> Based on the comments of the headwaiter when he tasted the wine, it was obviously well into the celebration when the wine had run out. If Jesus had never performed a miracle before, why would Mary have expected Him to do something at the wedding? Even though Jesus’ response to Mary seems to indicate that He wasn’t going to do anything, she must have understood it differently, because she immediately told the servants to do whatever He said. I believe His method for performing the miracle shows that He wants people to be involved in the distribution of His blessings to others.

Finally, I think something needs to be said about whether Jesus made pure fresh grape juice or the alcoholic drink, we today call wine. Many have assumed that the word “wine” in the Bible refers only to the alcoholic beverage we know today. In chapter two of his book *Wine in the Bible*, Dr. Bacchiocchi goes into great depth to explain that the word wine can mean either fermented or fresh unfermented grape juice.<sup>308</sup> Furthermore in chapter five of the same book, he concludes, “The claim that Christ used and sanctioned the use of alcoholic beverages has been found to be unsubstantiated. The evidence I have submitted shows that Jesus abstained from all intoxicating substances and gave no sanction to His followers to use them.”<sup>309</sup> Personally, I believe that if Jesus lived a perfect life, He would not have taken into His body anything that would lessen or loosen His mental powers. I also believe that even though it appears that there are some who can drink moderately, there are more than enough examples of ruined lives, abused people and even death directly resulting from those who cannot drink in moderation. For these reasons, I can see no way that Jesus would have used personally or condoned the use of alcoholic beverages.

<sup>302</sup> <https://3amthoughts.com/article/people-and-places/cana-and-third-day> [website may longer exist]

<sup>303</sup> Laney. [http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification\\_of\\_Cana\\_of\\_Galilee,\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification_of_Cana_of_Galilee,_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf) [if not available there [http://btlb.org/Identification\\_of\\_Cana\\_of\\_Galilee,\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://btlb.org/Identification_of_Cana_of_Galilee,_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf)]

<sup>304</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khirbet\\_Qana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khirbet_Qana)

<sup>305</sup> <http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/khircanah.html>

<sup>306</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/@32.8222403,35.3035214,1912m/data=!3m1!1e3>

<sup>307</sup> <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/after-the-wedding-ceremony/>

<sup>308</sup> Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *Wine in the Bible: A Biblical Study on the Use of Alcoholic Beverages*. Biblical Perspectives, 2001. [https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav\\_timeline\\_asin?encoding=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav_timeline_asin?encoding=UTF8&psc=1)

<sup>309</sup> Bacchiocchi. [https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav\\_timeline\\_asin?encoding=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav_timeline_asin?encoding=UTF8&psc=1)

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What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus say His hour had not yet come, if He was going to perform the miracle?
- Did Jesus' response to His mother seem abrupt or rude to you?
- Do you think Jesus made pure fresh grape juice, or wine as it is commonly referred to today?

## Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry

[John 2:12-25](#)<sup>310</sup>

[John 2:12](#) After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

<sup>13</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. <sup>15</sup> When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. <sup>16</sup> And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" <sup>17</sup> Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

[Psalm 69:9](#) Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, ... [Psalm 69:9 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

<sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all [men], <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. [John 2:12-25 NKJV](#)

After the wedding and before going back down to Jerusalem for the Passover, Jesus spent some time with his family and new disciples in Capernaum. According to Strong's harmony, none of the Gospels record any events between these few days in Capernaum and the Passover.

Several things of note took place during this first Passover of Jesus' public ministry. The cleansing of the temple is where Jesus first came out against the religious establishment of the day. This is where He began stepping on their toes, so to speak. Ellen White in the *Desire or Ages* suggests that the exchange of currency for the temple tax and the purchase of animals for the sacrifices was a great source of corruption and revenue for the priests.<sup>311</sup> The origin of the temple tax which was to be used for the upkeep and operation of the temple, was one of the laws given to Moses by God. When the Jews were numbered, they were instructed to pay a half-shekel so that a plague would not break out among the people [[Exodus 30:11-16](#)]. Based on this command, presumably every time the Jews assembled at the Temple for one of

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<sup>310</sup> Strong. p39. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n97/mode/2up>

<sup>311</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p155.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=155>



their feasts, they were registered (counted) which required the payment of the tax. In Exodus, it states the tax should be a half shekel, with the sanctuary shekel being defined as twenty gerahs [[verse 13](#)]. According to Strong's concordance a gerah was the weight of 16 grains of barley or 4 to 5 carob beans.<sup>312</sup> I didn't have any carob beans on hand, but I did have some barley, so I painstakingly counted out 20 x 16 or 320 grains of barley and weighed them on a mail scale and it was less than half an ounce. The temple tax was half this weight, but of what material? I believe that Exodus 38 gives us a clue in mentioning the amount of silver collected when the congregation were numbered.



Figure 1 320 grains of barley

[Exodus 38:25](#) And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation [was] one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: [Exodus 38:25 NKJV](#)

Silver half-shekel temple tax coins weighing 6.249 – 6.474 grams have actually been found and determined to be from the time of Jesus.<sup>313</sup> I believe the original command given to Moses specified the amount of silver that should be given in terms of the sanctuary shekel, but over time it seems the priests actually minted silver temple coins which were supposedly the weight of a half-shekel. My crude weight of a gerah being under a half ounce is in line with the weight of the temple tax coins mentioned above. With the contribution being required in temple coins, the people would have to exchange their silver or other currency, rather than simply giving 6.5 gm of silver. That meant that money changers were needed, who could charge exchange fees, and the people would have no choice but to pay them. Then in order to gain business, money changers would probably compete with each other by yelling out their exchange rates. The exact same corruption could be replicated for the animal sacrifices. The command of God to Moses regarding the sacrifice for the first Passover was:

[Exodus 12:5](#) 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take [it] from the sheep or from the goats. [Exodus 12:5 NKJV](#)

Clearly at the time, God intended for each family to inspect and select the sacrifice themselves. On occasions when the people would have to bring their sacrifice to the temple, I presume the priests took it upon themselves to inspect the animal for blemishes, which I expect can be very subjective. This clearly left room for corruption as well. Those who didn't bring their own sacrifice would have to pay the asking price for an approved animal, and those who did bring their own could be rejected for blemishes. Those same animals that were rejected were probably then sold to another at a profit. This is the corruption that White suggests was sanctioned by the priests for their own gain. This is what Jesus was opposed to. I'm sure Jesus made some very powerful enemies that day and gained some admirers among the common people as well as those who hated the corruption that went on in the Temple "marketplace."

After Jesus chased the money changers and animal sellers out of the Temple, along with those who felt guilty and fled along with them, I believe He began to heal people. I preface it with I believe because the next thing it says is, the Jews asked Him to give them a sign that he had the authority to chase them out of the Temple. I would say that the very fact that they fled from Him was itself a sign. I think some time must have passed before the Jews, some of which must have fled, had the courage to come back and face Jesus. So, if I'm right, Jesus was already performing miracles when they asked for a sign. Jesus didn't give them what they wanted, and it wouldn't have mattered anyway because He was not the Messiah they were looking for. Their response to Jesus that the Temple had taken forty-six years to build, is understood by most scholars to mean that Herod's remodel and expansion of the Temple had begun forty-six years ago. This is one of the methods used for dating the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry, as well His baptism which most

<sup>312</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1626/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>313</sup> <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/catalog/roman-and-greek-coins.asp?vpar=828>

believe happened the fall of the prior year. Benson places the baptism in J.P. 4739 or 27 A.D. [see [Dating the baptism of Jesus](#)] which would make this Passover in the year 28 A.D.. Strong's Harmony, however, chooses to place this Passover a couple years earlier, in 25 A.D..<sup>314</sup> For additional references, see my discussion on the [Seventy week prophecy](#). I lean towards Benson's dating.

I presume that the cleansing of the Temple happened on the first day of the Passover and then John says, while He was in Jerusalem for the feast, many people saw the miracles He was performing and believed.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think people fled from Jesus who was dressed as a common pilgrim, with no authority that they were aware of?
- If the priests were taking advantage of the people as White suggests, do you think they felt guilty about it or do you think they felt entitled to the monetary gain?
- John says many people saw the signs and believed in His name, but what do you think they believed?

## Nicodemus

[John 3:1-21](#)<sup>315</sup>

[John 3:1](#) There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? <sup>11</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. <sup>12</sup> "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, [that is], the Son of Man who is in heaven. <sup>14</sup> "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world that He

<sup>314</sup> Strong. p39. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n97/mode/2up>

<sup>315</sup> Strong. p41. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n99/mode/2up>

gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

<sup>18</sup> "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup> "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

[John 3:1-21 NKJV](#)

Nicodemus is mentioned on three occasions and only in the Gospel of John. This night meeting with Jesus is the first. The second being in [John 7:50](#) when he reminds his fellow leaders or rulers that Jewish law required them to give a person an opportunity to speak or to explain themselves before passing judgment on them. The third occasion was the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus [[John 19:38-42](#)].

It is a widely accepted belief that Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council called the Sanhedrin. The word Sanhedrin does not actually appear in the NKJV translation of the Bible. According to Wikipedia, the Sanhedrin was an assembly of 23 to 71 men appointed in each city. The 23 was determined as follows. The minimum size of a community is 10 men, so for voting purposes 10 vs. 10. But one more is need to achieve a majority, but a simple majority cannot convict, so one more judge is required, but a court should not have an even number of judges, so one more is added, totaling 23 (10+10+1+1+1).<sup>316</sup> The 71 most likely had its origin from the seventy elders God told Moses to gather to help him bear the burden of judging and arbitrating between the people [[Numbers 11:16-17](#)]. According to Wikipedia, there was a single Great Sanhedrin, and many lesser Sanhedrin's.<sup>317</sup> This structure is not unlike the court system in the United States, where there are many district courts, and one Supreme Court. At times, throughout history, the role of the Sanhedrin varied. Clearly in the time of Moses, the 70 elders were to assist Moses in judging all matters. The Wikipedia article stated that the Sanhedrin only dealt with religious matters. It also claims that there was a time when the High Priest acted as the head of the Great Sanhedrin, but in 191 BC when the body lost confidence in the High Priest the office of Nasi was created.<sup>318</sup>

Nicodemus was clearly a person of influence and wealth. As a Pharisee, he was considered among the religious elite. This night meeting with Jesus seemed to have occurred within a short period of His cleansing of the Temple. It seems pretty clear that most of his peers were alarmed and outraged by the actions of Jesus. On the other hand, Nicodemus was intrigued. He had no doubt heard the report of those they had sent to question John the Baptist. He had probably spent time studying the prophecies of the Messiah. The second mention of Nicodemus in John makes it clear that he advised caution in dealing with Jesus in case He was sent of God.

Nicodemus had been taught and he had most likely taught as well, that the Jews were God's chosen. As a Pharisee, he probably thought of himself as the best of the best when it came to God's favor with humanity. However, in his secret meeting with Jesus, in spite of their differences in social standing and wealth, he seemed timid and awed. Jesus, knowing his heart didn't waste any time beating around the bush. He immediately informed Nicodemus, that in spite of how righteous he thought he was, that he needed to be born again in order to be save. White says that Nicodemus was

<sup>316</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin>

<sup>317</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Great\\_and\\_Lesser\\_Sanhedrin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Great_and_Lesser_Sanhedrin)

<sup>318</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Function\\_and\\_procedures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Function_and_procedures)

not unfamiliar with the concept of being born again in order to be saved. Jews had used similar language in relation to converts to Judaism.<sup>319</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Why did Nicodemus really want to meet and talk to Jesus?
- Why do you think Nicodemus took the symbol of re-birth literally rather than spiritually?
- Do you think Nicodemus actually understood what Jesus was saying about being lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness?

## He must increase, I must decrease – John's imprisonment

[John 3:22-36](#), [Matthew 14:3-5](#), [Mark 6:17-20](#), [Luke 3:19-20](#)<sup>320</sup>

[John 3:22](#) After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. <sup>23</sup> Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

<sup>25</sup> Then there arose a dispute between [some] of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified-- behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

<sup>27</sup> John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' <sup>29</sup> "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> "He must increase, but I [must] decrease. <sup>31</sup> "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup> "And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. <sup>33</sup> "He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. <sup>34</sup> "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. <sup>35</sup> "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. <sup>36</sup> "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." [John 3:22-36 NKJV](#)

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<sup>319</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p171.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=171>

<sup>320</sup> Strong. p44. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n103/mode/2up>

[Mark 6:17](#) For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. <sup>18</sup> Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[Matthew 14:3](#) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put [him] in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.  
<sup>4</sup> Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

[Luke 3:19](#) But Herod the tetrarch ... <sup>20</sup> ... also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison. <sup>19</sup> ... being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, [Luke 3:19,20 NKJV](#)

<sup>19</sup> Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; <sup>20</sup> 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 6:17-20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:5](#) And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. [Matthew 14:3-5 NKJV](#)

It is clear that John was respected by the people and even the wicked king Herod. He was addressed as Rabbi, and even though it says that Herod feared doing anything to him because he was afraid of the reaction from the people, it also says he enjoyed listening to him. If John had been interested in popularity and power, he could have kept the attention on himself instead of directing the people to Jesus. But the statement by John that he must decrease and Jesus must increase showed his humility and character.

We don't know exactly when these events took place, and how much time passed between John's discussion and his imprisonment. Strong roughly places these events in the summer after the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry.

What do you believe?

- Why were people still coming to John to listen to him and be baptized if he had already identified the Messiah?
- Why did John still have disciples after identifying Jesus as the Messiah?
- Why do you think Herod, being as wicked as he was known to be, enjoy listening to John?

## The Samaritan woman at the well

[John 4:1-45](#), [Matthew 4:12](#), [Mark 1:14](#), [Luke 4:14](#) <sup>321</sup>

[John 4:1](#) Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

<sup>3</sup> He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

[Matthew 4:12](#) Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. [Matthew 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:14](#) Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, ... [Mark 1:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:14](#) Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, ... [Luke 4:14 NKJV](#)

<sup>4</sup> But He needed to go through Samaria.

<sup>5</sup> So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from [His] journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>321</sup> Strong. p47. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n107/mode/2up>

<sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup> For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

<sup>9</sup> Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

<sup>10</sup> 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? <sup>12</sup> "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> "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."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' <sup>18</sup> "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

<sup>19</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> "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. <sup>24</sup> "God [is] Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am [He]."

<sup>27</sup> And at this [point] His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

<sup>28</sup> The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup> Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

<sup>31</sup> In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

<sup>32</sup> But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

<sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him [anything] to eat?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> "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! <sup>36</sup> "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

<sup>39</sup> And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I [ever] did." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of His own word.

<sup>42</sup> Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard [Him] and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." <sup>43</sup> Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. <sup>44</sup> For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. <sup>45</sup> So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast. [John 4:1-45 NKJV](#)

Matthew, Mark & Luke tell of Jesus going back to Galilee, John's story has Him going north through Samaria. Strong put these together and proposes a time of December after the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry.

A traditional and current tourist site of Jacob's well has had a church built to house it. Because a well doesn't move around, it is considered one of the most authentic sites in the Holy Land. <sup>322</sup> <sup>323</sup> According to John, the well was near Sychar in Samaria, and was on a parcel of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. It is thought that this well was dug in Shechem, the place where Jacob first stayed upon his return from Paddan-aram [[Genesis 33:18](#)]. The Bible itself doesn't say that Jacob gave this land to Joseph, but when the land was divided by Joshua, Shechem lay in the middle of the territory belonging to the descendants of Joseph. Wayne Stiles has a nice biblical summary of Shechem. He points out that being at a major crossroad, the town of Shechem saw a lot of traffic and also was the location for some significant biblical events. <sup>324</sup>

Although there were times during Jesus' ministry that He instructed the disciples to only reach out to the Jews, this was not one of them. There were reasons for Jesus to instruct them to do so and it wasn't because he was racist. Here, near the start of His ministry, Jesus surprised His disciples by not only talking to the Samaritan woman, but by staying with them and offering salvation to them as well. In her booklet on John, which I mentioned in the summary of his gospel, Talbot wrote a chapter on the woman at the well. She points out that Jesus had to get through five layers to reach to woman. <sup>325</sup>

1. Prejudice. The woman said, our people hate each other, why are you talking to me? Jesus peeled back that layer by hinting at who He is and offering her a gift.
2. Heritage. The woman said, you're not greater than our father Jacob, are you? Jesus ignored that questions and stays on His theme of water, saying that whoever drinks His water will never thirst again.
3. Superficial truth. In response to Jesus' request to bring her husband, she tried to avoid the topic by claiming she wasn't married. Jesus pushed through that barrier, by telling her the truth that she didn't want to mention.

<sup>322</sup> <http://www.seetheholyland.net/jacobs-well/>

<sup>323</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/the-fourfold-gospel/by-sections/at-jacobs-well-and-at-sychar.html>

<sup>324</sup> <https://bible.org/article/geographical-historical-spiritual-significance-shechem>

<sup>325</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *God Became Flesh*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010. p20-28.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=3](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=3)

4. Religiosity. No doubt feeling uncomfortable, and maybe a little amazed, she tried to change the subject by asking a controversial theological question. Jesus doesn't get bogged down in that debate and pushed through to what true worship will be.
5. Procrastination. Finally, she declares, I know the Messiah is coming one day and will be able to answer these difficult questions. Jesus, then tells her, I am He.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jews and Samaritans hated each other?
- What was it like for a woman in that culture to be divorced five times?
- Why did the Samaritans listen to the woman and come out to see Jesus?

## Jesus teaches in Galilee and heals the royal official's son

[Matthew 4:17](#), [Mark 1:14-15](#), [Luke 4:14-15](#), [John 4:46-50](#)<sup>326</sup>

[Mark 1:14](#) ... preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." [Mark 1:14,15 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 4:17](#) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Matthew 4:17 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:15](#) And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ...<sup>14</sup> and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region [Luke 4:14,15 NKJV](#)

[John 4:46](#) So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.<sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you [people] see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

<sup>49</sup> The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.<sup>51</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told [him], saying, "Your son lives!"

<sup>52</sup> Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."<sup>53</sup> So the father knew that [it was] at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

<sup>54</sup> This again [is] the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee. [John 4:46-50 NKJV](#)

After leaving Samaria, Jesus continued on to Galilee where He was widely accepted as He preached the message, the kingdom of God is at hand. Word had no doubt spread ahead of Jesus of His actions in cleansing temple of the sellers and money changes who took advantage of the people. These Galileans probably thought of Jesus as being one of their own and were probably thrilled to have someone who would stand up for the common people against the corruption in the Temple.

<sup>326</sup> Strong. p52. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n113/mode/2up>



One day when Jesus was in Cana, where He had turned water into wine, He was approached by a royal official from Capernaum. As someone serving in a royal court, it is most likely that it was a person who served in Herod's court. It has been suggested by many that this official could have been Chuza, the steward of Herod, whose wife was mentioned in Luke 8:3 as one of the women who supported Jesus financially.

[Luke 8:1](#) Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve [were] with Him, <sup>2</sup> and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities--Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, <sup>3</sup> and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. [Luke 8:1-3 NKJV](#)

Arguments against this this royal official being Chuza, was that Luke was mentioning some women who had evil spirits cast out, Mary from Magdalene, and some who had been healed, possibly Joanna and Susanna.

What do you believe?

- Although it doesn't specifically say so, do you think Jesus was healing a lot of people as He taught and preached throughout Galilee?
- Do you think Jesus required some belief before a healing was granted?
- Why do you think Jesus initially responded to the official by saying, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe?"

## Jesus rejected in His home town of Nazareth

[Luke 4:16-31](#), [Mathew 4:13-16](#)<sup>327</sup>

[Luke 4:16](#) So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> "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;

<sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

[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;

<sup>2</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, ... [Isaiah 61:1-2 NKJV](#)

<sup>20</sup> Then He closed the book, and gave [it] back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." <sup>22</sup> So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' " <sup>24</sup> Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. <sup>25</sup> "But I tell you truly, many widows were in

<sup>327</sup> Strong. p53. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n113/mode/2up>

Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; <sup>26</sup> "but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, [in the region] of Sidon, to a woman [who was] a widow. <sup>27</sup> "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." <sup>28</sup> So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, <sup>29</sup> and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. <sup>30</sup> Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. [Luke 4:16-30 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 4:13](#) And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>15</sup> "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
[By] the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles:

<sup>16</sup> The people who sat in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light  
has dawned." [Matthew 4:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 9:1](#) ... The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, ...  
[By] the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
In Galilee of the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
Upon them a light has shined. [Isaiah 9:1-2 NKJV](#)

This is a really disturbing story. These people were in church on Sabbath and their own hometown boy, Jesus came to visit and was asked to read the scripture and teach. They became so enraged by what He said that they stood up, dragged Jesus out of church, and fully intended to murder Him. The Jews were not allowed to condemn a person to death in their courts, but this was not even a legal proceeding, this was a murderous mob. But what exactly did Jesus say that got them so riled up that they were willing to commit murder, on the Sabbath day no less? First, it should be mentioned that Jesus stopped in mid verse in His reading of Isaiah. He left unread, "And the day of vengeance of our God; ..." But this is not what upset them, nor the fact that He claimed that He was the fulfillment of this Messianic prophecy. Because after He claimed this prophecy was fulfilled in their hearing, they wondered at the gracious words that came from His lips. This is probably when they were thinking, this man grew up in our midst, we know him and his family. He didn't seem like anything special then, so how is he now a fulfillment of this Messianic prophecy? But this seemed like wondering thoughts, or marveling thoughts, but not murderous thoughts. But when Jesus implied that the gifts of God would be given to heathens, foreigners, and their enemies, they snapped.

After leaving Nazareth, Matthew says that Jesus settled in Capernaum. What does that mean? I don't think it means that Jesus built a house for Himself there. I think it means that city of Capernaum became His home base. In a couple places, we read that after teaching in the Synagogue, Jesus and the disciples went to the home of Peter and Andrew.

[Mark 1:21](#) Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ... <sup>29</sup> Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [Mark 1:21, 29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:31](#) Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. ... <sup>38</sup> Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. [Luke 4:31, 38 NKJV](#)

This raises an interesting question: was Peter from Bethsaida or Capernaum?

[John 1:44](#) Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. [John 1:44 NKJV](#)

I don't think there is any controversy here. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, was often called Jesus of Nazareth, but settled in Capernaum. It seems pretty clear that Peter and Andrew had a house in Capernaum, where Peter's mother-in-law lived as well. That doesn't prevent them from originally being from Bethsaida.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the people of Nazareth were willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah if He hadn't said the things about the widow of Zarephath or Naaman?
- Do you think Jesus' family were in the synagogue that day? If so, what do you think they were doing when the churchgoers turned into a murderous mob?
- Do you think Jesus was homeless?

## Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Him full-time

[Luke 5:1-11](#), [Matthew 4:18-22](#), [Mark 1:16-17](#)<sup>328</sup>

[Luke 5:1](#) So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, [Matthew 4:18](#) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, [Mark 1:16](#) And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, <sup>2</sup> and saw two boats standing saw ... He saw ... by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing [their] nets. <sup>3</sup> Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> But Simon answered and said to Him, Matthew 4:18 ... two brothers, Simon "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." <sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled to [their] partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw [it], he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; <sup>10</sup> and so also [were] James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. ... Mark 1:16 ... Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Mathew 4:18 NKJV

<sup>328</sup> Strong. p56. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n117/mode/2up>

Matthew 4:19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> They immediately left [their] nets and followed Him. <sup>21</sup> Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James [the son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. [Matthew 4:18-22 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:17 Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." <sup>18</sup> They immediately left their nets and followed Him. <sup>19</sup> When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the [son] of Zebedee,

Luke 5:10 ... And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." <sup>11</sup> So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him. [Luke 5:1-11 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:19 ... and John his brother, who also [were] in the boat mending their nets. <sup>20</sup> And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. [Mark 1:16-20 NKJV](#)

Strong places the calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John to fulltime discipleship around January, more than a year after the Baptism which marked the start of Jesus' public ministry. I wonder what their relationship was with Jesus between the time they met Him shortly after the Baptism and now. There is at least one verse later which tells us there were disciples following Jesus full time from the time of His baptism.

[Acts 1:21](#) "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." <sup>23</sup> And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. [Acts 1:22-26 NKJV](#)

All three accounts mention cleaning or mending nets, two sets of brothers, and the call to leave their jobs to follow Jesus full time. Luke is the only one of the four Gospels that mentions the details of the teaching from the boat, and the miracle catch. Matthew and Mark mention that James and John were there with their father Zebedee. Luke was obviously not an eyewitness, but most likely neither were Matthew or Mark. Although if Mark as many think was the Gospel according to Peter, his would have been a second hand telling of the events. I think that based on many of the details in Luke about Mary, I think his account would have been influenced by John who was Mary's caretaker after Jesus went to heaven. Luke would also no doubt have had access to John, as a firsthand witness of these particular events. I think the story in Mark was short and to the point, and Matthew copied it and added some details toward the end.

I believe the miracle, was Jesus' way of letting them know that their needs could be met if they quit their jobs to do what God called them to do.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus had any fulltime followers before He called these four prominent disciples to quit their jobs and follow Him?
- How do you think the needs of their families were met after they stopped fishing?
- Why do you think the father of James and John was mentioned as being present, but nothing is said of Peter and Andrew's father?

## Jesus casts out an evil spirit in the synagogue on Sabbath

[Mark 1:21-28](#), [Matthew 7:28-29](#), [Luke 4:31-37](#)<sup>329</sup>

[Mark 1:21](#) Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup> And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine [is] this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." <sup>28</sup> And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee. [Mark 1:21-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:28](#) And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, <sup>29</sup> for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. [Matthew 7:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:33](#) Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, <sup>34</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>35</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in [their] midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.

<sup>36</sup> Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this [is]! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." <sup>37</sup> And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region. [Luke 4:31-37 NKJV](#)

Leaning on Strong again for chronology and the merging of the Gospel accounts, he has this healing occurring within the same month of calling Peter, Andrew, James & John to fulltime ministry.

Jesus has been traveling around preaching and healing for over a year now. People were already amazed by His ability to heal sickness. Now they are amazed again and consider the ability to command and cast out evil spirits a new teaching. Obviously, the fact that Jesus had power to heal sickness, did not automatically lead the people to believe He had power to do any and everything. We will see this again when the disciples, no less, were amazed by His ability to command nature.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus didn't want the demons revealing who He was?
- Do you think the people had ever encountered someone with power to heal sickness before Jesus? (in some future dialog, He implied that some people had the ability to cast out evil spirits [[Matthew 12:27](#)])
- Do you think demon possession was more common then than it is today?

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<sup>329</sup> Strong. p58. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n119/mode/2up>

## Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law

[Mark 1:29-34](#), [Matthew 8:14-16](#), [Luke 4:38-41](#)<sup>330</sup>

[Mark 1:29](#) Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

<sup>30</sup> But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once.

<sup>31</sup> So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

<sup>32</sup> At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered together at the door. <sup>34</sup> Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him. [Mark 1:29-34 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:14](#) Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. <sup>15</sup> So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

<sup>16</sup> When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, [Matthew 8:14-16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:38](#) Then He got up and [left] the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. <sup>39</sup> And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and served them.

<sup>40</sup> Now while the sun was setting, all those who had [any who were] sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He was laying His hands on each one of them and healing them.

<sup>41</sup> Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" And [yet] He was rebuking them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that He was the Christ. [Luke 4:38-41 NKJV](#)

This story tells us several things. Peter and Andrew lived in the same house along with Peter's mother-in-law. That is one of the clues we have that Peter is married, but the Bible doesn't tell us anything about his wife or children. Another reference to his married status was written by Paul.

[1 Corinthians 9:5](#) Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as [do] also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? [1 Corinthians 9:5 NKJV](#)

The Bible doesn't mention Andrew's family either, so we will not make any assumptions. If this story occurred on the same day that Jesus healed the demon possessed man in the synagogue in Capernaum, then we must assume that Peter's home was also in Capernaum, since Jesus would most likely not have traveled between towns on Sabbath. Jesus didn't wait until after the Sabbath to heal Peter's mother-in-law, but the rest of the people waited until sunset to bring their friends and family for healing. Here again, we have demons shouting out who Jesus really was as they were being cast out, and Jesus telling them not to speak. Several interesting questions arise out of this, which are listed in the wrap-up for this section.

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What do you believe?

- What did the demons have to gain by revealing Jesus' true identity?
- Why did Jesus not want them to reveal His true identity?
- I have to assume Jesus actually had the power to silence the demons if He really wanted, so why was He telling them to be silent, but they were still saying things as they left?

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<sup>330</sup> Strong. p59. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n119/mode/2up>

## Jesus teaches and heals throughout Galilee, and touches a leper in healing him

[Mark 1:35-45](#), [Matthew 4:23-25](#), [Matthew 8:2-4](#), [Luke 4:42-44](#), [Luke 5:12-15](#)<sup>331</sup>

[Mark 1:35](#) Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

<sup>36</sup> And Simon and those [who were] with Him searched for Him.

<sup>37</sup> When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." <sup>38</sup> But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

[Luke 4:42](#) Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; <sup>43</sup> but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

[Matthew 4:23](#) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. <sup>24</sup> Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick

people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. <sup>25</sup> Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. [Matthew 4:23-25 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:39](#) And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

[Luke 4:44](#) And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. [Luke 4:44 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:12](#) And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on [his] face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

[Matthew 8:2](#) And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

[Mark 1:40](#) Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

[Mark 1:41](#) Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out [His] hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." <sup>42</sup> As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. <sup>43</sup> And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, <sup>44</sup> and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." <sup>45</sup> However, he went out and began to proclaim [it] freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction. [Mark 1:35-45 NKJV](#)

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus put out [His] hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." [Matthew 8:2-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:13](#) Then He put out [His] hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him.

[Luke 5:14](#) And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded."

<sup>15</sup> However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. [Luke 5:12-15](#)

As usual, I credit the alignment of these Gospels to Strong. I have found it interesting that the first chapter of Mark covers such a wide span of time, according to Strong.

<sup>331</sup> Strong. p60. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n121/mode/2up>

[Mark 1:35](#) tells us that before the sun even came up, Jesus went to a secluded place and prayed. I think this is an example to each of us who want to be like Jesus. I believe that this was a consistent practice of His and as Christians, should be ours as well. In the *Desire of Ages*, White suggests that it would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ.<sup>332</sup> I believe that spending time every single day, studying the Bible and praying is a necessary part of living a Christ-like life.

When Jesus healed the leper, He told him not to tell anyone but to immediately go to a priest and offer the sacrifice for being cured of leprosy. I don't know how people were cured of leprosy in those days but God actually gave the Israelites a law describing what they should do when someone was cured of leprosy in [Leviticus 14](#). The curious thing about this is that to the best of our knowledge, leprosy has until very recently been seen as an incurable disease. It wasn't until the 1940's that an effective treatment for leprosy became available with the currently used Multidrug therapy (MDT) being recommended to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1981.<sup>333</sup> In addition to being seen as a terminal illness, in Bible times, it often carried the additional stigma that the infected were sinners and cursed by God. If leprosy were that incurable, why would God bother to give Moses a procedure for what to do when someone is healed of leprosy? My own personal opinion is that there were other skin conditions that might appear like leprosy and were quarantined the same way, which could go away on their own or be cured. I believe that knowing their feelings about Him, Jesus wanted the man to get his inspection without the priests knowing how he was cured. Furthermore, I think the reason Jesus told him not to tell anyone was born out in the story. After this Jesus was overwhelmed by sick people whenever He entered any town, forcing Him to stay in remote places where people could come to Him to hear Him preach. It's not that Jesus didn't want to heal people, but I think He wanted a balance between teaching and healing, and I suspect that many people that were healed did not become followers and did not use the gift of healing to glorify God.

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What do you believe?

- How do you envision Jesus' private prayer time?
- Why do you think Jesus physically touched the leper when He healed him?
- Why do you think Jesus didn't want the leper to tell anyone that Jesus healed him?

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<sup>332</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p83.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=83>

<sup>333</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leprosy#History>



## Jesus offers forgiveness for sin

[Luke 5:17-26](#), [Matthew 9:2-8](#), [Mark 2:1-12](#) <sup>334</sup>

[Luke 5:17](#) Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was [present] to heal them. <sup>18</sup> Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who [Matthew 9:2](#) Then behold, they brought to Him was paralyzed, whom they a paralytic lying on a bed. ... sought to bring in and lay before Him. <sup>19</sup> And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with [his] bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

[Mark 2:1](#) And again He entered Capernaum after [some] days, and it was heard that He was in the house. <sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive [them], not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four [men]. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

<sup>20</sup> When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." <sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>22</sup> But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? <sup>24</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." <sup>25</sup> Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. <sup>26</sup> And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!" [Luke 5:17-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 9:2](#) ... When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." <sup>3</sup> And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" <sup>4</sup> But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? <sup>5</sup> "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? <sup>6</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." <sup>7</sup> And he arose and departed to his house. <sup>8</sup> Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. [Matthew 9:2-8 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:5](#) When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." <sup>6</sup> And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this [Man] speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup> But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '[Your] sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? <sup>10</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup> "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." <sup>12</sup> Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw [anything] like this!" [Mark 2:1-12 NKJV](#)

Strong places these events in April, just before the second Passover of Jesus' public ministry. This appears to be the first record we have of Jesus forgiving sin. For any who did not believe He was God, I could easily see how they would be

<sup>334</sup> Strong. p63. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n123/mode/2up>

alarmed, and think Him blasphemous. I believe that Jesus knew the paralytic's heart and knew that what he longed for even more than healing, was the assurance that his sins were forgiven. These sentiments were written by White, probably influencing my belief.<sup>335</sup> We are told that some scribes, Pharisees, and teachers of the law were there. Most of them were probably present for the purpose of finding fault with Jesus rather than because they believed. Jesus knew this and addressed them directly, knowing what they were thinking. He tried to use some logic on them by asking which they thought was easier, to utter the words "your sins are forgiven," or to actually perform a miraculous healing? I believe Jesus meant to say, if I have power to perform this miracle, that proves I have the ability to forgive sin as well. This logic worked for Him but there were others, including the disciples that were given the power to heal, but not to forgive sin. So, I do not believe Jesus meant as a general principle that those who were given the power to heal, could forgive sins as well.

I believe there is another lesson in this story, as well as many other of Jesus's healings. The man's healing was in large part, made possible because of the faith of his friends. This was obviously not the only instance that we are told that sick were brought to Jesus. In fact, if you search for the word, "brought," depending on the translation, you could probably count eight times in Matthew alone, that it says people were brought to Jesus for healing. I think the lesson here is that we can play an important and maybe even crucial role in helping others to receive the blessings of God.

What do you believe?

- Do you think that more often than not, people were brought to Jesus for healing as opposed to coming themselves?
- Not to imply that the paralysis was a punishment from God, do you think that the paralytic's sickness was related to the sin's that he received forgiveness for?
- Can you think of some sin's that may have some kind of sickness as a natural consequence?

## Jesus calls Matthew

[Mark 2:13-14](#), [Matthew 9:9](#), [Luke 5:27-28](#)<sup>336</sup>

[Mark 2:13](#) Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them.

<p><sup>14</sup> As He passed by, He saw Levi the [son] of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. <a href="#">Mark 2:13-14 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 9:9</a> As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. <a href="#">Matthew 9:9 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 5:27</a> After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>28</sup> So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. <a href="#">Luke 5:27-28 NKJV</a></p>
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It is interesting that Strong chose to put a gap of about half a year between the call of Matthew and the feast which he threw for Jesus, which immediately follows in all three accounts. I don't really know why he did that, but we'll go with it because he clearly has studied the chronology in much greater depth than I have.<sup>337</sup>

<sup>335</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p267.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=267>

<sup>336</sup> Strong. p65. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n125/mode/2up>

<sup>337</sup> Strong. p127. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/126/mode/2up>

Levi Matthew was a tax collector, and as such, he was despised by the Jews as one of the worst kind of sinners. Not only were tax collectors considered collaborators with the occupying force, they were also looked on as thieves. With the power of Rome behind them, they were allowed to collect above and beyond what was required and keep the surplus for themselves. Apparently, this was Rome's way of attracting people to perform this despised task. The Holy Spirit must have been working on Matthew's heart, and he may have been having guilt for over collecting. Whatever the case, when Jesus called, Matthew was willing to walk away from his occupation, and give up what was most likely a considerable income. Matthew became a fulltime disciple, and one of the twelve apostles, and later authored what eventually became the first book of the New Testament.

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What do you believe?

- If Jesus intended to reach the Jews, why did He choose a tax collector as one of the twelve apostles?
- Why do you think Matthew was so willing to walk away from his high paying occupation?
- Would you be willing to walk away from your job if you felt Jesus calling you to full time ministry?

## Jesus heals a lame man at the pool of Bethesda on Sabbath

[John 5](#)<sup>338</sup>

[John 5:1](#) After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep [Gate] a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup> For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. <sup>5</sup> Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been [in that condition] a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

<sup>7</sup> The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." <sup>9</sup> And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup> The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

<sup>11</sup> He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' "

<sup>12</sup> Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" <sup>13</sup> But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in [that] place. <sup>14</sup> Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

<sup>15</sup> The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

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<sup>338</sup> Strong. p66. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n127/mode/2up>

<sup>18</sup> Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. <sup>19</sup> Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. <sup>20</sup> "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup> "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to [them], even so the Son gives life to whom He will. <sup>22</sup> "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup> "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

<sup>24</sup> "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 into life. <sup>25</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup> "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, <sup>27</sup> "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> "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. <sup>30</sup> "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. <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. <sup>40</sup> "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

<sup>41</sup> "I do not receive honor from men. <sup>42</sup> "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. <sup>43</sup> "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. <sup>44</sup> "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that [comes] from the only God? <sup>45</sup> "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is [one] who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. <sup>46</sup> "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" [John 5:1-47 NKJV](#)

Before getting into the healing, I wanted to say that I believe along with Strong, that this feast mentioned in the first verse of the chapter was a Passover. There is some debate over this, but if you choose to believe the ministry of Jesus was three and a half years, this is probably the most logical conclusion to make of this feast. That would make this the second Passover in the public ministry of Jesus, and about a year and a half after His baptism.

The first part of this chapter is about the healing, and the remainder is Jesus' response to the Jews' desire to kill Him because He healed on the Sabbath and called God His Father. Jesus didn't have to heal this man on Sabbath. The man had probably been at the pool every day for years and would no doubt have been there on the next day. Furthermore, Jesus did not have to tell him to pick up his mat after he was healed. I believe Jesus was making a statement about what He intended as proper Sabbath keeping principles. Many of these Sabbath laws that the Jews were trying to enforce

were not in the Ten Commandments, or even in the other laws given to Moses. They were laws that their religious leaders had added over time in an attempt to keep people from breaking the true laws. A simple example is to think of a law as a fence. If you put a fence around a tree to keep people from touching it, then the spirit of the law is to not touch the tree. But what the Jews did was in effect to add more fences to keep people from touching the original fence. In doing so, they also lost sight of the true spirit of the original law. In fact, later on in another encounter, Jesus pointed out to them how they were stricter about keeping and enforcing their laws than the Ten Commandments. In fairness to these Jews who wished to kill Jesus, there were laws that blasphemers should be stoned. In calling God His Father, the Jews took Jesus literally, hence they accused Him of blasphemy. But a blasphemer who demonstrated god-like abilities, and one who callously took God's name in vain should have been easily distinguishable. He was literally being accused of breaking the Sabbath for doing something miraculous, something human beings were not even capable of doing.

In response to their desire to kill Him, Jesus launched into a monologue, to describe how they could know that He was sent by God and was the Son of God. These are the highlights:

- He will do marvelous works
- He can give life to the dead
- He doesn't do His own will but does the will of God (this would be difficult to identify if you don't study the scriptures to understand the character of God)
- John, whom many believed to be a prophet, pointed Jesus out as the Messiah and Lamb of God
- He fulfills what was predicted of Him in the Old Testament scriptures
- He doesn't seek glory for Himself, but wants to glorify God

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What do you believe?

- If people didn't have power to miraculously heal, how could there be a law against performing miracles to heal people on the Sabbath?
- Do you think that people were really healed by jumping in the pool? If so, by what power?
- Why were so many of the Jewish rulers not willing to see Jesus for who He really was?

## The disciples accused of harvesting and threshing on the Sabbath

[Matthew 12:1-8](#), [Matthew 9:13](#), [Mark 2:23-28](#), [Luke 6:1-5](#)<sup>339</sup>

[Luke 6:1](#) Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate [them], rubbing [them] in [their] hands. <sup>2</sup> And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

<sup>3</sup> But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> "how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?"

<sup>5</sup> "Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? <sup>6</sup> "Yet I say to you that in this place there is [One] greater than the temple. <sup>7</sup> "But if you had known what [this] means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

<sup>8</sup> "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." [Matthew 12:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:23](#) Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

<sup>25</sup> But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: <sup>26</sup> "how he went into the house of God [in the days] of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

[Matthew 9:13](#) "But go and learn what [this] means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' ... [Matthew 9:13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:27](#) And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the

Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." [Mark 2:23-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:1](#) At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. <sup>2</sup> And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

<sup>3</sup> But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> "how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?"

[Hosea 6:6](#) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ... [Hosea 6:6 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:5](#) And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." [Luke 6:1-5 NKJV](#)

Strong places this on the very next Sabbath after healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda.

I find it somewhat amusing that there are Pharisees, either following Jesus and His disciples closely or lurking behind, as they walk through the field. Their purpose of course was to discredit Jesus. These Pharisees were not accusing the disciples of stealing because the Law of Moses allowed anyone walking through a field to satisfy their own hunger.

[Deuteronomy 23:25](#) "When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain. [Deuteronomy 23:25 NKJV](#)

<sup>339</sup> Strong. p71. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n131/mode/2up>

But what did David's actions have to do with keeping or breaking the Sabbath? First, we probably should assume that the Pharisees agreed that David was justified in eating the consecrated bread in this extreme case of need. Let's read from the Old Testament about this incident. A tiny bit of back story for those not familiar with it. Saul, the king of Israel was jealous of David because he believed David was chosen by God to be the next king instead of his son, Jonathan. Saul was insane and was trying to kill David. This was David's first major flight from Saul, and it seems he had to leave in such a hurry, he didn't even have food or a weapon. He thought he was protecting the Priests from choosing sides by lying to them, but in the end it didn't save them.

[1 Samuel 21:1](#) Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, "Why [are] you alone, and no one is with you?" <sup>2</sup> So David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, 'Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.' And I have directed [my] young men to such and such a place." <sup>3</sup> "Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give [me] five [loaves of] bread in my hand, or whatever can be found." <sup>4</sup> And the priest answered David and said, "[There is] no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women." <sup>5</sup> Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women [have been] kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and [the bread is] in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day." <sup>6</sup> So the priest gave him holy [bread]; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread [in its place] on the day when it was taken away. [1 Samuel 21:1-6 NKJV](#)

This is how the Law of Moses describes the bread of the Presence.

[Leviticus 24:5](#) "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths [of an ephah] shall be in each cake. <sup>6</sup> "You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure [gold] table before the LORD. <sup>7</sup> "And you shall put pure frankincense on [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. <sup>8</sup> "Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. <sup>9</sup> "And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it [is] most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute." [Leviticus 24:5-9 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 29:33](#) "They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate [and] to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat [them], because they [are] holy. [Exodus 29:33 NKJV](#)

God had instructed the Israelites to build a sanctuary and He had given them procedures or laws associated with its use. In this particular instance, there was a table of showbread in the sanctuary upon which this bread was to be placed. This bread was to be replaced weekly, on the Sabbath, and was only to be eaten by the priests. One interesting question which is probably impossible to answer is, was the bread just removed that day? If so, it was the Sabbath. The High Priest at the time, under the circumstances, thought it ok to give the bread that had been removed to David to satisfy his hunger even though he was not a descendant of Aaron. The common denominator in these two cases is hunger, so is Jesus is saying, at least under certain circumstances, that it is ok to break the law to satisfy hunger? I'm pretty sure He didn't consider the plucking grain and rubbing it breaking the Sabbath, but the Pharisees did. So rather than try to explain why that act wasn't breaking the Sabbath, like a lawyer, He quoted well known incident from the past.

Since we're discussing satisfying hunger on the Sabbath, let's wander a little to the topic of buying food on the Sabbath, either prepared or unprepared. The general rule for a Biblical Sabbath keeper is to not buy and sell on the Sabbath, based on the reading of Nehemiah.

[Nehemiah 13:15](#) In those days I saw [people] in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all [kinds of] burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned [them] about the day on which they were selling provisions. <sup>16</sup> Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold [them] on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup> Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing [is] this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? <sup>18</sup> "Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath." [Nehemiah 13:15-18 NKJV](#)

Many will argue that it is less work to pay for the food than to work at preparing it on the Sabbath. I would propose looking at it another way.

1. If we choose as a Sabbath keeper to not work in a restaurant on that day,
2. Then, if everyone were converted, and became Sabbath keepers, which should be our goal,
3. Then there would be no body to work in restaurants on Sabbath
4. Then, if we choose to go out to a restaurant on Sabbath, are we indirectly saying that we need some people to not be converted so we can do this?

I would say that last question is not what most people would be thinking, but it does give you something to think about. Obviously, there are certain jobs that must be performed on the Sabbath, at least at some level. Jesus inferred this when He pointed out that the Priests work hard on the Sabbath and are blameless.

The next part of Jesus' response to the Pharisees, is another statement that helps clarify. Jesus says that He desires compassion more than sacrifice. Now offering sacrifices was required by the Law of Moses, but it seems that Jesus prioritized compassion over sacrifices. God also said through the prophet Samuel to King Saul, that He preferred obedience over sacrifices.

[1 Samuel 15:22](#) So Samuel said:

"Has the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
[And] to heed than the fat of rams. [1 Samuel 15:22 NKJV](#)

This may seem pretty broad to some, but I infer from all of this, that most any type of activity is acceptable on the Sabbath if it is done solely for the benefit of or to be compassionate to others, and not for our own benefit or gratification. A few examples of this principle in my opinion are:

- Even though I wouldn't schedule moving myself on Sabbath, if a neighbor needs help moving on Sabbath, help them.
- While I would not rake my leaves on Sabbath, if the need arose to rake the leaves of a neighbor in need on the Sabbath, I have no problem with that.
- If something had to be bought on Sabbath to meet someone's needs, by all means do so.



- This can seem like rationalizing which I hate to do, but if you are in a position where you would be seen as heartless and uncompassionate for choosing not to do something on Sabbath, or would make someone think poorly of Christianity and Christ as a result, then do it. I realize the value of having and upholding principles, but think about the point Jesus is making here.

The last part of Jesus' response to the Pharisees doesn't seem like it would do much for them. He essentially said I'm Lord of the Sabbath, so I will be the judge of what is right and what is wrong to do on the Sabbath.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe it is ok to buy food on the Sabbath day? If you don't have a stance, did this discussion influence you to make a decision one way or the other?
- The Seventh-Day Adventist Church has a general principle of providing emergency medical care at its hospitals but discouraging elective care on the Sabbath.<sup>340</sup> Is this in line with Christ's example of healing people who were not in medical emergencies?
- How far do you believe in stretching traditional rules or laws in order to show compassion?

## Jesus heals a withered hand on the Sabbath

[Matthew 12:9-14](#), [Mark 3:1-6](#), [Luke 6:6-11](#),<sup>341</sup>

[Luke 6:6](#) Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered.<sup>7</sup> So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.<sup>8</sup> But He knew their thoughts,

and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood.<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"

[Matthew 12:11](#) Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift [it] out?<sup>12</sup> "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." [Matthew 12:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:9](#) Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue.<sup>10</sup> And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--that they might accuse Him. [Matthew 12:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:1](#) And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.<sup>2</sup> So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

[Mark 3:3](#) And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."

<sup>4</sup> Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

<sup>340</sup> <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/documents/article/go/0/sabbath-observance/>

<sup>341</sup> Strong. p73. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n133/mode/2up>

Mark 3:5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. <sup>6</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

[Mark 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

Luke 6:10 And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. <sup>11</sup> But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. [Luke 6:6-11](#)

[NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:13](#) Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and it was restored as whole as the other. <sup>14</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

[Matthew 12:13-14 NKJV](#)

Strong proposes placing this next Sabbath healing a week after the grain harvesting encounter with the Pharisees. This time it seems that Jesus is actually provoking an incident. The expression, "picking a fight," is what comes to mind. He is still trying to get his point across that having mercy and compassion is more important than observing their super strict Sabbath Laws. In fact, Jesus pointed out to them the hypocrisy of their practices, in that they would do for an animal on the Sabbath, what they would not do for a person. White proposed in *Desire of Ages*, that the motivation for this was financial. She said, "This illustrates the working of all false religions. They originate in man's desire to exalt himself above God, but they result in degrading man below the brute."<sup>342</sup>

Here again, Jesus is trying to teach a Sabbath keeping principle. Doing good (relieving suffering) on the Sabbath is in accordance with God's intent for the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment.

The Pharisees were so blinded by their opposition to Jesus, that not only would they plot how they could kill Him on the Sabbath, but they collaborated with their enemies. Most scholars describe the Herodians as a political party or religious sect who were supporters of King Herod, and opponents of the Pharisees. Some possibly even supported Herod as the Messiah. The Jewish Encyclopedia says they were adherents of the family of Boethus whose daughter was a wife of Herod and whose sons had been made High Priest. They were generally aligned with the Sadducees against the Pharisees.<sup>343</sup> Here we see the idea of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," at work.

What do you believe?

- When Mark says Jesus looked at them with anger, how is that not sin?
- Is healing on the Sabbath different for Jesus than it is for us because He used miraculous power to do it?
- Is the Sabbath keeping principle the same from this incident as it was for the previous ones?

## Jesus names the twelve apostles

[Luke 6:12-19](#), [Mark 3:13-19](#), [Matthew 10:2-4](#)<sup>344</sup>

[Luke 6:12](#) Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

[Mark 3:13](#) And He went up on the mountain ... —

<sup>342</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p286. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=286>

<sup>343</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7605-herodians>

<sup>344</sup> Strong. p76. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n137/mode/2up>

Mark 3:14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,  
 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: —

Luke 6:13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:  
 14 Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;  
 15 and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; 16 Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. [Luke 6:12-16 NKJV](#)

Mark 3:13 ... and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. — 16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), 17 James the [son] of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder"); 18 and Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. [Mark 3:13-19 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:2](#) Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother;  
 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Lebbeaus,  
 4 Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. [Matthew 10:2-4 NKJV](#)

Strong dates the selection of the twelve Apostles around May after the second Passover, which would be just a little over a year and a half after Jesus' baptism. There were obviously more than twelve disciples or regular followers from whom Jesus chose the Apostles. We know this for certain because of what was written in Acts:

[Acts 1:21](#) "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." 23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. [Acts 1:21-26 NKJV](#)

This is a strange question, but I wonder what Joseph thought when Matthias was chosen over him? So, what criteria do you think Jesus used to choose the twelve? Most would probably not have been considered the type to be religious leaders. Most of them would probably not have been chosen to be heads of big enterprises. We don't know very much about most of the apostles, but here is some of what we know.

- Most of the disciples were from the region of Galilee, which was looked down upon by the pious Jews from Judea.
- At least four were fishermen – a useful and necessary occupation but by no means glamorous or respected.
- One was a tax collector – an absolutely despised occupation.
- One was a zealot – which could probably be considered the Jewish equivalent to Islamic terrorists of today.
- Clear through His ministry, Jesus was constantly disappointed by their bickering for the highest place in His kingdom.

The word "apostle" is defined in the online Merriam Webster dictionary, with the first three definitions being relevant to our discussion:<sup>345</sup>

1. one sent on a mission: as

<sup>345</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apostle>

- a. one of an authoritative New Testament group sent out to preach the gospel and made up especially of Christ's 12 original disciples and Paul
  - b. the first prominent Christian missionary to a region or group
- 2.
- a. a person who initiates a great moral reform or who first advocates an important belief or system
  - b. an ardent supporter : adherent
3. the highest ecclesiastical official in some church organizations

Since the Bible doesn't really give us very much information about most of the Apostles, especially after Jesus left, most of what we think we know is from church tradition and speculation. As such there is room for differences of opinion and conclusions. I intend to write something about each of the twelve Apostles, starting with what we know from scripture, then following that with other sources.<sup>346</sup> The book, *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*, by L. H. Young was a great resource. The light he shed on some of the tradition, and the motivation for much of it, gave me a healthy skepticism for the things so many recall as fact today.<sup>347</sup> In fact it seems he had a general rule for these "writings of the fathers," and I quote, "the voice of antiquity has already been shown to be worth very little, when it is not heard within three centuries of the events on which it offers testimony."<sup>348</sup>

## Peter

In all four lists of the twelve Apostles, from Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, Peter is named first. In a word search in the NKJV, Peter occurs 152 times in the first five books of the New Testament. Of the three most named, John occurs less than thirty times and two thirds of them were with Peter. James is named about 20 times, half of them with Peter. In spite of the quarrels among the disciples over who was number one, I think it was pretty clear and mostly accepted that Peter was it. Statements of Jesus that supported this were:

[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](#)

[John 21:15](#) So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." <sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. [John 21:15-17 NKJV](#)

There are also the numerous times in Acts, after Jesus had left, that Peter spoke for the group, or made recommendations that were accepted without question from the others. None of this is to imply that Peter lorded it over the others or made himself out to be the leader of the church. In fact, a James, who seemed to not be the Apostle, who some have supposed to be the brother of Jesus, spoke out as a leader in the following case:

[Acts 15:13](#) And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men [and] brethren, listen to me: <sup>14</sup> "Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. <sup>15</sup> "And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

<sup>346</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples>

<sup>347</sup> Young, L H. *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*. New Haven, 1836, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA5#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>348</sup> Young. p288. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA288>

<sup>16</sup> 'After this I will return  
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;  
I will rebuild its ruins,  
And I will set it up;

<sup>17</sup> So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD,  
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,  
Says the LORD who does all these things.'

<sup>18</sup> "Known to God from eternity are all His works. <sup>19</sup> "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, <sup>20</sup> "but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, [from] sexual immorality, [from] things strangled, and [from] blood. <sup>21</sup> "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

<sup>22</sup> Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, [namely], Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. [Acts 15:13-22 NKJV](#)

It is not my purpose to cover everything the New Testament said regarding Peter because much of it will be covered in the following pages. Very little is said of Peter after his imprisonment by Herod and miraculous release, after which he went to an unknown place. It seems that as the spread of the Gospel shifted from the Jews to the Gentiles, the focus of the storyline shifted to Paul and his missionary companions. The last mention of Peter aside from His letters is in the council mentioned above where the Apostles and Elders made a decision about the minimum set of Jewish ceremonial laws that would be required of the Gentile Christians. It is pretty widely accepted that at some point Peter ended up in Babylon (the one associated with king Nebuchadnezzar). This is based on his first letter, in [1 Peter 5:13](#), where he sends greetings from those who are in Babylon. In Papal literature, there are many detailed stories of the travels of Peter and the bishops he appointed. Many of these stories show him as the head bishop in Rome, (which Young called absurd and completely unscriptural<sup>349</sup>) supporting of course the lineage of Popes descended from Peter the first Pope. Young referred to many of the writings of these papal historians as fables, absurd, and amusing.<sup>350 351</sup>

The death of Peter by crucifixion is mostly based on the statement of Jesus from John.

[John 21:18](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." <sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." [John 21:18-19 NKJV](#)

<sup>349</sup> Young. p224. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA224>

<sup>350</sup> Young. p216. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA216>

<sup>351</sup> Young. p254. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA254>

Crucifixion is implied but is by no means the only way to interpret the statement by Jesus. It seems that the popular tradition is almost unanimous in its claim that Peter was crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to die in the same way Jesus did. However Young states that one of the earliest reliable Christian writers from the first century, Clemens Romanus said, "Peter, on account of unrighteous hatred, underwent not one, or two, but many labors, and having borne his testimony, he departed to the place of glory, which was his due,"<sup>352</sup> One might think that soon after the event, if there were anything unusual about Peter's death, it would have been mentioned. I am not trying to say that Peter was not crucified upside-down, but merely that non-Biblical sources should not be treated with the same trustworthiness as the Bible.

## John

The disciple that is mentioned the next most is John. We know a lot about John from the Bible as he is mentioned more than thirty times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. He mentions himself indirectly but never by name in the Gospel of John, supposedly written by him. He singled himself out among the Apostles as the one Jesus loved, and he was one of the three, along with Peter and his brother James, that Jesus at times called out from among the twelve. We know that his parents were named Zebedee and Salome. John along with Andrew were the first of the twelve to approach Jesus after John the Baptist pointed Him out, and they each called their brothers to meet Jesus. He and his brother were fishermen who worked with their father on the family trade, when Jesus called them to follow Him. John and his brother were nicknamed the sons of thunder for reasons illustrated by their desire to call fire down from heaven to destroy a Samaritan town who refused to allow Jesus to lodging for the night. They also drew the displeasure of the other ten, when their mother had the gall to ask Jesus for the top two positions in His kingdom for her two sons. John's temper must have been mellowed by his close association with Jesus as evidenced by his use of the word love in his alleged writings, which are responsible for 72 of the 361 times the word occurs in the NKJV.<sup>353</sup>

John doesn't give us any clue as to how or why, but he informs us that he was on friendly terms with the gate keeper of the High Priest's compound. He used this connection to gain entrance for himself and Peter to watch the pre-trial of Jesus. John was the only one of the twelve who was said to be at the foot of the cross when Jesus died, and he was given the privilege of caring for Mary the mother of Jesus, even though she had other sons.

After the resurrection, John is specifically mentioned in Acts as collaborating with Peter in the healing of a lame man and is subsequently arrested and questioned by the High Priest. He also accompanied Peter on a trip to pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on the Samaritans who had been baptized. Finally, the last mention of John, other than the books he wrote, is by Paul who names Him with Peter and James as pillars of the church.

Now for the things we think we know about John from tradition and the writings of the church fathers and historians. It has generally been believed that John was the youngest of the twelve. One supporting factor in this belief is that their father was young enough to still be participating the rigorous occupation of a fisherman.<sup>354</sup> It is very widely accepted, though not as much by modern scholars, that he is the author of the Gospel account and the three letters bearing his name, as well as the book of Revelation. The primary thing of geographical significance that we can derive from these writings is that he spent some time, presumably in exile, on the island of Patmos.

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<sup>352</sup> Young. p255. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA255>

<sup>353</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=love&t=NASB#s=s\\_primary\\_0\\_1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=love&t=NASB#s=s_primary_0_1)

<sup>354</sup> Young. p287. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA287>

[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](#)

Going back as far as my childhood, I recall hearing that on one occasion, John was placed in pot of hot oil, obviously for the purpose of executing him. Young, however says, “the whole story is so completely covered over with gross blunders and contradictions about times and places, that it cannot receive any place among the details of serious and well authorized history.”<sup>355</sup> One thing that tradition is pretty unanimous and seemingly reliable on is that John spent time in Ephesus toward the end of his life. Some believe that John died in exile on Patmos, but others believe that he was recalled from exile, and returned to Ephesus. In support of the latter is that the reign of Domitian, under whose reign John was supposed to have been exiled, ended in AD 96. He was succeeded by Cocceius Nerva, who himself having suffered banishment under Domitian, restored all who had suffered the same fate, including those guilty of religious offenses.<sup>356 357 358</sup>

The book of Revelation itself tells us it was written by John on the island of Patmos. The other writings of John, the Gospel and the three letters also bearing his name, were almost certainly all written late in his life. The question being whether before, during or after his exile on Patmos. Some modern scholars have claimed because of its great differences from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that the book of John was not written by the Apostle. Others, that it was not written by him because of its style differences from Revelation. I along with others believe the content was so different because he was writing it for a different purpose than the other three and possibly even to fill in some of their gaps. Young believes the greatest probability is that the book of John was written in Ephesus after his return from exile on Patmos.<sup>359</sup>

There is virtually no disagreement that John did not suffer martyrdom, but instead died at an old age as the last of the Apostles. There is respectable ancient authority which claims that he survived to the reign of Trajan in AD 98.<sup>360 361 362</sup>

## James

James the brother of John was the third-most mentioned disciple after Peter and his brother. The three of them were on multiple occasions called out by Jesus from among the twelve. And the same three are named in the top four each time the Apostles are listed in the New Testament. In spite of him being mentioned so many times in the Gospels, we really know very little about James. Mark says that Jesus nicknamed the brothers James and John, Boanerges, which means sons of thunder. Perhaps the name was used at times to distinguish him from the other disciple James. He was also mentioned in connection with the incident where his mother requested the highest places in the kingdom for her two sons. Other than that, the next and last thing mentioned specifically about him in the Bible, was that he was the first of the disciples to be martyred.

An observation from the Gospels is that James is named before John when they are called out together in Matthew and Mark, which has led some to say it supports the idea that James was the older, but Luke always names them in the

<sup>355</sup> Young. p316. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA345>

<sup>356</sup> Young. p340. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA340>

<sup>357</sup> Briscoe, Richard. *History of the Acts of the Apostles*. Oxford, University Press, 1840, p313. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA312>

<sup>358</sup> Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the Church*. Hartford, F. J. Huntington, 1835, p32. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>359</sup> Young. p346. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA346>

<sup>360</sup> Young. p352. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA352>

<sup>361</sup> Briscoe. P312. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA312>

<sup>362</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.lviii.lviii.htm>

reverse order. Nevertheless, I believe there is probably near universal consensus that James was the older of the two brothers.

[Acts 12](#), where we read about the beheading of James, doesn't identify which Herod it was who ordered it. But later in the chapter we learn that he was angry with Tyre and Sidon, and when they, trying to win back his favor began crying out, "the voice of a god and not a man!" the Lord struck him and he died [[Acts 12:22-23](#)]. History identifies him as Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, who was the son of Mariamne and Herod the Great. Mariamne was a Jew, the daughter of the last remnants of the Asmonean line.<sup>363 364</sup> This was the blood line of the dynasty that was established by Simon Maccabaeus in 110 BC, two decades after Judas the Maccabee defeated the Selucid army during the Maccabean revolt.<sup>365</sup> Agrippa was actually the first of the descendants of Herod the great to actually be given the title king. Because of his blood line and his favorable regard for the Jewish faith, he was received with joy and hope as their king. Anxious to please the Jews, he ordered the execution of James and intended to follow that up by killing Peter as well.<sup>366 367</sup>

There is not really much for tradition to fill in regarding the life and death of James because he died so soon. The way the story is written in Acts 12, it is reasonable to assume that James was executed right after the ascension of Agrippa to the throne in 41 AD. By my reckoning, that would be about ten years after the crucifixion of Jesus. In a footnote, Young mentions what he calls fables and absurd fiction, created by the Spanish to claim one of the Apostles as their patron saint. These stories tell of a voyage by James, over the whole length of the Mediterranean, into Spain, where he remained several years, preaching, founding churches and performing miracles.<sup>368</sup> I am not saying such a voyage never occurred, or that James didn't found churches and perform miracles. I simply believe that if the sources and origins of these stories are not reliable, they should not be presented as historical fact.

## Andrew

Andrew is names among the top four in all the lists of Apostles given in the New Testament, although he is only mentioned eight times outside of that. But at least there are some individual mentions to speak of. Andrew and John were originally disciples of Jesus and as I already mentioned were the first of the twelve to make contact with Jesus. They understood that John the Baptist's mission was not about himself, but about the Messiah whom all Israel was waiting for. So, when their master identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, they went to talk to Him.

[John 1:35](#) Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

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<sup>363</sup> Goodrich. p19. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

<sup>364</sup> Young. p181. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA181>

<sup>365</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean\\_dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty)

<sup>366</sup> Young. p184-185. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA184>

<sup>367</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_Agrippa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Agrippa)

<sup>368</sup> Young. p285. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA285>



<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John [speak], and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

<sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone). [John 1:35-42 NKJV](#)

The next incident where Andrew is mentioned on his own merit is when he brought the child who was willing to share his lunch with Jesus. This seems to imply that Andrew had taken interest and talked to the lad enough to learn that he had brought a lunch with him.

[John 6:8](#) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" [John 6:8-9 NKJV](#)

The last incident in the Gospels where Andrew is mentioned for something he did was when he brought some Greeks to Jesus.

[John 12:20](#) Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. [John 12:20-22 NKJV](#)

One generality that people read into these few verses is that Andrew brought people to Jesus. In fact, in each of the three incidents where Andrew is specifically mentioned for something, he brought someone to Jesus. A few other things that that might be read into these actions of Andrew is that he didn't think himself to important or busy to talk to a lad. Perhaps he was not among the disciples who tried to prevent mothers with their children from coming to Jesus, or maybe he learned a lesson from that incident. Another is that he thought that Jesus would want to meet these "Gentile" Greeks, where it seems Phillip was not so sure. Finally, it might be said of Andrew from lack of evidence to the contrary, that he was not a jealous person, considering the fact that he introduced Peter to Jesus, who after which seemed to monopolize the relationship.

Anything else we have heard or think we know about Andrew should be treated with a degree of skepticism, depending on the reliability of the source. Young states,

The earliest mention made of the apostle Andrew by any writer whatever, after the evangelists, is by Origen, (about AD 230 or 240,) who speaks of him as having been sent to the Scythians. (Com. in Genes. 1. 3.)<sup>369</sup>

He goes on to say:

By following these droll stories through all their details, the life of Andrew might easily be made longer than that of Peter; but the character of this work would be much degraded from its true historical dignity by such contents.<sup>370</sup>

I think it is safe to say that detailed stories, including intimate conversations, written of the American Revolution, 240 years after the fact, without reliable sources would be considered a novel.

The tradition of Andrew's death by crucifixion in Patras in Achaia were probably the most frequently occurring story. There are slightly different details that I encountered. An X shaped cross was mentioned because he felt unworthy to suffer the same way Jesus did. Some mentioned being tied to the cross to prolong suffering, during which time he

<sup>369</sup> Young. p268. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA268>

<sup>370</sup> Young. p272. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA272>

preached to by passers for two days as he suffered. Some included the detail that he was crucified on the charge of converting the Roman Proconsul's wife to Christianity after healing her.<sup>371 372 373 374 375</sup>

## Philip

In the three lists of the Apostles in the Gospels, Philip is named fifth, but nothing else is said of him in those three books. John however gives us a few additional details of Philip, including being the first disciple to whom Jesus said "follow Me" [[John 1:43](#)]. In the same paragraph, we are told that Philip was from the same town as Andrew and Peter, and that the first thing he did on being called was to go tell his friend Nathanael and bring him to Jesus. In fact, in the book of John, the mentions of Philip nearly parallel those of Andrew. Before Jesus fed the 5000 with the loaves and fish brought to Jesus by Andrew, Philip exclaimed, two hundred days' worth of wages is not enough to buy bread for all these people [[John 6:7](#)]. When Andrew brought the Greeks to Jesus, it was Philip whom they approached first, who brought them to Andrew [[John 12:22](#)]. Finally, not mentioned with Andrew, in the upper room during the Last Supper, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, to which Jesus answered, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" [[John 14:8,9](#)].

When we come to Acts things get a little less clear regarding the life of Philip, because there is a deacon by the same name mentioned in [Acts 6:5](#). In [Acts 8](#), there is a story about Philip, who the church has called the evangelist. [Acts 21:8](#) adds some clarity by identifying Philip the evangelist as being one of the seven, who by the way had four daughters who were prophets [[Acts 21:9](#)]. There are several possibilities for the person called Philip in the book of Acts:

1. Philip the Apostle and Philip the evangelist are two different people
  - a. All mention of Philip except for the list of seven deacons is about the Apostle
  - b. All mention of Philip except for the list of Apostles is about the deacon
2. Philip the Apostle was willing to serve in the capacity of deacon and hence they are the same person

1.a can immediately be dismissed because [Acts 21](#) tells of the Apostle Paul visiting Phillip the evangelist who is identified as one of the seven. Young wrote that the early church Fathers seemed to not have any distinction between the Philips mentioned in Acts, but that there were inconsistencies in identifying him as one of the twelve or one of the seven, and also about whether his daughters remained virgins or married.<sup>376</sup> I think I am probably in the majority by identifying with #1.b, in believing that the only mention of Philip in Acts is in the list of Apostles and all remaining mentions of Philip in the book are about the deacon. Part of my reason is that when Philip went to Samaria, he only baptized with water, after which the Apostles were summoned to baptize with the Holy Spirit. I think the Apostle should have received the gift of baptizing with the Holy Spirit along with the rest in the upper room. I realize this is not a super strong argument, because other's who were not Apostles must have received the gift as well. In addition, since this apparently occurred before Peter's vision of the unclean animals, Philip may have sought validation from Peter in baptizing Samaritans. The stronger argument is that since the same author of the book of Acts writes of a Philip that was preaching and evangelizing in one chapter, then in another speaks of a Philip the evangelist, it would seem he is speaking of the same person.

<sup>371</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew\\_the\\_Apostle#Life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_the_Apostle#Life)

<sup>372</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>373</sup> Goodrich. p28. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA28>

<sup>374</sup> Young. p269. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA269>

<sup>375</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#andrew>

<sup>376</sup> Young. p357. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA357>

If we cannot distinguish from tradition the difference between the two Philips, then either the events of the two have been intermingled, or one has been eclipsed by the other. Tradition holds that a Philip was crucified in Heliopolis in Egypt,<sup>377 378</sup> but ultimately which if either, we do not know.

### Bartholomew or Nathanael

There is no statement in the Bible that tells us that Nathanael and Bartholomew were the same person, but there doesn't seem to be much dispute that the two names refer to the same person. The name Bartholomew is used in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, while John uses the name Nathanael. Bartholomew is listed immediately after Phillip in the Gospel lists of the Apostles, and Philip introduced Nathanael to Jesus in John. Another point to be made is that when someone was called Bar-anything, that was not necessarily their given name, because it really meant "son of" followed by the father's given name. This could be somewhat like calling someone by their last name today. So it is highly possible that Nathanael was his given name and Bartholomew meant that he was the son of Tholomew, or Tholomai.<sup>379</sup> Some have extrapolated this name to Tolmai, and then to Talmi, to suggest that he was a descendant of Talmi ([2 Samuel 3:3](#)). Talmi was king of Geshur whose daughter, Maacah, was the wife of David, mother of Absalom.<sup>380</sup> I haven't viewed the sources for this connection, but I would be highly skeptical if it were only based on the similarities in the names.

The Bible tells us nothing about Bartholomew except that he was listed as one of the twelve. John on the other hand give us some details of Nathanael including a conversation between him and Jesus. It is all contained in one paragraph, so let's just read it next.

[John 1:43](#) The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

<sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

<sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

<sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [John 1:43-51 NKJV](#)

Jesus called Nathanael a man in whom there is no deceit, which is translated from the Greek word [δόλος, dolos](#).<sup>381</sup> The word is associated with guile, lure and bait. So, I presume this to mean that Nathanael was a very genuine person, not being someone different in private, than he was in public. The Jews had an idea that their Messiah, the Christ, would be a king like David, and a prophet like Moses. But did they also believe Him to be the God who spoke to Moses, the One who led them out of Egypt, and performed miraculous works during the Exodus? Perhaps that's what Nathanael was confessing, that their Messiah and their God were one and the same. So, when did Nathanael see angels of God

<sup>377</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>378</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#philip>

<sup>379</sup> Young. p359. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA359>

<sup>380</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#bartholomew-nathanael>

<sup>381</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1388/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

ascending and descending on the Son of Man? Maybe Jesus was saying to Nathanael, that he would see many varied and more impressive miracles than this.

The only other mention of him in scripture other than the lists is where he is said to have gone fishing with Peter, James, John and Thomas after the resurrection.

[John 21:1](#) After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed [Himself]: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the [sons] of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. [John 21:1-3 NKJV](#)

Tradition, for whatever its worth tells us that Nathanael is claimed by Armenia as the Apostle who brought the Gospel to them. However, a different source says that he was flayed alive and then beheaded in India.<sup>382</sup> There is an account of him being beat and then crucified by "impatient idolaters."<sup>383</sup> Yet another tells of him going to Arabia and preaching there until his death.<sup>384</sup>

### Thomas or Didymus

Apparently, this disciple was a twin based on his name. Thomas is translated from his Hebrew name, and Didymus from Greek, both meaning twin. John's Gospel is the only one that used the name Didymus, and he used it three times together with the name Thomas leaving no question that the two names were used for the same person. The Bible, however, tells us nothing about his twin or his parents. Matthew, Mark and Luke do not mention Thomas aside from their list of the Apostles. John as we have come to appreciate has provided us with at least a few other details.

Probably the most well-known story of Thomas is the one which gives him the modern nickname "doubting Thomas," that he is probably best known for.

[John 20:24](#) Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand [here], and put [it] into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed [are] those who have not seen and [yet] have believed." [John 20:24-29 NKJV](#)

Earlier in John are a couple very brief mentions of Thomas. Toward the end of Jesus' ministry, it was becoming very clear that the religious leaders were looking for a way to get rid of Him. It seemed that there were only two possible outcomes, Jesus becoming King and putting them in their place, or them getting their way which was to kill Jesus. It seemed that the two sides had reached a tipping point, and something was going to happen the next time Jesus entered Jerusalem. In this case, Jesus was talking about going to Bethany, which was not in Jerusalem, but it was so close that

<sup>382</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#bartholomew-nathanael>

<sup>383</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>384</sup> Young. p362. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA362>

Thomas feared that Jesus was putting himself within their grasp. I guess Thomas had decided in his mind that Jesus was not taking the route of claiming the throne and putting the leaders in their place, so his assumption was that the leaders would arrest Jesus and kill Him at their next opportunity.

[John 11:16](#) Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." [John 11:16 NKJV](#)

Whether he was a pessimist in general or a realist, Thomas was showing his loyalty to his master. Would you go ahead and follow your leader if you thought that they were leading your group to death? The only other incident where Thomas is mentioned, he asked the question that everyone wanted to ask but was afraid to ask. Have you even been in a situation where everyone is wondering the same thing, but they are all afraid to show their ignorance by asking? Jesus had just told His disciples that that He was going to go away and prepare a place for them in His Father's house. He even said, "you know the way where I am going." [[John 14:4](#)]

[John 14:1](#) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also. <sup>4</sup> "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. [John 14:1-6 NKJV](#)

Tradition on Thomas is similar to the other disciples, which is at times, suspiciously too much detail for stories that don't seem to have earlier sources. In spite of this there is a lot of consensus and evidence that Thomas ended up in India, starting the Christian church there and eventually dying a martyr's death there.<sup>385 386 387 388</sup>

## Matthew

The Apostle Matthew is another one who is thought to be known by more than one name although we do not have the benefit of John's additional details, as he doesn't mention either name. The name is used twice in Matthew, once in his call to follow Jesus, and once in the list of Apostles.

[Matthew 9:9](#) As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. [Matthew 9:9 NKJV](#)

Mark, Luke and Acts also mention Matthew as one of the twelve. The name Levi is used in the calling of a tax collector to follow Jesus in Mark and Luke, which sounds suspiciously similar to the calling of Matthew in the book of Matthew.

[Mark 2:14](#) As He passed by, He saw Levi the [son] of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. [Mark 2:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:27](#) After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." [Luke 5:27 NKJV](#)

<sup>385</sup> Young. p385. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA385>

<sup>386</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#thomas>

<sup>387</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>388</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_the\\_Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_the_Apostle)

Since Levi is not used in any of the lists of Apostles, it is assumed that the tax collector in Matthew, Mark and Luke are the same person. If you are willing to accept this conclusion, then you can add one more piece of information to what we know of Matthew, that being the name of his father, Alphaeus. The last specific mention of this disciple in the Bible is of a reception he gave for Jesus at his house, presumably to invite many of his friends and former colleagues to meet Jesus.

[Luke 5:29](#) Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. [Luke 5:29 NKJV](#)

If we put all of this together, we have a picture of a tax collector named Levi or Matthew, the son of Alphaeus, who was despised by the Jews, but selected by Jesus to be one of the twelve, and the author of one of the four Gospels. We can quite easily infer that he was wealthy, and that he gave up a lucrative occupation to follow Jesus. The name of his father brings up one other interesting possibility, as it is mentioned four other times in the New Testament, all of them as the father of one of the other Apostles. It seems like more than coincidence, that in the small circle of the twelve Apostles, that the same father's name would appear without any disclaimer that they were different people. Hence, some assume it was the same, inferring that Levi or Matthew and the disciple called James the less were brothers.

Though the Gospel record doesn't give us anymore details of the Apostle named Matthew or Levi, the first book of the New Testament, written by him can tell us something. His target audience is widely accepted to be the Jews.<sup>389 390 391 392</sup> The testimony of the Fathers from the very earliest times, is that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew.<sup>393 394</sup> One of his goals was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah that was prophesied about in their holy scriptures, which for the most part is our Old Testament.<sup>395</sup> In fact he included up to 67 Old Testament sources<sup>396</sup>, in 56 different statements, most of which were quotes by Jesus.<sup>397</sup> I would say this paints a pretty good picture of Matthew as a writer and scholar, who had a burden for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to his own people.

Finally, there is the question of if and where Matthew went from Jerusalem. Young says there is no reliable record that can answer this question for us. He wrote that the earliest testimony on this point is by Socrates in the year 425 A.D., that when the disciples cast lots to divide the heathen world among themselves, Matthew drew Ethiopia. Even less reliable would be the long and fanciful accounts of monks from the fourteenth century, detailing the miracles performed by Matthew, and culminating with his martyrdom.<sup>398</sup> Several other modern sources went with Ethiopia without citing references.<sup>399 400</sup>

<sup>389</sup> Monser, Harold E (Editor). *Cross=Reference Bible*. New York, Chicago, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901, p1751.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=It7AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1751>

<sup>390</sup> Bland, Rev. M. *Annotations on the Gospel of St. Matthew*. Cambridge, J. Smith, 1878, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=X8LM165r68oC&pg=PA5>

<sup>391</sup> Tarbell, Martha. *Tarbell's Teacher's Guide*. New York, Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919, p32.

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

<sup>392</sup> Robertson, A.T. *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. New York, Macmillian Company, 1911, p27.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=1dKsbMPkOhwC&pg=PA27>

<sup>393</sup> Young. p367. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA367>

<sup>394</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew\\_the\\_Apostle#Notes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_the_Apostle#Notes)

<sup>395</sup> Young. p376. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA376>

<sup>396</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Matthew-OTQuotations.htm>

<sup>397</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/matthew.cfm>

<sup>398</sup> Young. p380. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA380>

<sup>399</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#matthew-levi>

<sup>400</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

## James the son of Alphaeus

In all the lists of the twelve Apostles, this disciple was identified as James the son of Alphaeus, presumably to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. Other than that, the only other time I believe this James is mentioned in the Gospel record is to identify his mother as being one of the women at the crucifixion. I say this because he is identified differently than he is in the lists.

[Mark 15:40](#) There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of **James the Less** and of Joses, and Salome, [Mark 15:40 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:1](#) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of **James**, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. [Mark 16:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:56](#) among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of **James** and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. [Matthew 27:56 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:10](#) It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary [the mother] of **James**, and the other [women] with them, who told these things to the apostles. [Luke 24:10 NKJV](#)

[John 19:25](#) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. [John 19:25 NKJV](#)

These four verses had to do with the women who were at the cross, the tomb, or telling the disciples that Jesus was risen. Only once, in the presumed three times his name is mentioned, he is identified as James the Less, which literally means "little," whether in age or stature we do not know. In the other two verses, he is just called James, but it is assumed to be the same James because of the names of the women mentioned. I wrote a chapter entirely on the subject of the women who were at the cross and the tomb that crucifixion weekend titled, [Women at the Cross and Tomb](#). Correlating all the accounts, it seems the women were:

- Mary the mother of Jesus
- Mary Magdalene
- The other Mary
- Joanna
- Salome the mother of the other James and John the sons of Zebedee

There is a fairly clear picture of three Mary's at the cross and the tomb. Two of them are unquestionably identified. If we assume the third Mary mentioned in the different accounts are the same person, and that John was describing His mother's sister and the wife of Clopas as this same person, then this is what we can say:

- She was the mother of the James the Less and Joses (Joseph)
- She is the sister (or sister-in-law) of Mary the mother of Jesus
- She is the wife of Clopas
- James was a first cousin of Jesus

The fact that we already know that Salome was the mother of the other Apostle James, leads us to conclude that Mary the mother of James the Less is the mother of the other Apostle by the same name. But we can only do that if we can somehow reconcile that James is called the son of Alphaeus in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but his mother is called the wife of Clopas in John, which it seems many have been willing to accept. Young says one way to look at it is to notice the similarity of the consonants of both names in Hebrew. The differences, by reference to the original Hebrew word, can be

shown to be only the result of the different modes of expressing the same Hebrew letters.<sup>401</sup> I believe most share the opinion that James the Less and the son of Alphaeus are the same person.<sup>402</sup> Because both women were named Mary, some think maybe she was the sister-in-law of Mary the mother of Jesus, rather than a sibling.<sup>403</sup>

But wait, there's more. There are two other verses naming James and Joses (Joseph) (sound familiar?), but as brothers of Jesus.

[Matthew 13:55](#) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers **James, Joses**, Simon, and Judas? [Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of **James, Joses**, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)

Are these the same James and Joses as the ones mentioned with the other Mary at the cross and the tomb? If so, why are Judas and Simon not mentioned there as well? Why are they called brothers of Jesus here? In the past, the Western Church used to identify him with James the Lord's brother ("James the Just").<sup>404</sup> <sup>405</sup> Personally, I feel that the assumptions are starting to get stretched a little thin.

Michaelis in his introduction to the Epistle of James, states five different suppositions:

1. They were sons of Joseph by a former wife
2. They were sons of Joseph by Mary the mother of Jesus
3. They were sons of Joseph by the widow of a brother, to whom he was obliged to raise according to the Law of Moses
4. This deceased brother of Joseph, to whom the laws required him to raise up issue, was Alphaeus
5. That they were brothers of Christ, not in the strict sense but in a more lax sense, namely cousins

Michaelis clearly refutes 2-4. He was taught to respect 5 from early on, which was the opinion of many after it was first advanced by Jerome, but he has since become more favorable of the first.<sup>406</sup> The discussion of who these four are, who are said to be brothers of Jesus, has been kind of merged with the discussion of who this outspoken James in the book of Acts is. He has been called James the Just and pretty widely accepted to be the author of the Epistle James and the brother of the Jude.

I am of the opinion that the Apostle James the Less and James the son of Alphaeus were the same person. I am on the fence about whether he is a brother of Levi Matthew the son of Alphaeus. I also believe that James the Just, the author of the book of James was a brother of Jesus by being a son of Joseph by a wife prior to Mary. I believe that the four, James, Joses, Judas and Simon were older brothers, sons of Joseph, who did not believe in Christ during his ministry.

[John 7:5](#) For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [John 7:5 NKJV](#)

I believe that they must have come around after the resurrection. I also do not believe that an older brother of Jesus would be nicknamed "the little," especially after the prominent role he assumed in the early church. So ultimately since,

<sup>401</sup> Young. p389. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA389>

<sup>402</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_the\\_Less](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Less)

<sup>403</sup> Young. p391. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA391>

<sup>404</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_the\\_Less](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Less)

<sup>405</sup> Young. p391. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA391>

<sup>406</sup> Young. p392. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA392>



I differentiate the Apostle James the son of Alphaeus from the prominent James in the book of Acts, the tradition of what became of him is even more uncertain than usual. I think most of the tradition of the James who was not the son of Zebedee, were about James called the Just, the brother of Jesus.

### Simon the Zealot

This Apostle is one we know hardly anything about from the Bible. His name is only mentioned the four times the Apostles are listed, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. In Matthew and Mark in the KJV, he is distinguished from Simon Peter as Simon the Canaanite. This is apparently an incorrect translation<sup>407</sup> which was corrected in the NKJV to Cananite, possibly implying his home being the town of Cana. The NASB even departs from that simply using the same distinguishing term as Luke and Acts, which is the Zealot, but their footnote offers the alternative Cananaean. Young offers what I believe to be the correct explanation for the use of the words, "Canaanite" (not "Canaanite") or "Zealot." He says that in the vernacular language of Palestine, the word from which Cananite is derived, has a meaning identical with that of the root of the Greek word Zelotes.<sup>408</sup> In this case, the word "Canaanite," would have nothing to do with the town, but would be associated with the more common designation used to distinguish this Simon, "the Zealot." If you stop for a moment to think about what a Jewish Zealot is, you would realize that it wouldn't make any sense for a Canaanite to be a Zealot. That being said, there is some debate over whether the term Zealot, simply implies that he was zealous, or was part of the radical, political, movement called Zealots, who were violently anti-Roman, to the point of employing terrorist tactics against the Romans and even Jews who disagreed with them. Having said all of that, there is some doubt that this movement, by that name existed at the time of Christ's ministry and selection of Apostles.<sup>409</sup> According to some, the movement was founded by Judas of Galilee in the year 6, but the Jewish Encyclopedia on Zealots, says there is not a clear identification in original sources. There is much support for the existence of the Zealot's in during first Jewish War (66-73).<sup>410 411</sup>

There is one more supposition that is made by some, since this Apostle is listed with James and Judas (Jude?), that he is their brother and relative to Jesus.

[Matthew 13:55](#) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, **Simon**, and Judas? [Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and **Simon**? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)

I have leaned away from identification of brothers of Jesus with Apostles mainly because the Bible says His brothers did not believe in Him.

[John 7:5](#) For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [John 7:5 NKJV](#)

It almost seems that if you accept that His "brothers," (cousins) were His disciples, then you almost have to accept all three together, James, Simon and Judas? If three of his brothers were disciples, how could John say that even His brothers didn't believe in Him?

<sup>407</sup> Young. p412. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA412>

<sup>408</sup> Young. p411. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA411>

<sup>409</sup> Young. p412. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA412>

<sup>410</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zealots\\_\(Judea\)#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zealots_(Judea)#History)

<sup>411</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon\\_the\\_Zealot#Identity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_the_Zealot#Identity)

Regarding Simon, as with all the disciples, there are many questionable traditions. Some say he went to Egypt, Persia, Armenia, Beirut and Lebanon where he was martyred. Others, that he was crucified as Bishop of Jerusalem. Ethiopians claim he was crucified in Samaria, while Justus Lipsius writes that he was sawn in half at Saunir, Persia.<sup>412 413 414</sup>

### Judas or Thaddaeus<sup>415 416 417 418</sup>

As we have seen before, Matthew and Mark used a designation for this Apostle that differed from that used by Luke. It is by process of elimination that we identify the two names as referring to the same person. Thaddaeus is listed by Matthew and Mark, but they do not list a Jude, Juda or Judas aside from the betrayer. Luke on the other hand, does not list Thaddaeus as one of the twelve, but he lists a Juda son of James. Interestingly, in the [KJV/NKJV](#) of Matthew 10:3, the name Lebbeaus is also used with Thaddaeus as the surname, although the [NASB](#) does not include the first name. Another discrepancy between the KJV, NKJV and the NASB is that in [Acts 1:3 KJV](#), and [NKJV](#) he is called Judas the son of James, whereas in the [NASB](#) there is a footnote that offers brother instead of son. Once again I will quote the two verses that list brothers of Jesus who many traditionally associate with two or three of the Apostles, in this case Judas.

[Matthew 13:55](#) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and **Judas**? [Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, **Judas**, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)

With all the references in the New Testament, we have the following different identities, including translations.

1. Thaddaeus [[Matthew 10:3 NASB](#); [Mark 3:18 NKJV](#)]
2. Lebbeaus Thaddaeus [[Matthew 10:3 NKJV](#)]
3. Judas the brother or cousin of Jesus [[Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#), [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)]
4. Judas the brother of James [[Acts 1:13 KJV](#)]
5. Judas the son of James [[Acts 1:13 NASB](#)]
6. Judas (not Iscariot) [[John 14:22 NKJV](#)]
7. Judas the brother of James and author of Jude [[Jude 1:1 NKJV](#)]

If I'm not mistaken, I believe Catholic tradition treats, all seven as the same person. I do not share these views for some of the reasons that I have mentioned for James the Less and Simon the Zealot, and will now add one more. Both Matthew and Mark called him Thaddaeus in their lists. If they knew him as the same person as Judas the brother (cousin) of Jesus, why would they use different names for him. I lean toward 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 as being the same person, and 3, 7 being the same person.

There are probably more traditions than there are possible identities for this person. Preached in Judea, Samaria, Idumea, Syria, Mesopotamia, Libya, Beirut, Edessa and more. Venerated as the patron saint of the Armenian Apostolic Church. He was a vegetarian. Crucified in Edessa. Killed by arrows in Ararat. Killed in 65 AD in Beirut. Killed with an axe.

<sup>412</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon\\_the\\_Zealot#Later\\_tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_the_Zealot#Later_tradition)

<sup>413</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>414</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#simon-zealot>

<sup>415</sup> Young. p414. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA414>

<sup>416</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude\\_the\\_Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude_the_Apostle)

<sup>417</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>418</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#jude-thaddeus>

Ultimately I am skeptical of all of these traditions.

## Judas

Judas is among the few Apostles that we know the most about from his mentions in the Bible. I found his name 23 times, used in the following ways.

1. Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him [[Matthew 10:4](#), [Mark 3:19](#)]
2. Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor [[Luke 6:16](#)]
3. Judas Iscariot, who stole money [[John 12:4-6](#)]
4. Judas Iscariot, son of Simon [[John 13:2](#), [John 6:71](#), [John 13:26](#)]
5. Judas and Judas Iscariot, in the story of his betrayal [[Matthew 26,27](#), [Mark 14](#), [Luke 22](#), [John 18](#)]

For obvious reasons, it's not a pretty picture that is painted of Judas in the Bible. 1 and 2 are just the lists of the twelve Apostles, but even there Judas cannot escape the mention of his legacy of betrayal. 4-6 are in relation to the Last Supper and the arrest and trial of Jesus. The context for 3 is a feast or a reception, supposedly in honor of Jesus and Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. This took place in Bethany, which was very near to Jerusalem, just prior to the last Passover of Christ's ministry. It says that a large crowd was there, because they wanted to see Lazarus, the man who had been resurrected from the dead.

[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>2</sup> There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. <sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

<sup>4</sup> But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], who would betray Him, said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. <sup>8</sup> "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." [John 12:1-8 NKJV](#)

This was an open rebuke that must have not sat well with Judas. I found it interesting that John would even add that he used to pilfer money from the group's treasury. Ellen White put's it a little more diplomatically by saying he used to pay himself out of their meager fund.<sup>419</sup> It is thought that on leaving this reception, after the rebuke, Judas went about putting his betrayal plan in effect.<sup>420 421</sup>

Beyond the mentions of Judas as a betrayer and thief, we have two other pieces of information. He was often called Judas Iscariot and was also called the son of Simon Iscariot. There are many Simons in the New Testament, but no other mention of a Simon Iscariot, and I don't believe there is any reason to assume he was identified with any of them. But what can we draw from the name Iscariot? Obviously, the use of surnames back then was not universal as it is in many cultures today. The practice back then, if needed, seemed to be to identify the person as being the son of someone, or from some place or city. There are many surnames today that probably had their origins in identifying someone by their

<sup>419</sup> White. p718. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=718>

<sup>420</sup> Young. p431. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA431>

<sup>421</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p563-564.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=563>

father's name, such as Adamson, Davidson, Johnson, to name a few. Young presented six options that have been suggested by different scholars over time.<sup>422</sup>

1. Dropping the vowel 'I' at the beginning of the name leaves you with a word similar to the Syriac (sckharyut) which has the meanings "bag" or "purse." This would make the name descriptive of his duties and could be seen as Judas the Steward.
2. Again, with the first vowel dropped, the Syriac (sakar) has the meaning strangle. This explanation attempts to associate the name with his fate, which was hanging.
3. The third attempts to analyze Iscariot into (seker), meaning "wages" or "reward," alluding to the fact that for money he betrayed his master.
4. Then there is the explanation to derive it from (Ish Issachar), "man of Issacar."
5. The next is to associate the name with the Talmudic Hebrew (sekurti), leather apron. Again, attempting to make an association with his responsibilities in the group.
6. Finally, there is the (Ish-Qerioth or Kerioth) meaning "man of Kerioth," which was a town in Judah.

I would argue against 1, 2, 3, 5 because the surname is also used for his father, naming him Simon Iscariot, but also because they seem kind of weak. So, unless the father was known for all these same actions or occupations, it seems unlikely that the same name would be used for both of them. Young doesn't give much credit to 4 because, he says, most of the distinctions of the ten tribes must have been lost by that time. Wikipedia presents another list of six possibilities for the meaning of the name which, except for 2 and 6 were all different.<sup>423</sup> I lean heavily toward 6 and I don't have a source for this, but I believe many others do as well.

I have always wondered about a few things regarding the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. First, I find it hard to believe that the Jews with as much motivation as they seemed to have, could not have tracked the movements of Jesus and known where He was whenever they wanted to. Secondly, why did Judas make a point of the signal to identify Jesus for them? How could anyone not know who He was and what He looked like? White wrote a whole chapter on Judas which gives some plausible answers to the second question.

Judas reasoned that if Jesus was to be crucified, the event must come to pass. His own act in betraying the Saviour would not change the result. If Jesus was not to die, it would only force Him to deliver Himself. At all events, Judas would gain something by his treachery. He counted that he had made a sharp bargain in betraying his Lord.

Judas did not, however, believe that Christ would permit Himself to be arrested. In betraying Him, it was his purpose to teach Him a lesson. He intended to play a part that would make the Saviour careful thenceforth to treat him with due respect. But Judas knew not that he was giving Christ up to death. How often, as the Saviour taught in parables, the scribes and Pharisees had been carried away with His striking illustrations! How often they had pronounced judgment against themselves! Often when the truth was brought home to their hearts, they had been filled with rage, and had taken up stones to cast at Him; but again and again He had made His escape. Since He had escaped so many snares, thought Judas, He certainly would not now allow Himself to be taken.

<sup>422</sup> Young. p423. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA423>

<sup>423</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judas\\_Iscariot#Etymology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judas_Iscariot#Etymology)

Judas decided to put the matter to the test. If Jesus really was the Messiah, the people, for whom He had done so much, would rally about Him, and would proclaim Him king. This would forever settle many minds that were now in uncertainty. Judas would have the credit of having placed the king on David's throne. And this act would secure to him the first position, next to Christ, in the new kingdom.

The false disciple acted his part in betraying Jesus. In the garden, when he said to the leaders of the mob, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast" (Matthew 26:48), he fully believed that Christ would escape out of their hands. Then if they should blame him, he could say, Did I not tell you to hold Him fast?

[White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p720](#)<sup>424</sup>

I think the remorse Judas showed just before his death and the fact that he took his own life lead many to believe what White suggested, that he didn't believe Jesus would allow Himself to be taken and killed.

[Matthew 27:3](#) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, <sup>4</sup> saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What [is that] to us? You see [to it]!" <sup>5</sup> Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. [Matthew 27:3-5 NKJV](#)

Finally, it doesn't seem we should end our discussion of Judas without some mention of the prophecies regarding the betrayal of Jesus, of which I believe there to be two.

[Zechariah 11:12](#) Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give [me] my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty [pieces] of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. [Zechariah 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

Then there is the one quoted by Peter which motivated the selection of a replacement for Judas.

[Psalm 109:8](#) Let his days be few, [And] let another take his office. [Psalm 109:8 NKJV](#)

When I read the context of these two "prophecies," I didn't see any way they would have served to predict the actions of the betrayer. However, I do believe that in retrospect, or after the events occurred, that one could look back on them and see that they could have been inspired by One who knew the future events. After all, Jesus Himself told His disciples that He was predicting things so that after they happened, it would strengthen their belief in Him. The one from the Psalms, is thought to be David writing about his betrayal by Ahithopel, who also hanged himself. I wrote a little more about the one from Zechariah in a later chapter titled [Judas agrees to betray Jesus](#).

[John 13:19](#) "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am [He]. [John 13:19 NKJV](#)

I will close the book on Judas by saying that I don't think he was more flawed, than any of the other disciples at first. In fact, right at the end, when Judas betrayed, his master, Peter very publicly denied his association with Jesus. The difference was in what they did after that. I believe that if Judas had truly repented, Jesus would have taken him back just as readily as he accepted Peter back after the resurrection. If that had happened, then David's Psalm about the betrayal by Ahithopel, would have remained just that and would never have been considered a prophecy of Judas.

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<sup>424</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p720.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=720>

## Matthias

In the end there was a thirteenth Apostle, named Matthias, who was chosen to replace Judas.

[Acts 1:15](#) And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, <sup>16</sup> "Men [and] brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; <sup>17</sup> "for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."

<sup>18</sup> (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. <sup>19</sup> And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup> "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his dwelling place be desolate,  
And let no one live in it';

and,

'Let another take his office.'

<sup>21</sup> "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

<sup>23</sup> And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. [Acts 1:15-25](#)  
[NKJV](#)

The only thing said of him is that he was a disciple, who had been a follower of Jesus for His entire ministry. I take that to mean that he had been a disciple as long as the other eleven. This was an interesting concept to me because I envisioned Jesus and the twelve often being alone, well maybe not often, but just the thirteen of them. But this along with the mention of the women who used to support them paints a picture of more than just thirteen.

According to Young, fanciful stories of his life and death exist, but they are not accepted by the writers of the Catholic Church. <sup>425</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus exercised His knowledge of the future in choosing the twelve, so that He knew how they would all turn out?
- Why do you think He chose twelve and not more or less?
- Do you think the disciples ever used the fact that they were chosen to exercise their authority over people?

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<sup>425</sup> Young. p442. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA442>

- In choosing the replacement for Judas, do you think the eleven should have let God choose from among all instead of just two?

## Jesus heals a multitude of people

[Mark 3:7-12](#), [Matthew 12:15-21](#), [Luke 6:17-19](#)

According to Strong, there are two different times when Jesus healed multitudes, including people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and even the region of Tyre and Sidon. He placed one between the encounter with the Pharisees in the grain fields and the naming of the twelve apostles<sup>426</sup>, and the other after He came down the mountain where He named the twelve.<sup>427</sup> So even though the first occasion may be a little out of chronological order, because there were so many similarities, I choose to combine them into the same discussion. I wonder if they were really the same.

The first:

[Mark 3:7](#) But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea <sup>8</sup> and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. <sup>9</sup> So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. <sup>10</sup> For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. <sup>11</sup> And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." <sup>12</sup> But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known. [Mark 3:7-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:15](#) But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him,

and He healed them all.

<sup>16</sup> Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

[Matthew 12:15-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:17](#) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>18</sup> "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,  
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!  
I will put My Spirit upon Him,  
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel nor cry out,  
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench,  
Till He sends forth justice to victory;

<sup>21</sup> And in His name Gentiles will trust." [Matthew 12:17-21 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 42:1](#) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,  
My Elect One [in whom] My soul delights!

I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup> He will not cry out, nor raise [His voice],  
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench;

He will bring forth justice for truth.

<sup>4</sup> He will not fail nor be discouraged,

Till He has established justice in the earth;

And the coastlands shall wait for His law." [Isaiah 42:1-4 NKJV](#)

<sup>426</sup> Strong. p74. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n135/mode/2up>

<sup>427</sup> Strong. p77. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n137/mode/2up>

The second:

[Luke 6:17](#) And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, <sup>18</sup> as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. <sup>19</sup> And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed [them] all.

[Luke 6:17-19 NKJV](#)

If you recall, when Jesus named the twelve apostles, He had been up on a mountain. The event recorded by Luke, immediately follows the naming of the twelve and hence, the “came down,” in [verse 17](#) would refer to coming down from the mountain spoken of in the prior verses.

I found the verses in Luke interesting because generally Jesus healed people one-on-one, often asking for some show of faith. In this instance, Luke writes that people were all pressing in on Him trying to touch Him. Depending on how many were in this great throng, this could have turned into a disaster with people trampling down others in their eagerness to touch Jesus. Can you imagine, thinking that this might be your one-and-only chance to be healed. To avoid people getting hurt by a trampling mob, Jesus may have decided to simultaneously heal everyone in the crowd. The [KJV](#) says “for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.”

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What do you believe?

- What other times did Jesus heal someone without being face-to-face with them? Did someone else exhibit faith on their behalf?
- Do you think there were people in this multitude who were healed who didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah?
- Did Jesus make any distinction between Jews and Gentiles in this mass healing?



## The Sermon on the Mount

[Matthew 5 \(except 25,26\)](#), [Matthew 6:1-18 \(excluding 9-15\)](#), [Matthew 7:1-27 \(excluding 6-11, 13, 14\)](#), [Matthew 8:1](#), [Matthew 18:8-9](#), [Matthew 23:22](#), [Mark 9:43,47](#), [Luke 6:20-49 \(except 39,40\)](#), [Luke 16:17](#)<sup>428</sup>

I know this looks a little chopped up, but for the most part, this is Strong's harmony. I took a few liberties by not rearranging verses on the left column as much as he did. All of Matthew 5 is included except for verses [25, 26](#), which will be incorporated later on. The Lord's Prayer is in the middle of Matthew 6, and will be brought in later. And [Luke 6:20-49](#) is all included except for verses [39, 40](#) which will also be brought in later on.

[Matthew 5:1](#) And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. <sup>2</sup> Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed [are] the poor in spirit,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed [are] those who mourn,  
For they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed [are] the meek,  
For they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed [are] those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they shall be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed [are] the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed [are] the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed [are] the peacemakers,  
For they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed [are] those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

<sup>12</sup> "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great [is] your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. [Matthew 5:1-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:24](#) "But woe to you who are rich,  
For you have received your consolation.

<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are full,  
For you shall hunger.

Woe to you who laugh now,  
For you shall mourn and weep.

[Luke 6:20](#) Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

"Blessed are you poor,  
For yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21b</sup> Blessed are you who weep now,  
For you shall laugh.

<sup>21a</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now,  
For you shall be filled.

<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile [you], and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.

<sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward [is] great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. [Luke 6:20-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>428</sup> Strong. p78. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n139/mode/2up>

<sup>26</sup> Woe to you when all men speak well of you,  
For so did their fathers to the false prophets. [Luke 6:24-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:13](#) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

<sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all [who are] in the house. <sup>16</sup> "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, [Luke 16:17](#) "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till one tittle of the law to fail. [Luke 16:17 NKJV](#)  
all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches [them], he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>20</sup> "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' [Exodus 20:13](#) "You shall not murder. [Deuteronomy 5:17](#) 'You shall not murder. [Exodus 20:13 NKJV](#) [Deuteronomy 5:17 NKJV](#)

<sup>22</sup> "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. [Matthew 5:13-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:27](#) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' [Exodus 20:14](#) "You shall not commit adultery. [Deuteronomy 5:18](#) 'You shall not commit adultery. [Exodus 20:14 NKJV](#) [Deuteronomy 5:18 NKJV](#)  
<sup>28</sup> "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

<sup>29</sup> "If your right eye causes you to sin, [Matthew 18:9](#) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast [it] from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. <sup>30</sup> "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast [it] from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. [Matthew 18:9](#) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. <sup>8</sup> "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. [Mark 9:47](#) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— <sup>43</sup> "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- [Mark 9:47, 43 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:9, 8 NKJV](#)

<sup>31</sup> "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'  
<sup>32</sup> "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

[Deuteronomy 24:1](#) "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house, [Deuteronomy 24:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>33</sup> "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'  
<sup>34</sup> "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.  
<sup>36</sup> "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.  
<sup>37</sup> "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

[Numbers 30:2](#) "If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

[Numbers 30:2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:22](#) "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. [Matthew 23:22 NKJV](#)

<sup>38</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'  
<sup>39</sup> "But I tell you not to resist an evil person.

[Exodus 21:24](#) "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [Exodus 21:24 NKJV](#)

But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.  
<sup>40</sup> "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have [your] cloak also.  
<sup>41</sup> "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

[Luke 6:29](#) "To him who strikes you on the [one] cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold [your] tunic either.

<sup>42</sup> "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

<sup>30</sup> "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask [them] back. [Luke 6:29-30 NKJV](#)

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

[Leviticus 19:18](#) 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 19:18 NKJV](#)

<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,  
<sup>45</sup> "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

[Luke 6:27](#) "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> "bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. [Luke 6:27-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:27-45 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:32](#) "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

[Matthew 5:46](#) "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

<sup>33</sup> "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.  
<sup>34</sup> "And if you lend [to those] from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.  
<sup>35</sup> "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.  
<sup>36</sup> "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

<sup>47</sup> "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more [than others]? Do not even the tax collectors do so? [Matthew 5:46-47 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:32-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:1](#) "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. [Matthew 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:48](#) "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. [Matthew 5:48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:2](#) "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>3</sup> "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

<sup>5</sup> "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

<sup>6</sup> "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. <sup>7</sup> "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen [do]. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

<sup>8</sup> "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

[Matthew 6:2-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:16](#) "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>17</sup> "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

[Matthew 6:16-18 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:1](#) "Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

[Mark 4:24](#) ...  
NKJV

... With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; ... [Mark 4:24](#) you use, it will be measured back to you."

[Luke 6:37](#) "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. ...

[Luke 6:37](#) ... Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. ... [Luke 6:37-38 NKJV](#)

<sup>3</sup> "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

<sup>4</sup> "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank [is] in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. [Matthew 7:1-5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:41](#) "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? <sup>42</sup> "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that [is] in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that [is] in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye. [Luke 6:41-42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:12](#) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. [Matthew 7:12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:31](#) "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. [Luke 6:31 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:15](#) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather [Luke 6:44](#) ... For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> "Even so, do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. [Luke 6:44](#) every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

<sup>18</sup> "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor [can] a bad [Luke 6:43](#) "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. tree bear good fruit.

<sup>20</sup> "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. <sup>44</sup> "For every tree is known by its own fruit. ... [Luke 6:43-44 NKJV](#)

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the [Luke 6:46](#) "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in the things which I say? [Luke 6:46 NKJV](#) heaven. <sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [Psalm 6:8](#) Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; ... [Psalm 6:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does [Luke 6:47](#) "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> "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. <sup>49</sup> "But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." [Luke 6:47-49 NKJV](#) them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: <sup>25</sup> "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: <sup>27</sup> "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." [Matthew 7:15-27 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:1](#) When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. [Matthew 8:1 NKJV](#)

The "Sermon on the Mount," which occupies almost all of Matthew 5 and large portions from 6 and 7, is the longest recorded teaching session by Jesus that we have.<sup>429</sup> If I recall correctly, it is the evangelist Peter Gregory, known for his seminars on how to study the Bible, who suggested the following. The words of the Bible can be classified at three levels:

1. Words written by God's own hand (or finger). The Ten Commandments.
2. Words which were spoken by God, in most cases Jesus. Many Bibles conveniently print these in red letters.
3. Words written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. This category could possibly be subdivided.

According to Peter, it is right to give higher weight to the words written by God's own hand than the rest of the Bible. And it is right to give higher weight to direct quotes by Jesus, although written by human beings, than the words of man inspired by God. If you agree with this hierarchy, this sermon by Jesus is one of the biggest treasures in the whole Bible.

Beginning in Matthew 5, Jesus turned the whole theology of the day upside-down. The religious teachers among the Jews would teach that health and wealth were gifts from God and signs that those individuals were pleasing Him.

<sup>429</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon\\_on\\_the\\_Mount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon_on_the_Mount)

Conversely, those who did not have as much health and wealth were not as pleasing to God, or depending on the degree of misfortune, were being punished by Him.

I would summarize the first part of this sermon, also known as the beatitudes, as “your reward will be in heaven.” All those who love God and choose to be with Him in heaven will be blessed and rewarded beyond measure when they get there. You may or may not suffer hunger, sorrow, misfortune, persecution, or all manner of evil here on this earth. But your reward in heaven will be so much bigger and better, that it will far outweigh the evil suffered here. This all makes sense to me, but the troubling thing is the wrap up of this first section which I draw from [Luke 6:24-26](#), which sort of says the opposite. Those who are rich, and well fed, and have a good life in general, have already received their reward. Is Jesus saying, they won’t get to heaven? Is He saying heaven won’t be any better? If that is the case, then these good things on earth would really be a curse. I believe Jesus wants people to use the abilities God has given them, which may result in some being successful. In fact, I believe there are people in this world who are more gifted than others in leading, influencing, and making a difference on a large scale. I think if they use these gifts to only benefit themselves, then they are receiving their reward in full. I also know there are people who are receiving these good things in this life, even though they did nothing to deserve them. Many of them are worse off for it and for them it is a curse. Ultimately, I do not believe that having wealth, food or comfort are a bad thing, but if you do not use those blessings to help those in need, they might end up being a curse.

The verses immediately following, in [Matthew 5:13-16](#), are essentially saying that everything we do, should be for the purpose of making God look good. People should always be able to look at our words and actions and think to themselves that they would like the God we serve and love. We should never leave people thinking, if God is like them, I want nothing to do with Him. I think this fits perfectly with one of the main themes of the Bible, and with the example of Jesus’ life, which is to love your neighbor as yourself. Show compassion to all people, especially those less fortunate, and you will be a light to the world, salt to add good flavor to food, and a good ambassador for your Father in heaven.

Next Jesus clarifies that He has not come to do away with the Law, but to fulfill it. But what law was He talking about? As I mentioned above, the Ten Commandments, written by God’s own hand should be given highest esteem. In this sermon, Jesus gave several examples of what it meant to truly keep the Law of God. He explained how the Law should not just govern our outward actions, but our thoughts and motives as well. He gave the examples that anger at someone is actually breaking the Commandment to not murder, and that looking lustfully at someone who is not your spouse is committing adultery. I believe He intended that this principle apply to all Ten Commandments. I also believe that the way Jesus lived His life was an example to us of how to keep the Law of God. I think this was one of the ways He fulfilled the Law. But what about the rest of the thousands of laws the Jews had? In verses [21](#), [38](#), Jesus gives examples of how the remainder of their laws should take a back seat to the Ten Commandments. Their problem was that in many cases, they had the priorities reversed. The laws of Moses could be divided into two parts, the ceremonial law and the civil law. The civil laws were like the laws our governments make and enforce, and should be obeyed, unless they contradict the Law of God. The ceremonial law were practices and procedures mainly having to do with the sanctuary and the various sacrifices which were all in fact given to point forward to His coming. When He actually came, many of these “laws” or practices and procedures, no longer needed to be performed, because the purpose for them was in fact fulfilled.

Next starting with [Luke 6:32-36](#), and [Matthew 5:46](#) and continuing on into [Matthew 6](#), Jesus teaches that we should not do our good deeds or practice righteousness to be praised by men, but do them secretly.

In [Matthew 7:12](#), and [Luke 6:31](#) Jesus teaches what has become known as the Golden Rule.

Jesus closes out His sermon with three warnings.

1. In [Matthew 7:15-20](#), Jesus says, beware of false prophets. They are like wolves in sheep's clothing. There are people who can put on a good outward show of holiness but have no good intentions and will be like devouring wolves if you follow them.
2. Then in [Matthew 7:21-23](#), He says, just putting on an outward show of holiness will not save you. Even preaching and healing and casting out demons doesn't mean you are truly converted and doing God's will.
3. Finally in [Matthew 7:24-27](#), Jesus says that whoever hears His words and obeys them will be building on a solid foundation. But those who hear them and don't obey them will be like someone who is building without a foundation.

I think these warnings can even be summarized in one sentence. An outward show of holiness and good works is not an adequate sign that one is truly doing God's will, and if that's all it is, they will come to ruin in the end.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus actually gave this talk the way it has been assembled, or do you think it has been compiled from many sittings?
- We usually hear about Jesus sitting down and teaching a large multitude, but do you think He ever spent the time teaching just a few (aside from His chosen disciples)?
- Do you think you understand what Jesus is saying and can put it into practice in your own life?

## Jesus heals the Centurion's servant

[Luke 7:1-10](#), [Matthew 8:5-13](#)<sup>430</sup>

[Luke 7:1](#) Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. <sup>3</sup> So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.

<sup>4</sup> And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving,

[Mathew 8:5](#) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, <sup>6</sup> saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." [Matthew 8:5-6 NKJV](#)

<sup>430</sup> Strong. p88. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/88/mode/2up>

<sup>5</sup> "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. <sup>7</sup> "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> "For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]."

<sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

<sup>10</sup> And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. [Luke 7:1-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:7](#) And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

<sup>8</sup> The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this [one], 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]."

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard [it], He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! [Matthew 8:7-10 NKJV](#)  
[Matthew 8:13](#) Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, [so] let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour. [Matthew 8:13 NKJV](#)

The harmony just presented is from Strong. The first thing to note are the differences in the stories as told by Luke and Matthew. At a high level, it appears that Luke has the centurion not meeting Jesus face to face but sending messengers because of his own perceived unworthiness. Matthew doesn't mention the Jewish elders, or the synagogue, and has the centurion presenting his request in person. Jack Shaffer gives a good analysis of the problem and proposes a solution which I tend to agree with.<sup>431</sup> I will present these verses again using his proposed harmony.

[Luke 7:1-8](#) Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. <sup>3</sup> So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. <sup>4</sup> And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, <sup>5</sup> "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. <sup>7</sup> "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> "For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]." [Luke 7:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:5a](#) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, ...

[Jesus continues to the house even after this second delegation gives Him the message, so the centurion finally comes out to give his message in person.]

[Matthew 8:5b-9](#) a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, <sup>6</sup> saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." <sup>7</sup> And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." <sup>8</sup> The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this [one], 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]." [Matthew 8:5-9 NKJV](#)

<sup>431</sup> Shaffer, Jack Russel. *A Harmonization of Matt 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10*. p48. <https://www.tms.edu/m/17c.pdf> (if the original link doesn't work <http://btlib.org/17c.pdf>)



[Luke 7:9a](#) When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, [Matthew 8:10a](#) When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed,

[Luke 7:9b](#) "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" [Luke 7:9 NKJV](#)

[Shaffer says Jesus restates Himself for emphasis. First, He says He hasn't seen this kind of faith in Israel. Then He says He has not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.]

[Matthew 8:10b-13](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" <sup>11</sup> "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." <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, [so] let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour. [Matthew 8:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:10](#) And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. [Luke 7:10 NKJV](#)

Shaffer explains that the authors of Matthew and Luke had different objectives. Luke wanted to emphasize the character of the centurion and contrast it with the works-oriented Jews. Matthew picks up with the faith of the centurion in contrast to Israel and showed that even a Gentile recognized the King of the Jews while His own people rejected Him.<sup>432</sup>

What do you believe?

- Do you think the centurion believed Jesus was a god, or just a miracle worker?
- Do you think the centurion had been converted to Judaism or was merely kind to the Jews?
- Do you think this miracle converted him to eventually following Christ?

## Jesus brings a widow's son back to life

[Luke 7:11-17](#)<sup>433</sup>

[Luke 7:11](#) Now it happened, the day after, [that] He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. <sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried [him] stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

<sup>16</sup> Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." <sup>17</sup> And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

[Luke 7:11-17 NKJV](#)

Strong places this incident right after the healing of the centurion's servant. According to his harmony, this is the first recorded instance of Jesus giving life to a dead person. According to Wikipedia, Edward Robinson and Eli Smith,

<sup>432</sup> Shaffer. p49. <https://www.tms.edu/m/17c.pdf> (if the original link doesn't work <http://btlb.org/17c.pdf>)

<sup>433</sup> Strong. p90. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/90/mode/2up>

who visited Palestine in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, identified Nein as the Nain of this story.<sup>434</sup> The distance from Capernaum is estimated to be 22 miles<sup>435</sup> or approximately 28 miles on modern roads.<sup>436</sup>

Jesus is stepping up the evidence that He is more than human. Even though many of His healings were beyond the abilities of the physicians of the day, there were doctors who could heal. Verse 16 says fear gripped them all, and they said a great prophet has risen, but some said God has visited His people.

It really shouldn't need to be said, but I will say it anyway. In that male dominated culture, women were very dependent on men for their sustenance. A woman without husband or sons was at the mercy of relatives, or worse yet reduced to begging or selling herself as a prostitute. Jesus understood this and had compassion on her.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus waited this long into His ministry to bring someone back to life?
- Do you think this increased the faith of the twelve disciples?
- Bringing someone back to life was no more difficult for Jesus than healing someone, so why do you think so few received this miracle?

## John the Baptist asks Jesus for confirmation of His identity

[Luke 7:18-35](#), [Matthew 11:2-24](#)<sup>437</sup>

[Luke 7:18](#) Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.<sup>19</sup> And John, calling two of his disciples to [him], sent [them] to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"<sup>20</sup> When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'"<sup>21</sup> And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.<sup>22</sup> 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 are raised,  
[the] poor have the gospel  
preached to them.  
<sup>23</sup> "And blessed is he who is not  
offended because of Me."

[Isaiah 35:5](#) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, ...  
<sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
And the tongue of the dumb sing. ...  
<sup>5</sup> ... And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.  
[Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV](#)  
[Isaiah 61:1](#) ... To preach good tidings to the  
poor; ... [Isaiah 61:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:2](#) Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples,  
[Matthew 11:3](#) and said to Him,

"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: [Matthew 11:3-4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:5](#) "[The] blind see and  
[the] lame walk;  
[the] lepers are cleansed and  
[the] deaf hear;  
[the] dead are raised up and  
[the] poor have the gospel preached to  
them.  
<sup>6</sup> "And blessed is he who is not offended  
because of Me." [Matthew 11:5-6 NKJV](#)

<sup>434</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nein#Biblical\\_associations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nein#Biblical_associations)

<sup>435</sup> [http://www.bible-history.com/map\\_jesus/MAPJESUSNew\\_Testament\\_Cities\\_Distances.htm](http://www.bible-history.com/map_jesus/MAPJESUSNew_Testament_Cities_Distances.htm)

<sup>436</sup> <https://www.google.com/#q=distance+from+nain+to+capernaum>

<sup>437</sup> Strong. p90. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n153/mode/2up>

<sup>24</sup> When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [Luke 7:18-26 NKJV](#)

[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? <sup>8</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft [clothing] are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [Matthew 11:7-9 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:14](#) "And if you are willing to receive [it], he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> "He who has ears to hear, let him hear! [Matthew 11:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." [Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:27](#) "This is [he] of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

[Matthew 11:10](#) "For this is [he] of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'  
[Matthew 11:10 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:2](#) As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." [Mark 1:2 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 3:1](#) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. ...  
[Isaiah 40:3](#) ... Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. [Malachi 3:1 NKJV](#)  
[Isaiah 40:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>28</sup> "For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." [Luke 7:27-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:11](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. [Matthew 11:11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:12](#) "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. [Matthew 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:16](#) "The law and the prophets [were] until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. [Luke 16:16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:29](#) And when all the people heard [Him], even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. <sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

<sup>31</sup> And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup> "They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.'

<sup>33</sup> "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>34</sup> "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' <sup>35</sup> "But wisdom is justified by all her children." [Luke 7:29-35 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:20](#) Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: <sup>21</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. <sup>23</sup> "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.

<sup>24</sup> "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 11:20-24 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

[Luke 10:12](#) "But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. [Luke 10:12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:16](#) "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, <sup>17</sup> "and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'

<sup>18</sup> "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>19</sup> "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children." [Matthew 11:16-19](#)

[Luke 10:13](#) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup> "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. [Luke 10:13-15 NKJV](#)

Strong places this event in June almost two years from when John had baptized Jesus and later introduced Him as the Lamb of God. Some of John's own disciples took that announcement to mean Jesus was the Messiah. During this time, Jesus has been travelling around the country teaching, healing and gathering followers but He had not made any noticeable move toward assuming the crown of Israel or overthrowing the Roman occupiers. Even though John, probably by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, called Jesus the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, he still did not have a clear picture of the Messiah's mission. There are so many prophecies in the Bible that speak of the Messiah as a conquering king that it would be understandable to expect it. If such were the case, it would be completely reasonable for John to expect Jesus to get him out of prison so he could be part of the movement and the new kingdom. In fact, regardless of the exact nature of Jesus' mission, humanly it would seem reasonable for Him to try to get John out of prison. But God's plans are often not in line with man's plans.

It was nice that John had some loyal friends who continued to visit him in prison, but unfortunately, they were probably enforcing doubts and questions in his mind about Jesus. John sent some of these friends for his sake but possibly more for theirs, to try to gain more insight into Jesus' mission. The question was very straight forward but as He often did, Jesus did not give a direct answer. He told them to stay and watch, then go and report to John what they had observed. What Jesus showed them that day was a side of the Messiah's mission that most Jews had probably overlooked.

[Isaiah 35:5](#) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
 And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.  
<sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
 And the tongue of the dumb sing.  
 For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,  
 And streams in the desert. [Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV](#)

When John's disciples described Jesus' response and what they observed, this prophecy must have come to John's mind, and I imagine that he must have been satisfied that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. At that point, he must have become content to suffer any fate that Jesus saw fit for him. Perhaps John also recalled [Isaiah 53](#) about the despised, rejected, and suffering Messiah and realized that he was suffering no more than Jesus Himself would.

Now we come to [Matthew 11:12-13](#) and [Luke 16:16](#) which I found truly puzzling. So, I searched for some commentary these verses. I found an interesting web page by Avram Yehoshua which presented a very believable explanation. He quotes [Micah 2:12-13](#) as the background for properly understanding these verses. He says if you translate the Greek back to Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, you can get a very different picture. The Hebrew word means to forcibly enter, which comes from פָּרַץ, *pāras*.<sup>438</sup> This has the meanings, 'to break or tear down...e.g. a wall...to break asunder, to break forth, as a child from the womb, [Genesis 38:29](#); of water, to burst forth...a torrent bursts forth...also to break out, act with violence, [Hosea 4:2](#).' He gives the example of a shepherd breaching the wall of the fold and the sheep following him out. So, the kingdom is not suffering violence, but the shepherd is tearing open, making a hole in the heavenly fence that separates man and God.<sup>439</sup> In his commentary, Matthew Henry likens rapid widespread interest in the Gospel, started by John and continued by Jesus, to the violence of an army taking a city by storm. He also describes the improbable multitude including harlots, tax collectors, and sinners who stormed the kingdom, while the so-called children of the kingdom, stayed out. He also describes the strength, earnestness and vigor with which one must strive for the kingdom of heaven.<sup>440</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Why didn't Jesus free John from prison?
- Why do you think Jesus waited until after John's disciples left to say good things about him?
- Do you have any additional ideas about the violence done to the kingdom in [Matthew 11:12](#)?

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<sup>438</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6555/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>439</sup> <http://www.seedofabraham.net/kingdomv.html>

<sup>440</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_011.cfm?a=940012](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_011.cfm?a=940012)

## Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house

[Luke 7:36-50](#)<sup>441</sup>

[Luke 7:36](#) Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup> 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, <sup>38</sup> and stood at His feet behind [Him] weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped [them] with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed [them] with the fragrant oil. <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw [this], he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman [this is] who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."

<sup>41</sup> "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

<sup>42</sup> "And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the [one] whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." <sup>44</sup> Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped [them] with the hair of her head. <sup>45</sup> "You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. <sup>46</sup> "You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. <sup>47</sup> "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which [are] many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loves little."

<sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup> Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." [Luke 7:36-50 NKJV](#)

I am really torn about whether to place this story here or at the start of the last week of Jesus' ministry. The other three Gospel writers have recorded an incident that has the following similarities and differences.

Similarities	Differences
Host named Simon	Simon is referred to as a Pharisee by Luke but a leper by Matthew and Mark, and is not named as host in John
Woman anoints Jesus with costly ointment from an alabaster container	Luke places this story much earlier where the other writers place theirs in the last week of Jesus' life
	This incident appears in the midst of events around Capernaum and Galilee, the other one is said to be in Bethany

While I think the similarities are more than coincidental and the differences can be easily explained I will still present them separately, as other scholars have, including Strong. This doesn't mean that I personally don't believe they are

<sup>441</sup> Strong. p95. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/94/mode/2up>

the same incident, or at least the same person anointing in both cases, but I don't believe there is enough evidence based on the Bible alone to do so. Ellen White, in the *Desire of Ages* combines the incidents. She makes the assumption that some others have, that Mary Magdalene is the Sister of Lazarus and Martha. A compelling argument made by others for identifying the Mary of Bethany, the anointer in [John 12](#), with Mary Magdalene, is that after Jesus' comments about her anointing Him for burial, it seems very logical that she would have been at His crucifixion [[Matthew 27:56](#), [Mark 15:40](#), [John 19:25](#)].<sup>442 443 444</sup> White also claims that it was Simon who had originally led her into sin.<sup>445</sup> The unsaid assumption taken up by some, being that he sexually abused her as a child.

Identifying Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, with the woman who anointed Jesus is clearly Biblical fact as stated in [John 11:1-2](#). But since this association is mentioned before the incident in [John 12](#), some wonder whether he refers to an earlier event as recorded in Luke, or the later one which he related in [chapter 12](#). It is also Biblical fact that Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out of her by Jesus [[Mark 16:9](#), [Luke 8:2](#)]. I think it is ok to believe the other associations about Mary, but we should not state them all as if they were Biblical fact. In other words, I don't think you should make these claims when discussing these stories without making a disclaimer.

What do you believe?

- When Jesus said, "for this reason," her sins are forgiven, what reason do you think He was referring to?
- Why do you think Simon, didn't follow custom and have his servants wash Jesus' feet?
- Do you believe this event and the ones recorded in the other Gospels are the same?

## Women who financially supported Jesus' ministry

[Luke 8:1-3](#)<sup>446</sup>

[Luke 8:1](#) Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve [were] with Him, <sup>2</sup> and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities--Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, <sup>3</sup> and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. [Luke 8:1-3 NKJV](#)

There is no mention of Jesus ever charging for healing people, even though it would have been customary to do so. I think Jesus wanted to make a point that the gifts of God are free to all, regardless of social or financial status. In the Old Testament, the example of Elisha made it pretty clear that there is to be no charge for God's gift of healing [[2 Kings 5:15-27](#)]. So, if Jesus and the twelve were constantly on the road, they would not have had time to earn money. As a result of this, they would have been dependent on the hospitality of people in the cities they visited. But what would they do when the cities weren't able or didn't step up and provide for their needs, or how would they get food on the road? As is always the case in the work of spreading the Gospel, money is provided by people who choose to give. Throughout the Bible giving a tithe or a tenth has been recommended or possibly even required, but God wants us to give cheerfully and

<sup>442</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09761a.htm>

<sup>443</sup> <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/mary-magdalene.html>

<sup>444</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_of\\_Bethany#Medieval\\_Western\\_identification\\_with\\_Mary\\_Magdalene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_of_Bethany#Medieval_Western_identification_with_Mary_Magdalene)

<sup>445</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p557.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=557>

<sup>446</sup> Strong. p97. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/96/mode/2up>

willingly. In return He promises that His blessings will be more than we can receive. The following verses from Malachi written to the Jews illustrated that failing to return a tenth to God is like stealing from Him.

[Malachi 3:8](#) "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, [Even] this whole nation. <sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you [such] blessing That [there will] not [be room] enough [to receive it]. [Malachi 3:8-10 NKJV](#)

I think it is healthy to view everything as being God's, and He asks us to return a tenth for His work on earth. If you look at it this way, it is even good to give more than a tenth. In the case of these women and the other unnamed donors, I believe they gave freely.

To me the interesting thing is that in that male dominated society, it was probably not the norm for women to have much money at their disposal. Let's take a brief look at who these women were that were called out by name.

**Mary Magdalene** I have already discussed at some length in the chapter on [Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house](#). She could very well have been the one who anointed Jesus with the expensive ointment once or twice [[Luke 7:37-38](#), [John 12:3](#)]. She could also have been the Mary who sat at Jesus' feet listening to Him [[Luke 10:39](#)]. What the Bible tells us for certain about her is that Jesus has cast seven demons out of her [[Luke 8:2](#), [Mark 16:9](#)]. She was present during the crucifixion [[Matthew 27:56](#), [Mark 15:40](#), [John 19:25](#)]. She was present during the burial [[Matthew 27:61](#), [Mark 15:47](#)]. She was with the first group going to the tomb on resurrection morning [[Matthew 28:1](#), [Mark 16:1](#), [John 20:1](#)]. She was the first to announce to the disciples that Jesus was risen [[Luke 24:10](#)]. She was the first to see and talk to Jesus after He was resurrected [[Mark 16:9](#), [John 20:14-18](#)]. A picture begins to emerge of an independent woman, who was most likely wealthy, who had been saved from demon possession by Jesus and had become maybe the most devoted disciple, sticking with Him when most of twelve apostles abandoned Him.

**Joanna** is only mentioned twice in the Bible, the other time being with Mary Magdalene and the other women who went to the tomb and found it empty on resurrection morning [[Luke 8:3](#), [Luke 24:10](#)]. This passage tells us that she was the wife of Chuza Herod's steward. I speculated in the chapter where I discussed the [healing of the royal official's son](#), that maybe Chuza was that royal official. However, the arrangement of the wording in this passage, "some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sickness," with names following tends to suggest an association. When this association is confirmed in Mary's case, it seems likely that Joanna was also cured of some sickness or had demons cast out of her as well. The source of Joanna's wealth seems obvious, with her husband being King Herod's steward, but the fact that he allowed her to follow Jesus and spend their money freely in support of His ministry suggests that Chuza was also a believer. This is not much of a stretch if Joanna was indeed the recipient of one of Jesus' miracles. The only other mention of Joanna by name is in the group of women who went to the tomb to apply their embalming spices to the body of Jesus. Instead, they found the tomb empty, and spoke to two angels who said Jesus was risen. So, they promptly went and reported what they saw and heard to the eleven disciples, who refused to believe them [[Luke 24:1-11](#)].

**Susanna**, we know even less about because this is the only mention of her by name in the entire Bible. She was probably healed by Jesus of some sickness. These women were mentioned by name, even years later when this Gospel was written by Luke, who was mostly likely not present himself at the time. I had speculated earlier that Luke probably knew Mary and had interviewed her before writing his version of the Gospel. These women were probably mentioned by name because they were memorable to Mary or the young church at the time. Mary must have been grateful for the ministry of these women to Jesus because it seems that she was most likely not always able to



accompany her son. In addition to sitting at the feet of Jesus, I can envision these women going to the market to buy food with their own money, cooking, and maybe even washing clothes for the group.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus didn't name any women among the twelve apostles?
- Why do you think there were no men mentioned as financially supporting the ministry?
- When [Luke 8:3](#) says there were many others who supported the group out of their private means, do you think that meant many other women or people?

## Jesus heals a blind and mute demon possessed man

[Matthew 12:22-30](#), [Mark 3:20-27](#), [Luke 11:14-23](#)<sup>447</sup>

[Mark 3:20](#) Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." [Mark 3:20-21 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:22](#) Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup> And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

[Luke 11:14](#) And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled.

<sup>24</sup> Now when the Pharisees heard [it] they said, "This [fellow] does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

[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."

<sup>15</sup> But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." <sup>16</sup> Others, testing [Him], sought from Him a

<sup>25</sup> And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

sign from heaven. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say

<sup>26</sup> If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

<sup>25</sup> "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

<sup>26</sup> "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. [Mark 3:22-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>27</sup> If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. <sup>28</sup> But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

I cast out demons by Beelzebub. <sup>19</sup> "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast [them] out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>20</sup> "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

<sup>447</sup> Strong. p97. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/96/mode/2up>

<sup>29</sup> "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

[Mark 3:27](#) "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house. [Mark 3:27](#)

<sup>21</sup> "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. <sup>22</sup> "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

<sup>3</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. [Matthew 12:22-30 NKJV](#)

[NKJV](#)

<sup>23</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters. [Luke 11:14-23 NKJV](#)

There seemed to be a lot of demon possession at the time of Jesus' ministry, but I wonder if some of the cases identified as demon possession were because people were suffering seizures or other illness. On the other hand, I imagine that there is probably more demon possession today than we recognize.

It seems that people were continually being amazed by the miracles performed by Jesus. Was this simply a case of different people observing His miraculous power, or was it things the observers considered different from what they had seen before?

Next, knowing what his accusers were thinking before they even had the chance to voice it, Jesus uses a logic argument on them. Now I have always been skeptical of modern-day healers, or maybe I should clarify, those who do it on the big stage with bright lights shining on them. In my mind, I have thought these healings could be the work of the Devil, to deceive people. Is this skepticism valid or am I guilty of doing the same thing as the Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus day? First of all, I want to clarify that I believe the Devil can probably heal certain types of illness, but I don't believe he has the same creative healing power that God does. He probably has the ability to make people seem sick, and then withdraw his influence, making them appear to be healed. Is this not exactly what the Scribes and Pharisees were thinking? Does this make me guilty of being a hypocrite if I condemn them for rejecting Jesus, ascribing His miraculous power to the Devil? There are several things to consider when trying to decide if something comes from God or the Devil. Can a motive be determined for the person doing the healing? Is the motive financial or fame? Next, are their other actions and their words, both on the stage and off, in accordance with the Bible? I think the process for determining this is much the same as that for deciding if someone is a true or a false prophet. I discussed this in greater detail with additional Bible texts in [Distinguishing a true from a false prophet](#).

The analogy of the strong man is the same in Matthew and Mark, but it is different in Luke. I was puzzled over the point Jesus was trying to make in this context. Matthew Henry says that Satan is the strong man and souls of some are his property. Jesus is invading Satan's house plundering it by releasing souls from his captivity. As for the differences in the analogies, I have mentioned before that Jesus probably repeated His teachings and varied them according to His audience. Jesus may well have used this illustration many times in different forms and perhaps Luke wished to convey the message that Jesus was stronger than the Devil. In any case, I believe the message pointed out by Matthew Hendry remains the same.<sup>448</sup>

Finally, Jesus makes the point that if you don't make an active choice to follow Him, you are against Him. Ultimately there is no fence to sit on, and you will be either on God's or Satan's side.

<sup>448</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_012.cfm?a=941029](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_012.cfm?a=941029)

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What do you believe?

- Who do you think “His own people” were who had thought Jesus had lost His sense?
- Why were the people so amazed by the ability to cast out demons if this was something other people of the day could do as is implied by Jesus’ question?
- In light of this story, is it possible today that there are cases that we diagnose as some kind of disease which are really demon possession?

## The unpardonable sin

[Matthew 12:31](#), [Mark 3:28-30](#), [Luke 12:10](#)<sup>449</sup>

[Matthew 12:31](#) "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy [against] the Spirit will not be forgiven men. <sup>32</sup> "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the [age] to come. [Matthew 12:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:28](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; <sup>29</sup> "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"—<sup>30</sup> because they said, "He has an unclean spirit." [Mark 3:28-30 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:10](#) "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. [Luke 12:10 NKJV](#)

For some reason, as a child I had heard that there was an unpardonable sin, and the thought frightened me. What I learned or concluded eventually was that there really is no sin that cannot be forgiven except the sin that we do not repent of, and ask forgiveness for. Matthew and Mark make it pretty clear that we can be forgiven of any and all sins. The way I understand this now is that since it is the Holy Spirit that prompts us to seek forgiveness, if we continually ignore our conscience when we feel guilty, we will eventually become deaf to the Holy Spirit and will not repent of our sins. A good illustration of this is the callous. A callous forms because are receiving repeated minor injury to the same spot on our skin. Over time, as the skin keeps healing, it naturally builds up a callous which protects us from suffering the pain from that minor injury. Think of the Holy Spirit’s promptings as the discomfort caused by those minor injuries. If we keep ignoring the uncomfortable feeling when we sin, we will eventually become calloused and not feel bad about it, then we will not feel the need to repent or ask forgiveness.

I think it is no coincidence that this topic immediately follows the incident where the scribes and Pharisees were claiming that Jesus was possessed by the Devil and using his power to cast out demons. I believe that Jesus was implying was that by continually attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan and refusing to believe what they were hearing and seeing, they were on the path to committing the unpardonable sin.

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<sup>449</sup> Strong. p99. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/98/mode/2up>

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What do you believe?

- How would you distinguish blasphemy against Jesus vs. the Holy Spirit since they are both God?
- Why do you think Jesus made it so clear that even sins committed against Him could be forgiven?
- Why do you think Matthew made a point of saying sin against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven in this age or the age to come?

## We will be judged by the words we speak

[Matthew 12:34-37](#), [Luke 6:45](#)<sup>450</sup>

[Matthew 12:34](#) "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

<sup>36</sup> "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

<sup>38</sup> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

[Matthew 12:34-38 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:45](#) ... For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.—<sup>45</sup> "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. ... [Luke 6:45 NKJV](#)

A society that promotes freedom of speech, would for the most part not make laws regarding what people can and can't say. Although, even in such a society, there are ways for a vocal minority to persecute others for what they say. Having said that, laws generally prohibit actions, with one major exception being perjury in a court of law. That one came straight from the ninth commandment in the Law of God which states:

[Exodus 20:16](#) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. [Exodus 20:16 NKJV](#)

In this statement, I don't think Jesus is taking the commandment prohibiting perjury deeper, as He did for murder and adultery in the [Sermon on the Mount](#). But I think He's making a similar point, which is that we will be judged by what is in our heart or mind, and that what we say is a reflection of what is in there.

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What do you believe?

- Considering the fact that some people talk a lot and some very little, is it fair for God to judge us by our words?
- What do you think Jesus means when He mentions good and evil treasure?
- How would you define a careless word from [verse 36](#)?

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<sup>450</sup> Strong. p100. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/100/mode/2up>

## The scribes and Pharisees ask for a sign

[Matthew 12:38-42](#), [Luke 11:16](#), [29-32](#)<sup>451</sup>

[Matthew 12:38](#) Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." <sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> "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 12:38-42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:16](#) Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.—[Luke 11:29](#) And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. <sup>30</sup> "For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.—

<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.—<sup>31</sup> "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. [Luke 11:16](#), [29-32 NKJV](#)

Why does Jesus say that a wicked and adulterous generation craves a sign? Gideon asked God for three signs and they were all given to him [[Judges 6:17-23](#), [Judges 6:36-38](#), [Judges 6:39-40](#)], and yet he was listed in Hebrews as a man of faith [[Hebrews 11:32](#)]. King Hezekiah asked for a sign and received one [[2 Kings 20:8-11](#)]. On the other hand, Jesus' response to one of Satan's temptations was 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.' [[Matthew 4:7](#), [Luke 4:12](#), [Deuteronomy 6:16](#), [Exodus 17:1-7](#)]. This statement was from the time of the Exodus from Egypt, when God had performed many miracles on their behalf, but when confronted with the need for water, the Israelites complained to Moses and said, "is the LORD among us or not?" The Israelites had possibly more evidence of the existence of God than at any time in history other than when Jesus was on earth. I feel like they were giving God an ultimatum, give us water or else.

So, can we determine from these stories when it is ok to ask for a sign and when it is not? I would say that up to that point in Gideon's life, he had not been accustomed to seeing miraculous signs from God. In Hezekiah's case, Israel had been faithful to God and had also been prospering during his reign. Hezekiah had prophets of God at his disposal and had been the recipient and witness to amazing miracles when the kingdom of Judah was saved from Assyria [[2 Kings 19:35](#), [2 Chronicles 32:20-21](#), [Isaiah 37:36](#)]. I believe he should not have been asking for a sign. I think it goes back to a way of thinking that if they were faithful to God, bad things should not happen to them. In this particular case, he may have thought he should not be dying from some terminal sickness?

I believe these scribes and Pharisees had been witness to many miracles and may even have witnessed Jesus giving life to a dead person. I suspect, they were looking for a particular kind of sign, such as a move toward taking the throne of Israel or rising up against the Romans. That is after all what they were expecting from the Messiah, but certainly not what they were seeing from Jesus.

<sup>451</sup> Strong. p100. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/100/mode/2up>

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe it is ok to ask God for a sign?
- Does asking for a sign show a lack of faith?
- How would you describe it as being wicked and adulterous to ask for a sign from God?

## Evil must be replaced by good

[Matthew 12:43-45](#), [Luke 11:24-26](#)<sup>452</sup>

[Matthew 12:43](#) "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. <sup>44</sup> "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds [it] empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup> "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last [state] of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation." [Matthew 12:43-45 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.' <sup>25</sup> "And when he comes, he finds [it] swept and put in order. <sup>26</sup> "Then he goes and takes with [him] seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last [state] of that man is worse than the first." [Luke 11:24-26 NKJV](#)

I don't know if this is a parable or an actual occurrence that Jesus knew of, but I believe this is a principle to live by. Stated another way, if there is some harmful behavior that you are trying to get rid of in your life, stopping doing it and then sitting around with nothing to replace it is not a good idea. You will most likely be thinking only of what you are not doing, longing to do it, and will probably eventually give in to the temptation to do it.

Then I believe Jesus applies this principle to the evil that was temporarily pushed back by Him and John the Baptist. Many people were excited and followed, but if they didn't make a full commitment and change their lives, when Jesus was gone, they would be worse off than before.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus said the vacated space of one evil would be replaced by more?
- Have you ever observed this principle at work in your life or the life of someone you know?
- Do you think the Jews were worse off after Jesus was gone than they were before?

## Jesus disowns His family?

[Luke 11:27-28](#), [Matthew 12:46-50](#), [Mark 3:31-35](#), [Luke 8:19-21](#)<sup>453</sup>

[Luke 11:27](#) And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed [is] the womb that bore You, and [the] breasts which nursed You!" <sup>28</sup> But He said, "More than that, blessed [are] those who hear the word of God and keep it!" [Luke 11:27-28 NKJV](#)

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<sup>452</sup> Strong. p101. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/100/mode/2up>

<sup>453</sup> Strong. p102. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/102/mode/2up>

[Matthew 12:46](#) While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

<sup>47</sup> Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

<sup>48</sup> But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" <sup>49</sup> And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>50</sup> "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." [Matthew 12:46-50 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:31](#) Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. <sup>32</sup> And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You."

<sup>33</sup> But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>35</sup> "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother." [Mark 3:31-35 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:19](#) Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. <sup>20</sup> And it was told Him [by some], who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."

<sup>21</sup> But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." [Luke 8:19-21 NKJV](#)

Putting yourself in the shoes of Jesus' family, it would seem hard not to be offended at His comments. But let's look beyond these words to the broader context. His family were known to try to influence His behavior based on what they thought was best. At the time, I don't think His brothers believed He was the Messiah. For all we know, they may have been coming to Him at this time to have an intervention, to try to get Him not to be so antagonistic towards the religious leaders, or to not spend so much time with prostitutes and tax collectors and fishermen. Let's look at some of the verses that we infer this context from.

[Mark 3:20](#) Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." [Mark 3:20-21 NKJV](#)

[John 7:3](#) His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. <sup>4</sup> "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [John 7:3-5 NKJV](#)

In chapter 33 of the book *Desire of Ages*, White paints a word picture for us of how the family relationship may have been.

The sons of Joseph were far from being in sympathy with Jesus in His work. The reports that reached them in regard to His life and labors filled them with astonishment and dismay. They heard that He devoted entire nights to prayer, that through the day He was thronged by great companies of people, and did not give Himself time so much as to eat. His friends felt that He was wearing Himself out by His incessant labor; they were unable to account for His attitude toward the Pharisees, and there were some who feared that His reason was becoming unsettled.

His brothers heard of this, and also of the charge brought by the Pharisees that He cast out devils through the power of Satan. They felt keenly the reproach that came upon them through their relation to Jesus. They knew what a tumult His words and works created, and were not only alarmed at His bold statements, but indignant at His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. They decided that He must be persuaded or constrained to cease this manner of labor, and they induced Mary to unite with them, thinking that through His love for her they might prevail upon Him to be more prudent.<sup>454</sup>

Jesus' miraculous power was undeniable, and I think Jesus' brothers were impressed by that, but they had other ideas of what should be done with that kind of power. In fact, one has to wonder how much His own mother, Mary, was involved in trying to influence His actions according to her own ideas of what the Messiah should be or do.

I think Jesus' main point is that those who choose can be closer to God than family members are to each other. Additionally, He may have been making a point that one must make a choice to follow God, but family relationships which are not chosen, cannot give someone an automatic pass into heaven. Because of who He was and is, Jesus already loved His family more than they could possibly love each other. But in order to benefit from His love, they needed to make a choice, and family ties would not give them any advantage.

What do you believe?

- Do you think "His own people" in [Mark 3:21](#) refers to Jesus' family?
- Do you think Jesus' brothers, whether older or younger, may have sided with the scribes and Pharisees in their opposition to His behavior?
- Do you think Mary ever tried to influence the behavior of Jesus? Do you think it ever did any good to try?

## Woes on the scribes and Pharisees

[Luke 11:37-42](#), [44,45](#), [52-54](#), [Matthew 23:13](#), [23-28](#)<sup>455</sup>

[Luke 11:37](#) And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat.

<sup>38</sup> When the Pharisee saw [it], he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. <sup>39</sup> Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.

<sup>40</sup> "Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup> "But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

[Matthew 23:25](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside

they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> "Blind

Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. [Matthew 23:25-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>454</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p321.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=321>

<sup>455</sup> Strong. p103. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/102/mode/2up>



<sup>42</sup> "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. —

<sup>44</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over [them] are not aware [of them]."

<sup>45</sup> Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

<sup>46</sup> And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. —

<sup>52</sup> "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."

<sup>53</sup> And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail [Him] vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, <sup>54</sup> lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him. [Luke 11:37-42, 44, 45, 52-54 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:23](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. <sup>24</sup> "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! —

<sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead [men's] bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. [Matthew 23:23-24, 27-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:13](#) "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in [yourselves], nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [Matthew 23:13 NKJV](#)

As can be seen, there were verses left out on both sides from these woes on the Pharisees. Luke places these woes in a Pharisees house. Matthew has his woes being spoken in front of a group of people later on in Jesus' ministry. As I have mentioned before, Jesus must have repeated Himself when speaking in front of different audiences. This was most likely the case here, so Strong split the content into two different occasions. He could just as easily have duplicated it all in both places, but I believe it was his goal to use every word of the Gospels once, arranged in a chronological harmony, besides where would you stop with the duplication.

This is not the first instance of Jesus being invited to the house of a Pharisee. He was invited to the house of Simon, a Pharisee, when He was anointed by a woman with a costly vial of perfume. In that case, Jesus also read the Pharisee's mind and addressed his thoughts, but He did so in a story without attacking His host. In this case, Jesus knew what His host was thinking also, but His response was to openly rebuke His host and all Pharisees with their hypocrisy.

I believe it is possible that when Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to his house, he was genuinely contemplating whether Jesus could be the Messiah. Whereas in this case, this could have been a more hostile environment. This may have been a setup from the start, to try to find fault with Jesus. Maybe in this case, Jesus knew there was no attendee on the fence, who would be offended and reject Him as a result of a more direct confrontation. From the lawyer's comment, they thought Jesus was just insulting them, but perhaps later on when some of them thought back to what Jesus had said, they would see the truth in it.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus purposely didn't wash ceremonially, so He would have an opportunity to address the hypocrisy?
- Does it seem "un-Christ-like" to verbally attack the Pharisees and Lawyers as Jesus did?
- How do you think the Lawyers shut off the key of knowledge to entering the kingdom of heaven?

## Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also

[Luke 12:1](#), [13-34](#), [Mathew 6:19-34 \(except 22-24\)](#), [Matthew 10:29-31](#), [Luke 21:18](#)<sup>456</sup>

[Luke 12:1](#) In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first [of all], "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.—

<sup>13</sup> Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

<sup>14</sup> But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

<sup>16</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. <sup>17</sup> "And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' <sup>18</sup> "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup> 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, [and] be merry." <sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' <sup>21</sup> "So [is] he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

<sup>22</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. <sup>23</sup> "Life is more than food, and the body [is more] than clothing. <sup>24</sup> "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?—

[Matthew 6:25](#) For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

<sup>6</sup> "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God.

[Matthew 10:29](#) "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.—<sup>31</sup> "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>7</sup> ... Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>7</sup> "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.—

[Matthew 10:30](#) "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [Matthew 10:30 NKJV](#) [Luke 21:18](#) "But not a hair of your head shall be lost. [Luke 21:18 NKJV](#)

<sup>25</sup> "And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>26</sup> "If you then are not able to do [the] least, why are you anxious for the rest? <sup>27</sup> "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> "If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more [will He clothe] you, O [you] of little faith?

<sup>29</sup> "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. <sup>30</sup> "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. <sup>31</sup> "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>32</sup> "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

<sup>34</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [Luke 12:1, 13-34 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:27](#) "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>28</sup> "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith?

<sup>31</sup> "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

<sup>34</sup> "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble.—

<sup>19</sup> "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.

<sup>21</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [Matthew 6:27-34, 19-21 NKJV](#)

This section is mostly about understanding how much God loves and cares for us, and also prioritizing heavenly treasure over earthly wealth. The things of this world can be lost, stolen or destroyed, but it is not so with heavenly treasure.

Regarding the first point, it is pretty hard sometimes in this sinful world to see God's love and care when so many people are hurting and suffering. How do we understand the verse in [Luke 12:24](#) when so many people go hungry every day?

[Luke 12:24](#) "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? [Luke 12:24 NKJV](#)

First, I would like to say there is no completely satisfactory answer to this question, which has been around as long as this Bible verse. It is echoed in the common question we have all heard, "if God is good and loving, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?" The most satisfactory answer to me is that we have all been given freedom of choice and if God were constantly imposing His will on earth, it would be violating our free will. But He does have a loophole and it has to do with the second half of this section which is to lay up treasure in heaven. God may have chosen to not exert His will any and everywhere, but those who choose to obey and follow Him can exercise their freedom of choice to be God's hands and feet and heart here on earth. I wrote a whole chapter on this topic in the appendix titled, [Hands feet, eyes and ears of God](#). I believe the act of giving of one's time and resources to do God's will is putting treasure in heaven.

So, to directly address verse 24, God through the balance of nature has provided food for the birds, and instinct to know how to survive, but it's not always easy. But because of sin, sometimes the birds fall prey to other animals, or people, or starve if their natural food supply is wiped out. I also believe that God created this earth with the ability

to feed us, but just as the birds have to spend their entire day in search of food, I do not believe God intends for food to be dropped in our laps. We may need to hunt, forage, or cultivate in order to obtain food, but with the intelligence and abilities God has given each of us, there are many ways we can work to obtain our food. Yes, I agree that sometimes greedy and evil people can make it more difficult for people under their power to obtain food, but that is one of the effects of sin. Others who choose to do God's will can work toward defeating the plans of evil and oppressive people.

What do you believe?

- Do you have a different answer for the question, "if God is good and loving, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?"
- If God is letting human free will and sin to reign on earth, how long does He have to let it continue?
- What are some other forms of suffering besides hunger that you can work to alleviate and while doing so, put treasure in heaven?

## The parable of the fig tree

[Luke 13:1-9](#)<sup>457</sup>

[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](#)

It seems very clear the Jesus wanted to clear up to misconception of the day that just because one suffers some calamity, doesn't mean they are being punished by God for sin. Then He threw in the warning for them, that unless they repented, they would suffer massive calamity, because He knew where their current course of action with the Romans was taking them.

I find it interesting that in the parable, the tree was given four years. In prophetic time a day represents a year, so 4 x 360 = 1440 symbolic days or literal years [see [Appendix B – Prophetic time](#)]. This just happened to be close to the age of the Israelite nation when Jesus spoke this parable. If this were really His intent, one could possibly come up with a period of time that could be added, before a newly planted tree was expected to bear fruit, which could then have made the four years span the period from Exodus to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D..

<sup>457</sup> Strong. p109. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/108/mode/2up>

God the Father is the owner of the vineyard and has determined that Israel is not going to yield the fruit for which it was planted. Jesus says, let Me go down there and work with them Myself and see if I can get them to bear fruit. If they do not change and bear fruit, their current course of action will lead to their destruction anyway.

Ellen White in her book, *To Be Like Jesus*, applies this parable to God's current chosen, then I believe even takes it a step further and applies it individually to people who are supposed to be His representative on earth. When these people mistreat their brothers and sisters, and take advantage of the necessities of others, they are not bearing the fruit God desires, and are showing that they are not governed by the principles of the Gospel.<sup>458</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Do you think God disciplines people for their own benefit as parents might their own children?
- Would God the Father give up on someone before Jesus?
- What do you think the extra time in the parable means?

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<sup>458</sup> White, Ellen G. *To Be Like Jesus*.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=BLJ&lang=en&collection=2&pagenumber=173>

## The parable of the sower and the seed

[Matthew 13:1-23](#), [Mark 4:1-20](#), [Luke 8:4-15](#), [Mark 4:26-29](#)<sup>459</sup>

[Matthew 13:1](#) On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. <sup>2</sup> And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

<sup>3</sup> Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying:

"Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> "And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

<sup>6</sup> "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. <sup>7</sup> "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

<sup>8</sup> "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

<sup>9</sup> "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

<sup>10</sup> And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

<sup>12</sup> "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> "Therefore I speak to them in parables,

[Mark 4:1](#) And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat [in it] on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

<sup>2</sup> Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: <sup>3</sup> "Listen!

Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> "And it happened, as he sowed, [that] some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup> "Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. <sup>6</sup> "But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. <sup>7</sup> "And some [seed] fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

<sup>8</sup> "But other [seed] fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." <sup>9</sup> And He said to them,

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

<sup>10</sup> But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. <sup>11</sup> 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 4:1-11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:4](#) And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city,

He spoke by a parable:

<sup>5</sup> "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. <sup>6</sup> "Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.

<sup>7</sup> "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

<sup>8</sup> "But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold."

When He had said these things He cried,

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

<sup>9</sup> Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" <sup>10</sup> And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest [it is given] in parables, ... [Luke 8:4-10 NKJV](#)

<sup>459</sup> Strong. p110. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/110/mode/2up>

because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;  
<sup>15</sup> FOR THE HEARTS OF THIS PEOPLE HAVE GROWN DULL.  
 [THEIR] EARS ARE HARD OF HEARING,  
 AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED,  
 LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH [THEIR] EYES AND HEAR WITH [THEIR] EARS,  
 LEST THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH [THEIR] HEARTS AND TURN,  
 SO THAT I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'

<sup>16</sup> "But blessed [are] your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; <sup>17</sup> "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous [men] desired to see what you see, and did not see [it], and to hear what you hear, and did not hear [it].

<sup>18</sup> "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:  
<sup>19</sup> "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand [it], then the wicked [one] comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

<sup>20</sup> "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

<sup>22</sup> "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

<sup>23</sup> "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands [it], who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." [Matthew 13:1-23 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:12](#) "so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And [their] sins be forgiven them.' " [Mark 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:10](#) ... that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'  
[Luke 8:10 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 6:9](#) ... 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'  
<sup>10</sup> "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." [Isaiah 6:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:13](#) And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [Mark 4:13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:14](#) "The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup> "And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

<sup>16</sup> "These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>17</sup> "and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

<sup>18</sup> "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; [they are] the ones who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> "and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

<sup>20</sup> "But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept [it], and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." [Mark 4:14-20 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:11](#) "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup> "Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

<sup>13</sup> "But the ones on the rock [are those] who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

<sup>14</sup> "Now the ones [that] fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

<sup>15</sup> "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 8:11-15 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

In his harmony, Strong has Jesus telling a number of parables to the people at one occasion, and then when He is alone with His disciples, he explains some of them. In order to break this up into smaller sections, I have chosen to split it up by parable, so the explanation if any will follow. Strong places this teaching around the month of October, a little over two years into Jesus' public ministry.<sup>460</sup>

There is not much to add to Jesus' explanation of His parable. In many ways this parable is describing building a multilevel marketing business, where they teach you it is about the numbers. If you talk to enough people, you will find those who are truly interested. Some will not be interested at all, others will seem interested initially, but they will fall out when the going gets tough. But if you keep sharing, you will eventually find those who will wholeheartedly embrace your vision and will go out and build their own network.

I think sharing the good news of salvation should be like a person who is out shopping and finds a great deal on something. Out of their great joy over the good deal they found, they will naturally share it with their friends and family. Some may not be interested in that particular deal, but those who are will go buy it for themselves and will begin spreading the good news as well.

I tacked on the short parable from the same chapter of Mark verses [26-29](#), because it emphasizes one of the main points. Man plants the seed, but doesn't make it grow or produce a harvest, in fact he doesn't even know how it happens.

What do you believe?

- It is difficult to build a successful multilevel marketing business if you don't truly believe in the product, so does that mean if we have a hard time witnessing, we don't truly believe in the good news of salvation?
- Do you believe it is not your job to convince someone to accept the good news of salvation?
- Do you believe that it is only through Jesus, His sacrifice, and free offer of salvation anyone can be saved?

## The parable of the wheat and the tares

[Matthew 13:24-30](#), [Matthew 13:36-40](#)<sup>461</sup>

[Matthew 13:24](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup> "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. <sup>26</sup> "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup> "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' <sup>28</sup> "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together

<sup>460</sup> Strong. p114. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/114/mode/2up>

<sup>461</sup> Strong. p112. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/112/mode/2up>



the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' " [Matthew 13:24-30](#)  
[NKJV](#)

This is an interesting parable with a very clear message. If we take this very literally, it was not about the slaves' ability to distinguish the wheat from the tares. The problem I think was that by marching through the field, and uprooting the tares, the roots of the wheat would be disturbed and some would even be lost as they were inadvertently pulled up with the tares. For example, what if someone in a church has friends or family with whom they have roots, and the leadership of the church judges and kicks out that friend or family member, how do you think the one left behind may feel about that church? But is it really that black and white? Does the Bible also talk about keeping the church pure? Here is something Jesus said that may be partly related.

[Matthew 18:15](#) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' <sup>17</sup> "And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.  
[Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV](#)

Here is a statement by Paul that seems to be on the topic.

[1 Corinthians 5:1](#) It is actually reported [that there is] sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! <sup>2</sup> And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. <sup>3</sup> For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. <sup>4</sup> In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>5</sup> deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> Your glorying [is] not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. <sup>10</sup> Yet [I] certainly [did] not [mean] with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.

<sup>12</sup> For what [have] I [to do] with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

<sup>13</sup> But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." [1 Corinthians 5:1-13 NKJV](#)

So, does this contradict what Jesus taught? In [verses 6-7](#), Paul explains why one should be removed from the church. Essentially, he says by analogy, that if this type of behavior is accepted, then others may feel it is ok and follow. But in [verse 5](#) Paul also says that hopefully the person will repent so they can be saved. Paul also clarifies in [verses 9-13](#), that

he is not saying not to associate with sinners at all. After all that was one of the biggest complaints the Pharisees had with Jesus. So, is Paul contradicting Jesus? I think the answer lies in Jesus own explanation of the parable.

[Matthew 13:36](#) Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." <sup>37</sup> He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked [one]. <sup>39</sup> "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup> "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. [Matthew 13:36-40 NKJV](#)

He had one more parable that described the good and the bad being sorted at the end of the world.

[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 the first parable, Jesus identifies the field as the world. And both describe the judgment and the separation of the good from the evil by God at the end of the age or world.

In summary, I think what Paul teaches is that if we accept and embrace people in the church who are openly, blatantly and unrepentantly sinning, we are condoning their behavior and risk that behavior spreading. We also risk outsiders looking in and thinking, if those people are Christians, I want nothing to do with them. So, while all of us are sinners, people in the church should be forsaking their sin, not embracing it.

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What do you believe?

- Islamic terrorists may be justified in identifying some people as infidels, but when they kill people, is this what Jesus is talking about?
- Is there a distinction between removing someone from church membership and not allowing them to enter the building?
- How could the act of removing someone from church membership [[1 Corinthians 5:2](#)] help to save their soul in the end [[1 Corinthians 5:5](#)]?

## The parables of the mustard seed, and the leaven

[Matthew 13:31-35](#), [Mark 4:30-34](#), [Luke 13:18-21](#)<sup>462</sup>

[Matthew 13:31](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, <sup>32</sup> "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

<sup>33</sup> Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

<sup>34</sup> All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, <sup>35</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." [Matthew 13:31-35 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:30](#) Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? <sup>31</sup> "[It is] like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup> "but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [Mark 4:30-](#)

[32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:20](#) And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup> "It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." [Luke 13:18-20 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:33](#) And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear [it]. <sup>34</sup> But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples. [Mark 4:33-34 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 78:2](#) I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, [Psalm 78:2 NKJV](#)

These two parables are similar, in that they are both about something starting small and growing and spreading in size and influence. There was probably a mustard tree present when Jesus spoke the first parable, maybe He was even sitting under it. I believe this is the way Jesus taught, He spoke in terms of things people could relate to and would remember. They may not have understood the meaning at the time, but later on as they thought back on the teachings of Jesus, they would see the truth in His words. In the book *Christ Object Lessons*, White comments on this parable saying,

Not only is the growth of Christ's kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated. For His church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work. The truth that is hid from the worldly wise and prudent is revealed to the child-like and humble. It calls for self-sacrifice. It has battles to fight and victories to win. At the outset its advocates are few. By the great men of the world and by a world-conforming church, they are opposed and despised. See John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, standing alone to rebuke the pride and formalism of the Jewish nation. See the first bearers of the gospel into Europe. How obscure, how hopeless, seemed the mission of Paul and Silas, the two tentmakers, as they with their companions took ship at Troas for Philippi. See "Paul the aged," in chains, preaching Christ in the stronghold of the Caesars. See the little communities of slaves and peasants in conflict with the heathenism of imperial Rome. See Martin Luther withstanding that mighty church which is the masterpiece of the world's wisdom. See him holding fast God's word against emperor and pope, declaring, "Here I take my stand; I can not do otherwise. God be my help." See John Wesley preaching Christ and His righteousness in the midst of formalism, sensualism, and infidelity. See one burdened with the woes of the

<sup>462</sup> Strong. p113. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/112/mode/2up>

heathen world, pleading for the privilege of carrying to them Christ's message of love. Hear the response of ecclesiasticism: "Sit down, young man. When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine."<sup>463</sup>

I find it interesting that in many other cases, Jesus used leaven as a symbol for sin or false teachings, but in this case He used it as a symbol for the growth of the kingdom of God on earth. I guess the principles of the kingdom of heaven have the ability to spread throughout and change a person's life from the inside out, similar to the way sin can. This has been seen over and over in the lives of people whose entire lives have been changed for the better when they committed themselves to Christ.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of something you would like to do to spread the Gospel that might be looked down on as small and insignificant by the Church?
- Do you think God needs us to help reach the heathen with the good news of salvation?
- Do you know someone whose life has been completely changed for the better after they committed their life to Christ?

## Let your light shine so that people will glorify your Father in heaven

[Matthew 5:14-16](#), [6:22-23](#), [10:26-27](#), [Mark 4:21-22](#), [Luke 8:16-17](#), [Luke 11:33](#), [12:2-3](#)<sup>464</sup>

[Matthew 5:14](#) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all [who are] in the house. <sup>16</sup> "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:21](#) Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [Mark 4:21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:16](#) "No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts [it] under a bed, but sets [it] on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. [Luke 8:16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:33](#) "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts [it] in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. [Luke 11:33 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:34](#) "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when [your eye] is bad, your body also [is] full of darkness.

<sup>35</sup> "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. <sup>36</sup> "If then your whole body [is] full of light, having no part dark, [the] whole [body] will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." [Luke 11:34-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:22](#) "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

[Matthew 6:22-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>463</sup> White, Ellen G. *Christ Object Lessons*. Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1900, p78-79.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=COL&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=78>

<sup>464</sup> Strong. p117. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/116/mode/2up>

<p><a href="#">Matthew 10:26</a> "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.<sup>27</sup> "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. <a href="#">Matthew 10:26-27 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 4:22</a> "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. <a href="#">Mark 4:22 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 8:17</a> "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor [anything] hidden that will not be known and come to light. <a href="#">Luke 8:17 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 12:2</a> "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.<sup>3</sup> "Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. <a href="#">Luke 12:2-3 NKJV</a></p>
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Strong probably strung these teachings together because of the common element of light, and the sequences in Luke. The first is pretty straight forward. We are to let our light shine by doing good works, not for the purpose of receiving compliments, or earning our way to heaven, but that those who see them will think well of God. If we live the way God wants, our lives should naturally shine as a light, unless we try to hide or cover it up.

One possible application of the second teaching could be that what we watch or look at will influence our lives. Today there is so much visual content in the form of movies, videos, TV, computer games and websites which are largely consumed through the eye. Are there things that you watch or look at that you would be embarrassed for your spouse or children or parents to know you were watching? Are there things you watch that you would be uncomfortable watching with Jesus? On the other hand, if you focus our sight on uplifting things, read good content, especially the Bible, it will naturally have a positive influence on your life.

In the context of what Jesus is saying, I think the third statement has to do with teaching, knowledge and information. There are things that can be hard to understand. Even some of Jesus' parables had meaning that was not immediately understood. There are many things written in the Bible that are hard to understand. I believe this is a promise from Jesus that teachings and information about God and the gift of salvation will be understood. In fact, He instructs us to preach and teach it.

What do you believe?

- How can you let your light shine for God's glory?
- Can you think of another explanation for a bad eye leading to shining dark light?
- In the last statement, do you think Jesus could have been referring to the saying, "be sure your sin will find you out?" Can you find the origin of that saying in the Bible?

## Parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price

[Matthew 13:44-46](#)<sup>465</sup>

[Matthew 13:44](#) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, <sup>46</sup> "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. [Matthew 13:44-46 NKJV](#)

<sup>465</sup> Strong. p120. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/120/mode/2up>

Strong places these two short parables at the end of the teaching time Jesus had with His disciples and not having them taught directly to the general public. The reason is because it follows the explanation of the wheat and the tares to the disciples. That is not to say that Jesus never repeated these parables to the public.

On the surface these two parables seem to be teaching the same thing, but the first parts are very different. In the first case a man is just going about his business, not looking at all, but in the second he is seeking. The response to the find is the same in both cases, which means they both recognized the value of what they had found. So, what are these parables teaching? Is the gift of salvation free or not? Do we have to buy it with everything we own?

It is my belief that salvation is a free gift, but I think that truly accepting it requires 100% commitment. I believe that if we are not willing to sell everything we have in exchange for it, then we are not recognizing its true value. If this is true, then those with great wealth and possessions, will have to be willing to give up more. So then, if salvation is the ultimate goal and outweighs everything in this life, are great wealth and possessions a blessing or a curse? Is this what Jesus is talking about in the following exchange with this rich man and His following conversation with the disciples?

[Matthew 19:21](#) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

<sup>25</sup> When His disciples heard [it], they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

<sup>26</sup> But Jesus looked at [them] and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." [Matthew 19:21-26 NKJV](#)

Looking at this on a large scale, does it seem that people in third world countries are more willing to accept the gift of salvation than those in more developed nations? If you answered yes, is this because people with more wealth are comfortable and feel need of nothing? Is it easier to feel a need for something better if all you own is a one room shack, a sleeping mat and a few dishes and pots and pans? Is this part of what's wrong with the Church of Laodicea, mentioned in the book of Revelation?

[Revelation 3:15](#) "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. [Revelation 3:15-18 NKJV](#)

Many questions were asked throughout this chapter, and some of them will be listed here at the end to give more time to contemplate them.

What do you believe?

- Is the gift of salvation free or not?
- Do we have to buy it with everything we own?
- When it comes to salvation, are great wealth and possessions a blessing or a curse?
- Does God bless some people with wealth, or do they earn it in spite of their best interests?
- What do you think the gold tried in the fire represents in [Revelation 3:18](#)?

## “No one, after having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God”

[Matthew 8:18-22](#), [Luke 9:57-62](#)<sup>466</sup>

[Matthew 8:18](#) And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.

<sup>19</sup> Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

[Luke 9:57](#) As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."

<sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air [have] nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay [His] head."

<sup>58</sup> And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

<sup>21</sup> Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

<sup>59</sup> And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

<sup>22</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead." [Matthew 8:18-22 NKJV](#)

<sup>60</sup> But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; ...

[Luke 9:60](#) ... Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

<sup>61</sup> And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go [and] bid them farewell who are at my house." <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." [Luke 9:57-62 NKJV](#)

Strong has these encounters happening just before Jesus and the disciples cross the lake, where they meet up with the demoniacs. Jesus seems kind of harsh here and even sounds like He is trying to discourage some people from following Him. What's going on here? In [verse 20](#), Jesus is clearly wanting to communicate to this scribe that life as a disciple, at least at that time was not an easy life. Jesus was essentially homeless, traveling from place to place, depending on friends and strangers for hospitality, and often sleeping out under the stars. This is a far cry from the mega church leaders today who live in multi-million-dollar mansions and fly around in private jets. Even many committed followers of Christ in developed nations today are far from living the type of life Jesus lived.

In the next two encounters Jesus sounds even more harsh. The next candidate said, let me go bury my father first, and Jesus responded, let the dead bury their own dead. Another said, let me go say goodbye to my family at home first, and Jesus said, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Did Jesus really

<sup>466</sup> Strong. p121. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n185/mode/2up>

intend this should be the response in all similar circumstances? Or were these answers by Jesus specifically tailored to these individuals because He knew exactly what they were thinking?

Matthew Henry offers some enlightening commentary on these encounters. He suggests that perhaps the man's father was not dead yet, and hence he was procrastinating. Christ wishes us to be kind and respectful to all including our parents. But this must not be used as an excuse for not doing our true duty for God.

In the next instance, one says he wants to follow Jesus but wants to go home first and say good-bye to his family. So, what do we make of Jesus' response to this man? First, consider the example of ploughing a field that Jesus gave. If a person ploughing a field is not keeping his focus straight ahead, the rows will not be straight, and will not be fit for planting. But on the other hand, Henry points out through the example of Elisha that it is acceptable to go home and kiss his father and mother before following as a disciple.

[1 Kings 19:20](#) And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and [then] I will follow you." ... [1 Kings 19:20 NKJV](#)

So why did Jesus respond this way? Henry recalls Lot's wife who showed where her heart truly was by looking back to Sodom as it was being destroyed [[Genesis 7:23-26](#)].<sup>467</sup> I think perhaps Jesus, knowing this man's heart, knew this was procrastination on his part.

White in the book *Gospel Workers* suggests that we have a responsibility to spouse and family, but our relationship and duty to God must be the first priority in our life.<sup>468</sup>

What do you believe?

- I don't think God calls everyone to full time ministry, but how can we make Him first priority in our life when we have a job and family?
- Do you see yourself procrastinating or putting off what you feel God is calling you to do?
- What do you think God would want you to do in your current place in life?

<sup>467</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk\\_009.cfm?a=982062](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk_009.cfm?a=982062)

<sup>468</sup> White, Ellen G. *Gospel Workers*. p248.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GW92&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=248>



## Jesus calms the storm

[Matthew 8:23-27](#), [Mark 4:35:41](#), [Luke 8:22-25](#)<sup>469</sup>

[Mark 4:35](#) On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."<sup>36</sup> Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.<sup>38</sup> But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

<sup>39</sup> Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

<sup>40</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How [is it] that you have no faith?"

<sup>41</sup> And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" [Mark 4:35-41 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:22](#) it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.<sup>23</sup> ... And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling [with water], and were in jeopardy.<sup>23</sup> But as they sailed He fell asleep.<sup>24</sup> And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

<sup>25</sup> But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" [Luke 8:22-25 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:23](#) Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.

<sup>24</sup> And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.<sup>25</sup> Then His disciples came to [Him] and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"—

<sup>26</sup> ... Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.—

<sup>26</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" ...<sup>27</sup> So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" [Matthew 8:23-27 NKJV](#)

The disciples must have still been coming to terms with the extent of Jesus' power. They had already seen Him turn water into wine, He had demonstrated His power over sickness, demons, and even death. Now they were amazed that He could even command nature.

A few other observations from the details of this story are:

- Mark says there were other boats that launched and followed Jesus [[Mark 4:36](#)]. That means there were additional witnesses to this miracle.
- Off the top of my head, I cannot think of any other mention in the Gospels of Jesus sleeping. Can you?
- Jesus must have been exhausted to be able to sleep through a storm that the disciples thought would sink their boat. This shows His humanity.

Looking back on this from our perspective, I see some similarity between this miracle and the second and third days of creation.

[Genesis 1:6](#) Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."<sup>7</sup> Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament; and it was so.<sup>8</sup> And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

<sup>469</sup> Strong. p122. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

<sup>9</sup> 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. [Genesis 1:6-9 NKJV](#)

When God created the world in the beginning, He was able to move air, land and water merely by speaking. In fact, this leads me to believe that perhaps there is actual power, or energy in physics terms, in God's voice.

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What do you believe?

- Was it necessary for the disciples to wake Jesus up in order for Him to calm the storm to save them?
- Did Jesus need them to ask before He exerted His power to calm the storm?
- Did Jesus ever perform a miracle without someone asking?
- Do you think the power flowed from Jesus' words or do you think He could have simply thought and performed the miracle?
- Did Jesus ever perform a miracle for His own comfort or benefit?
- Why did Jesus accuse the disciples of having little faith?

## Jesus heals the demoniacs

[Mark 5:1-22](#), [Luke 8:26-39](#), [Matthew 8:28-34](#)<sup>470</sup>

[Mark 5:1](#) Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

[Luke 8:26](#) Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.—<sup>29</sup> ... 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.—

[Matthew 8:28](#) When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed [men], coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.

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<sup>470</sup> Strong. p123. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. <sup>7</sup> 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."

<sup>8</sup> For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup> Then He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name [is] Legion; for we are many."

<sup>10</sup> Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

<sup>11</sup> Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. <sup>12</sup> So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." <sup>13</sup> And at once Jesus gave them permission.

Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

<sup>14</sup> So those who fed the swine fled, and they told [it] in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup> Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one [who had been] demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> And those who saw it told them how it happened to him [who had been] demon-possessed, and about the swine. <sup>17</sup> Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

[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!"

<sup>29</sup> For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. ...

<sup>30</sup> Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

<sup>32</sup> Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.

<sup>33</sup> Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

[Luke 8:34](#) When those who fed [them] saw what had happened, they fled and told [it] in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup> Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> They also who had seen [it] told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. <sup>37</sup> Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. ...

[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?"

<sup>30</sup> Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding.

<sup>31</sup> So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." <sup>32</sup> And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

<sup>33</sup> Then those who kept [them] fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what [had happened] to the demon-possessed [men].

<sup>34</sup> And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged [Him] to depart from their region. [Matthew 8:28-34 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. <sup>19</sup> However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." <sup>20</sup> And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

<sup>21</sup> Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [Mark 5:1-21 NKJV](#)

Luke 8:37 ... And He got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup> Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. [Luke 8:26-39 NKJV](#)

I think when reading these accounts in parallel, the first question that might come to mind is: are there one or two demon possessed men? This has been a question that has been discussed as long as the gospels have been compiled in this format. Many have used this discrepancy to argue against the inspiration of the Bible. My first response would be that if you are looking for a reason not to believe in the inspiration of the Bible by God, you can find many. But if you are one who finds the Bible and the good news of salvation inspirational and life changing, there are satisfactory answers to this discrepancy.

First, I would like to point out that of the three writers, it is virtually certain that Luke and Mark were not eyewitnesses to the event. Whether Matthew was or not is debatable, depending on the timeline of his call to discipleship. Have you ever played the game "telephone," or maybe you know it by a different name? The game where a word or phrase is whispered from one person to the next, and in the end, it is usually hilariously different. Is it possible that this effect would have an impact on the accuracy of the details? The next observation I would make is this. If there were two men, saying there was a man would not be a false statement. Thirdly, digging a little into the original language from which the English was translated from gives us some additional insight. In Mark "a man"<sup>471</sup> is translated from the Greek word, [ἄνθρωπος, anthrōpos](#)<sup>472</sup>, which can have the following meanings:

1. A human being
2. Indefinitely, someone, a man, one
3. In the plural, people

Luke however is a little more definite by using the words, [τις, tis](#)<sup>473</sup> [ἄνθρω, anēr](#)<sup>474</sup>, which were translated to "by a man."<sup>475</sup> The meaning of those words would generally be "a certain male person," although [τις](#) can refer to multiple people, and [ἄνθρω](#) can refer to a group of people.

I choose to side with the possible eyewitness when I believe there were two men. I don't think the number of demoniacs was the point any of the writers was trying to convey in telling this story. I think the main points are:

- The demon possessed man or men were extremely violent and scary
- Jesus cast out enough demons to possess a whole herd of pigs to run off a cliff into the sea and drown themselves
- The people saw the loss of property, and begged Jesus to leave

<sup>471</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/mar/5/2/p0/t\\_conc\\_962002](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/mar/5/2/p0/t_conc_962002)

<sup>472</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g444/nkjv/tr/>

<sup>473</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5100/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>474</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g435/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>475</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/luk/8/41/p0/ss1/t\\_conc\\_981027](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/luk/8/41/p0/ss1/t_conc_981027)

- The now sane man or men wanted to stay with Jesus, but He instead asked them to go home and share what God had done for them
- After having spent only that brief time with Jesus, the man or men became possibly the most successful missionaries during Jesus' ministry
- They did this by simply telling the entire city the great things Jesus had done for them

Luke couldn't wait to tell us how successful they were, because in the very next verse he says:

[Luke 8:40](#) So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. [Luke 8:40 NKJV](#)

The next question that comes to mind for me is where did this occur? Mark and Luke say the country of the Gadarenes, and Matthew's translation says the country of the Gergesenes. Is this a contradiction or do both names refer to the same place? Gordon Franz, on the website, Associates for Biblical Research, in summary said that the words could be two names for the same region depending on the target audience.<sup>476</sup> Strong says they landed near the site of the ancient city of the Gergashites, which was now within the bounds of the town of Gadara.<sup>477</sup> I think most all would agree that the incident occurred on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee, which would most likely make it Gentile territory. Franz, quoted above, believes it happened near the newly discovered harbor of Gadara, now located near Tel Samra, or the campground for Kibbutz Ha'on. Since he didn't give GPS coordinates, I assume this is somewhere near the community of Ha'on that I found on google maps.<sup>478</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Do you think there were one or two men?
- What can you share with people if you feel you don't have an amazing conversion or salvation story?
- With only a brief encounter with Jesus and no prior training on witnessing, how were the men so successful in preparing the city to welcome Jesus the next time He came?

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<sup>476</sup> <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2011/03/07/The-Demoniacs-of-Gadara.aspx>

<sup>477</sup> Strong. p123. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

<sup>478</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/HaOn/@32.7264594,35.6185702,16z>

## Matthew invites his friends to meet Jesus

[Luke 5:29-39](#), [Matthew 9:10-13](#), [Mark 2:15-22](#)<sup>479</sup>

[Luke 5:29](#) Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.

<sup>30</sup> And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

<sup>32</sup> "I have not come to call [the] righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

[Matthew 9:10](#) Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, [that] behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard [that], He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> ... For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."<sup>13</sup> "But go and learn what [this] means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'<sup>14</sup> [Matthew 9:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:15](#) And it happened that He was reclining [at the table] in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many [of them,] and they were following Him. <sup>16</sup> When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>17</sup> And hearing [this,] Jesus said to them, "[It is] not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

[Hosea 6:6](#) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ... [Hosea 6:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>33</sup> Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" <sup>34</sup> And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

<sup>36</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them:

No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was [taken] out of the new does not match the old. <sup>37</sup> "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> "But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. <sup>39</sup> "And no one, having drunk old [wine], immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.' " [Luke](#)

[5:29-39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:18](#) John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" <sup>19</sup> And Jesus said to them, "While the groom is with them, the attendants of the groom cannot fast, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> "But the days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast, on that day.

[Mark 2:21](#) "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results. <sup>22</sup> "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins [as well,] but [one puts] new wine into fresh wineskins." [Mark 2:15-22 NKJV](#)

I found it very interesting that in all three accounts, the call of Matthew to full time discipleship immediately preceded the feast. If this were the case, Matthew would probably not have been an eyewitness to the healing of the demoniacs in Gadara or the Gerasenes. However, Strong has the call of Matthew taking place seven months earlier in April,<sup>480</sup> and this feast in November, a little over two years into the public ministry of Jesus. Whenever it occurred, it would seem

<sup>479</sup> Strong. p127. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/126/mode/2up>

<sup>480</sup> Strong. p65. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n125/mode/2up>

logical that Matthew would have wanted to give his former colleagues an opportunity to meet Jesus up close and personal. It almost sounds like the Pharisees and their scribes were present at the party, and confronted the disciples with their questions, but it might make more sense for this questioning to have taken after the party. The Jewish leaders probably had spies following Jesus around all the time, and if they weren't invited to the feast, they undoubtedly knew who was in attendance. What is interesting this time is that they approached the disciples, rather than Jesus with their question. They were probably tired of getting shut down with Jesus' undebatable and intuitive answers, so they thought they might do better questioning His disciples. However, Jesus overheard and as usual, had another good answer. While it is clear that you cannot reach sinners with the good news of salvation if you never associated with them, is there a right way and a wrong way to hang out with sinners? Is it a good idea to hang out at a bar every night, looking for people to witness to? It may be for the right person but would definitely not be for recovering alcoholics.

The next question was about fasting, which I think for the Pharisees, had lost its true meaning and purpose and had become about putting on a show of religiousness. With the true purpose and benefit for fasting in mind, Jesus answered that there would come a time when the disciples fasted, but this was not it. On a different occasion, this is how Jesus described proper fasting.

[Matthew 6:16](#) "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>17</sup> "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

[Matthew 6:16-18 NKJV](#)

Last was the analogy about not mixing old and new. I don't think this is a teaching by Jesus that old and new should not be mixed. I think it is a statement that as human beings, we resist change, at least big change. White comments that the religion of the Pharisees had become like a rut of ceremonies and traditions. Their hearts could be compared to dried up wine skins. They thought their own righteousness was sufficient, and as such were not willing to accept the teachings of Jesus. He found other vessels in which to pour His new teachings, in uneducated fishermen, despised tax collectors, the Samaritan woman at the well, and the common people who heard Him gladly.<sup>481</sup> Finally, I am not willing to turn Jesus' last statement, that old (fermented) wine is better than new (fresh) grape juice, into a position that drinking alcoholic beverages is good. I think this was probably a thought that was common among the people and would be something they could relate to. This is how the parables of Jesus worked, giving new understanding about God and heaven in terms of everyday things they could relate to.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Matthew threw this party immediately after he was called to follow Jesus, or do you think maybe he did it sometime later?
- What do you think Jesus meant by His teaching about old and new?
- What do you think Jesus meant by His statement, "no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new?"

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<sup>481</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p279.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=279>

## Jesus heals a woman and brings a little girl back to life

[Mark 5:22-43](#), [Matthew 9:18-26](#), [Luke 8:41-56](#)<sup>482</sup>

[Mark 5:22](#) And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet<sup>23</sup> and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."<sup>24</sup> So [Jesus] went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

<sup>25</sup> Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,<sup>26</sup> and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.<sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came behind [Him] in the crowd and touched His garment.<sup>28</sup> For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

<sup>29</sup> Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in [her] body that she was healed of the affliction.<sup>30</sup> And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"<sup>31</sup> But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' "<sup>32</sup> And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.<sup>33</sup> But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

<sup>34</sup> And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

<sup>35</sup> While He was still speaking, [some] came from the ruler of the synagogue's [house] who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

[Matthew 9:18](#) While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."<sup>19</sup> So Jesus arose and followed him, and so [did] His disciples.

<sup>20</sup> And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

<sup>21</sup> For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."

[Luke 8:45](#) And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' "<sup>46</sup> But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."<sup>47</sup> Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

[Matthew 9:22](#) But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

[Luke 8:49](#) While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's [house], saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher."

[Luke 8:41](#) And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house,<sup>42</sup> for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him.

<sup>43</sup> Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any,

<sup>44</sup> came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

[Luke 8:48](#) And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

<sup>482</sup> Strong. p129. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/128/mode/2up>



<sup>36</sup> As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." <sup>37</sup> And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

<sup>38</sup> Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. <sup>39</sup> When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

<sup>40</sup> And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those [who were] with Him, and entered where the child was lying. <sup>41</sup> Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

<sup>42</sup> Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years [of age]. And they were overcome with great amazement. <sup>43</sup> But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that [something] should be given her to eat. [Mark 5:22-43 NKJV](#)

<sup>44</sup> And the report of this went out into all that land. [Matthew 9:18-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>45</sup> But when Jesus heard [it], He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." <sup>51</sup> When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl.

[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."

[Luke 8:52](#) Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." <sup>53</sup> And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead.

<sup>25</sup> But when the crowd was put outside, and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

<sup>54</sup> But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise."

<sup>55</sup> Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. ... <sup>56</sup> And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened. <sup>55</sup> ... And He commanded that she be given [something] to eat. [Luke 8:41-56](#)

These two stories have always been linked because of the way they are intertwined. If you took the time to read the parallel versions, one question might come to mind. Was the girl already dead when the official first approached Jesus as described in Matthew, or was she at the point of death as described in Mark and Luke? To me, the logical explanation is that Matthew only briefly covered this story and combined the initial meeting and request with the second event, when news came from the house that she had died. In both cases, Jesus proceeded toward the house. I also wondered why the Synagogue official allowed his daughter's sickness to progress to the point of near death, before seeking Jesus for healing. I suspect, he may not have been a true believer until it was his last hope. After all it was not customary for Jewish religious rulers to embrace Jesus. But if this ruler was hesitating or on the fence about his belief, Jesus did not confronted him with it as He did with the [royal official from Capernaum](#), which was only recorded in [John 4:46-50](#). He came to Jesus to request healing for his son who was at the point of death, but it seems his belief was conditional upon Jesus performing this miracle for him, and he was called out for his doubt. After the interruption and delay caused by the woman's healing, some people from the house who had apparently not heard of Jesus' ability to raise the dead, came and reported that the girl had died and added, why bother the Teacher anymore. After the miracle, Jesus gave strict orders to not tell anyone what had happened? It would have been impossible to contain the news because of how many people had been there for the funeral. Whether the parents obeyed or not, according to Matthew, the news spread throughout the whole land.

The second miracle that occurred in this story is the healing of the hemorrhaging woman. Even though the Bible doesn't explicitly say so, I believe along with probably most others that this bleeding, if not menstrual, at least appeared to be so. I cannot speak from personal experience, but excessive loss of blood can have some unpleasant side effects. Aside from the physical issues, and perhaps worse for the woman, may have been the attitude toward her of being perpetually unclean according to the Law of Moses.

[Leviticus 15:19](#) 'If a woman has a discharge, [and] the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. <sup>20</sup> 'Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. <sup>21</sup> 'Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. <sup>22</sup> 'And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. <sup>23</sup> 'If [anything] is on [her] bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. <sup>24</sup> 'And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

<sup>25</sup> 'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her [customary] impurity, or if it runs beyond her [usual time of] impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her [customary] impurity. She [shall be] unclean. <sup>26</sup> 'Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. <sup>27</sup> 'Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [Leviticus 15:19-27 NKJV](#)

Verses 25-27 make it abundantly clear that even if it is not menstruation, but looks like it, the woman is still considered unclean. In addition to the burden of uncleanness, the woman had dealt with many dishonest so-called doctors who were happy to take her money, but Mark says, she even got worse. With no money left, and her sickness continuing to get worse, Jesus was her only hope. White suggests that the woman had heard of the miracles of Jesus and felt sure that He could heal her if she could only get to Him. Now that Jesus was near, her opportunity had arrived, but as usual He was surrounded by huge crowds of people. Personally, I think Jesus knew of the woman's need and purposely walked near her. She saw that they were in a hurry to get to the home of Jairus and didn't feel that she could stop the whole crowd, so in a last-ditch effort, she believed that if she could just touch Jesus as He passed by she would be made well. The woman succeeded in touching the fringe of Jesus' cloak and instantly she knew she had been healed. Immediately Jesus stopped, which must have caused a lot of additional pushing and shoving in the crowd, and asked "who touched Me?" Peter, always ready with something to say, may have said something to this effect. "Master, the crowd is pressing in on You on all sides, how in the world can you ask, 'who touched Me?'" Jesus wanted to give the woman an opportunity to acknowledge her faith, and He probably also wanted to make sure that people would not superstitiously preserve His clothes thinking they had healing power.<sup>483</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus tell the parents not to tell anyone what had happened?
- Why did the translators of Mark use the phrase "Talitha, cumi" and follow it with the English translation?

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<sup>483</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p343-347.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=343>

- Why do you think Jewish ceremonial law considered a woman unclean during her period?

## Jesus heals two blind men and a man who can't speak

[Matthew 9:27-34](#)<sup>484</sup>

[Matthew 9:27](#) When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

<sup>28</sup> And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

<sup>29</sup> Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." <sup>30</sup> And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See [that] no one knows [it]." <sup>31</sup> But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

<sup>32</sup> As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

<sup>34</sup> But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." [Matthew 9:27-34 NKJV](#)

Strong places these healings in November, three months into the third year of the public ministry of Jesus. While it doesn't feel unusual for Jesus to be called the Son of David, this title carried a meaning that that many people were not willing to attribute to Jesus, especially the Jewish leaders. I did a word search for "son of david" in the NKJV, and found that in the Gospels, it occurred 17 times. In Matthew, the phrase occurred ten times, but one was in the genealogy and one was the angel addressing Joseph as the son of David. Another was given in answer to a theoretical question by Jesus to the Pharisees about who "The Christ" is the son of. And a fourth was written as the crowds wondering out loud, whether Jesus could be the Son of David. Two more were by the crowds at the triumphal entry, leaving only four verses where an individual directly addressed Jesus as "Son of David." One by a Canaanite woman in [Matthew 15:22](#) asking for healing for her daughter, and two verses from a different story, of two blind men on the side of the road asking for healing [[Matthew 20:30,31](#)]. Which leaves this instance of two other blind men calling Jesus the "Son of David," as they asked for healing. In Mark and Luke combined, 4 of the 7 occurrences were also by the two blind men on the side of the road. So that means in all four of the Gospels, the only individuals who directly addressed Jesus as "Son of David," were four blind men and a Canaanite woman. That is not to say these were the only ones who addressed Jesus using Messianic titles, but what was it about blind men and "Son of David?" Could it be that the blind were more willing to address Jesus with this title because they couldn't see that He looked like a humble wandering peasant?

The second healing, was the case of a demon possession apparently manifesting itself with physical symptoms. I tried to think if there were other instances in the Gospels where this phenomenon occurred, and I found one other. My chapter titled [Jesus heals a blind and mute demon possessed man](#), covered a very similar healing. In fact, Luke's account only refers to the man as being mute, not blind and mute as the parallel account does.

[Luke 11:14](#) And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. <sup>15</sup> But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." [Luke 11:14-15 NKJV](#)

<sup>484</sup> Strong. p133. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/132/mode/2up>

If you looked back at the chapter mentioned above, you can see that the healing is followed, in Matthew, Mark and Luke, by a discussion with the Pharisees who accused Jesus of using Satan's power to cast out demons. In fact, were it not for that dialog, we would probably have put the [Luke 11:14-15](#) healing in parallel with this, the [Matthew 9:32-34](#) account. In either case, when I searched for the word "demon," this was the only other case of demon possession that I found that had physical as opposed to behavioral symptoms. (I am grouping super strength with the behavioral rather than physical in that statement.) I wonder if the physical symptom type of demon possession was much less common at that time.

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What do you believe?

- Why is faith so important for healing? Do you think it's possible for someone to be healed if they don't have faith?
- Do you think these men were doing the right thing when they disobeyed Jesus and spread the news about Him?
- Do you think there are people today who have physical symptoms or handicaps as a result of demon possession?

## Jesus is not accepted in His home town of Nazareth

[Mark 6:1-6](#), [Matthew 13:54-58](#),<sup>485</sup>

[Mark 6:1](#) Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing [Him] were astonished, saying, "Where [did] this Man [get] these things? And what wisdom [is] this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! <sup>3</sup> "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

<sup>4</sup> But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

<sup>5</sup> Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed [them]. <sup>6</sup> And He marveled because of their unbelief. ... [Mark 6:1-6 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:54](#) When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this [Man] get this wisdom and [these] mighty works?

<sup>55</sup> "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this [Man] get all these things?" <sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

<sup>58</sup> Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. [Matthew 13:54-58 NKJV](#)

Is it a timeless principle, that a prophet is not accepted in his hometown? I don't think all public figures are rejected in their hometowns. Athletes for one are loved and adored by their hometowns, unless they leave to another team. Maybe leaving is the key, because prophets would expectedly have a larger ministry than to just their hometowns. Most of the time they are serving elsewhere and when they do return home, maybe there are greeted like the hometown athlete coming back on the opposing team. If a prophet just stayed home performing miracles and making their hometown great and prosperous, they would probably be adored. So, to me it seems that the nature of the work of a prophet, teaching, reproofing, bringing change is not conducive to home town adoration. I think it's not hard to see how a town

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<sup>485</sup> Strong. p134. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/134/mode/2up>

who knew you as a helpless child, and as a trouble making teen (though not in the case of Jesus, but maybe His siblings), would embrace you telling them they had to change.

In a prior chapter I had asked the question, whether someone could be healed if they didn't have faith. I think this question is answered in this story by the statement, "And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief." [Matthew 13:58]. Mark is even stronger by saying, "He could do no mighty work there ..." [Mark 6:5]. I guess this still doesn't tell us why or how the lack of faith makes the physical healing impossible.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of any other examples of a person being rejected by their own hometown?
- Are these brothers of Jesus mentioned elsewhere in the bible?
- Do you think the prophet's family would have more or less reason to reject him than the hometown?

## Jesus sends His disciples out in pairs to teach and preach

[Matthew 9:35-10:15](#), [10:40-11:1](#), [Mark 6:6-13](#), [Luke 9:1-6](#)<sup>486</sup>

[Matthew 9:35](#) Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup> 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 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. <sup>2</sup> Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup> "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' <sup>8</sup> "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.

[Mark 6:6](#) ... Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

[Mark 6:7](#) And He called the twelve to [Himself], and began to send them out two [by] two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

[Luke 9:1](#) Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

[Luke 9:2](#) He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

<sup>486</sup> Strong. p135. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/134/mode/2up>

Freely you have received, freely give. <sup>9</sup> "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, <sup>10</sup> "nor bag for [your] journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

[Mark 6:8](#) He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in [their] money belts—<sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

[Luke 9:3](#) And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

<sup>11</sup> "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. <sup>12</sup> "And when you go into a household, greet it. <sup>13</sup> "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

<sup>10</sup> Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.

<sup>4</sup> "Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.

<sup>14</sup> "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. <sup>15</sup> "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 9:35-10:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>11</sup> "And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!" [Mark 6:6-11 NKJV](#)

<sup>5</sup> "And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them." [Luke 9:1-5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:40](#) "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>41</sup> "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

<sup>42</sup> "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."

[Mark 9:41](#) "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. [Mark 9:41 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:1](#) Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. [Matthew 10:40-11:1 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:12](#) So they went out and preached that [people] should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed [them]. [Mark 6:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:6](#) So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. [Luke 9:6 NKJV](#)

I deviated from Strong in a couple ways. He left out the names of the twelve apostles from [Matthew 10:2-4](#). He also included Jesus' instructions before sending out seventy from [Luke 10](#). I will include those very similar instructions when I cover that story. Jesus is beginning to prepare the disciples for ministry when He will no longer be with them. They would no doubt make mistakes, and wonder what they should do in certain circumstances. On returning to Jesus from this experience, they would be able to go over each troubling incident with Him and discuss the best ways to handle those situations. Mark, in [verse 7](#), is the only one that tells us Jesus sent them out in pairs. There are many reasons why it is good to go out in pairs. A person alone could be in considerably more danger and could get easily discouraged and quit. With more than two, it is too easy for one person to be overshadowed and not participate.

Let's look at some of Jesus instructions. It seems that Jesus sent them out to do exactly the same thing that He did which was to heal and teach. In Jesus' case, healing was expanded to include raising the dead, and casting out demons. I

believe that some have the gift of miraculous healing today, but I think they are few. For those that do seem to possess this gift of the Spirit, they may encounter the same difficulty that Jesus did in His day, which was questions about whether the healing is done with God's power or the Devil's. What is much more common today is the gift of healing through medical science. Though this type of healing is not perceived the same way, it can still be rendered with similar effect when it is provided free of charge or brought to those in less developed countries who would not have access to it otherwise. Receiving sight through a cataract surgery for someone in a third world country may be no less a miracle even though it is medical science. This also applies to other medical practices including the use of medications and vaccinations. It is this application of Jesus' instructions that has driven Churches, namely the Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists to open hospitals all over the world. I think the underlying premise is that by providing health and healing services, Christians can show they care, which opens the door to preaching the Gospel.

The other half of Jesus' command was to teach, preach and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of heaven. Expanding on this command of Jesus, there is an opportunity to show care through teaching. Many parts of the world lack knowledge on how to reduce the risk of disease through basic sanitation or protection practices. Many of these places also lack the ability or the resources to implement these practices. Many people also live in poverty because they lack education. So, by educating and providing assistance, Christians show care, which opens the door to preaching the Gospel.

Ellen White wrote:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." [Ministry of Healing, p143](#)<sup>487</sup>

There are some other elements of Christ's instructions that should be noted as well. He said, "the worker is worthy of his support" [[Matthew 10:10](#)]. Pastors or priests are paid through contributions of those they minister to, but is this what Jesus was teaching? What Jesus is advancing here seems more like a medical or humanitarian missionary. In His own example, the healing probably almost always accompanied the preaching. When we go to third world countries on medical mission trips today, we don't generally expect the host country to support us financially.

Two more elements of Christ's instructions left to discuss are blessing a worthy home or taking back your blessing from an unworthy. In these specific instructions from Jesus, it was a blessing of peace that was to be pronounced on the home. What specifically is a blessing of peace as opposed to one of prosperity or fruitfulness for example? One would think it might mean peace among family members living under that roof, or peace between that home and their neighbors. But is that kind of peace not dependent on choices made by the free will of the people involved? I think that blessings of peace have often been pronounced by secular people without any intent for God to be the giver. This can sometimes have an effect if spoken enough, even as our words can program our actions. But I think in this case Jesus meant for it to be much more than mind training. When I think of a prayer of blessing and peace, the following often quoted prayer from the book of Numbers comes to mind.

[Numbers 6:22](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

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<sup>487</sup> White, E. G.. *The Ministry of Healing*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942, p143.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=MH&lang=en&pagenumber=143>

<sup>24</sup> "The LORD bless you and keep you;

<sup>25</sup> The LORD make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;

<sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace." '

<sup>27</sup> "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them." [Numbers 6:22-27 NKJV](#)

If you attend church, chances are that you have probably heard these words prayed at one time or another and most likely more than once. This was a blessing given word for word, from God to Moses, for the High Priest to recite to the Israelites. In this case, God specifically says He will bless them when High Priest pronounces this blessing over them. I think this is the type of blessing Jesus intended for his disciples to pronounce on the homes of worthy hosts, and God would in turn bless them. Peace is a precious commodity in many places in the world and I suspect that many people would take peace over physical healing if they had to choose.

Finally, what about wiping the dust of their feet, and it being more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those cities that reject them? Obviously wiping the dust off their feet was a symbolic gesture, however I do not believe that means that humans can render judgment against a city leading to their destruction. I guess I believe it was more of a gesture that they had done their part and that town was left to God's judgment without the excuse of ignorance. Now about Sodom and Gomorrah, they were destroyed ahead of the judgment with fire and brimstone because of their wickedness. You can read all about it in [Genesis 18-19](#). I can deduce from the conversation between Abram and God [[18:23-32](#)], that there were less than ten righteous people in the city and possibly they were all removed along with Lot by the angels [[19:15-16](#)]. When someone passes away, we should always understand that God is their judge and we do not know how they will be judged regardless of what we think we know. In the case of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah at that time, we know how they will be judged, because they were destroyed because of their wickedness. So, not that there are degrees of judgment, but if missionaries in Jesus' name are rejected, unless those people repent later, we know how they will be judged. Of course, I believe that every person is judged individually and that God will be fair and just. For example, if the missionary was a terrible person and not representative of Him, or if there were righteous people that had nothing to do with rejecting His representatives.

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe a person can be lost because a human being did not share the Gospel with them?
- Do you think a person can be lost because they disobeyed God's command to share the good news of salvation with others?
- Can you think of a way that you can use Christ's method of witnessing to people?



## Death of John the Baptist

[Mark 6:14-29](#), [Matthew 14:1-12](#), [Luke 9:7-9](#)<sup>488</sup>

[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, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

[Matthew 14:1](#) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus <sup>2</sup> and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

[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>15</sup> Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

[Luke 9:8](#) and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.

<sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!"

<sup>9</sup> Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought to see Him. [Luke 9:7-9 NKJV](#)

<sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. <sup>18</sup> Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[Matthew 14:3](#) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put [him] in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. <sup>4</sup> Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

<sup>19</sup> Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; <sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

<sup>21</sup> Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief [men] of Galilee.

<sup>6</sup> But when Herod's birthday was celebrated,

<sup>22</sup> And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give [it] to you." <sup>23</sup> He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. <sup>7</sup> Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

<sup>24</sup> So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

<sup>8</sup> So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." <sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who

<sup>25</sup> Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

<sup>26</sup> And the king was exceedingly sorry; [yet], because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

<sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded [it] to be given to [her].

<sup>488</sup> Strong. p139. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/138/mode/2up>

<sup>27</sup> Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, <sup>28</sup> brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup> When his disciples heard [of it], they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. [Mark 6:14-29 NKJV](#)

<sup>10</sup> So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. <sup>11</sup> And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought [it] to her mother. <sup>12</sup> Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. [Matthew 14:1-12 NKJV](#)

I deviated from Strong's chronology which had Herod's birthday party and John's beheading happening at this time. I chose to go with both Matthew and Mark which had Herod recalling his party and the beheading of John because of the miracles he heard Jesus was performing. I also included the section of the arrest even though it was covered in the earlier chapter, [He must increase, I must decrease - John's imprisonment](#), so as to not break the flow of the story.

A couple things are clear from the start. Herod must not have heard of Jesus before he killed John, and he also appeared to believe in some form of reincarnation. If Herod did not know of Jesus and John as two distinct people, especially since Jesus spent most of his time in Galilee, then I believe John must have been killed pretty early on in the public ministry of Jesus. Strong has Herod putting John in prison sometime in the first summer after Jesus began His public ministry,<sup>489</sup> but he still has John alive a year later.<sup>490</sup> I wonder how Herod could not have heard of Jesus for two years while John was still alive in prison? Maybe John's death occurred much earlier in the ministry of Jesus. This is another good reason to make this a recollection and not the actual time when John was beheaded. The Bible also mentions that others said maybe Jesus was Elijah or another one of the prophets of old. These thoughts were most likely motivated by the following prophecies from the Jewish scriptures.

[Deuteronomy 18:15](#) "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, [Deuteronomy 18:15 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. [Malachi 4:5 NKJV](#)

Moving on to what actually led to John's death, the promise to give anything, even up to half the kingdom. There is one other king in the Bible who made this same promise. It was the Persian king Ahasuerus, to his Jewish queen Esther. He actually made this offer three times, once when she risked her life to appear before him in court without his summons [[Esther 5:3](#)]. And interestingly enough, the other two times, were at a feast, possibly under the influence of alcohol [[Esther 5:6](#), [7:2](#)]. When a king made a promise like this, several factors came into play. He was obviously pleased with the person the promise was being made to. But probably, he was mostly making a show of his power to grant an extravagant wish. I'm sure the king never intended for the person to ask for half the kingdom, but what would have happened if they did? Maybe these offers were only made to women who were not considered to have the type of

<sup>489</sup> Strong. p46. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n105/mode/2up>

<sup>490</sup> Strong. p91. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n153/mode/2up>

ambition to ask for half the kingdom. It is interesting to me that three of the four times this offer is made, alcohol was involved. Ellen White wrote the following commentary about Herod and the leading men who attended his feast.

Herod was astonished and confounded. The riotous mirth ceased, and an ominous silence settled down upon the scene of revelry. The king was horror-stricken at the thought of taking the life of John. Yet his word was pledged, and he was unwilling to appear fickle or rash. The oath had been made in honor of his guests, and if one of them had offered a word against the fulfillment of his promise, he would gladly have spared the prophet. He gave them opportunity to speak in the prisoner's behalf. They had traveled long distances in order to hear the preaching of John, and they knew him to be a man without crime, and a servant of God. But though shocked at the girl's demand, they were too besotted to interpose a remonstrance. No voice was raised to save the life of Heaven's messenger. These men occupied high positions of trust in the nation, and upon them rested grave responsibilities; yet they had given themselves up to feasting and drunkenness until the senses were benumbed. Their heads were turned with the giddy scene of music and dancing, and conscience lay dormant. By their silence they pronounced the sentence of death upon the prophet of God to satisfy the revenge of an abandoned woman.

Herod waited in vain to be released from his oath; then he reluctantly commanded the execution of the prophet. Soon the head of John was brought in before the king and his guests. Forever sealed were those lips that had faithfully warned Herod to turn from his life of sin. Never more would that voice be heard calling men to repentance. The revels of one night had cost the life of one of the greatest of the prophets.

Oh, how often has the life of the innocent been sacrificed through the intemperance of those who should have been guardians of justice! He who puts the intoxicating cup to his lips makes himself responsible for all the injustice he may commit under its besotting power. By numbing his senses he makes it impossible for him to judge calmly or to have a clear perception of right and wrong. He opens the way for Satan to work through him in oppressing and destroying the innocent. [Desire of Ages, p221-222](#).<sup>491</sup>

As I said above, the oath was made to impress the guests in attendance. White made an interesting point that I had not read elsewhere. If one of those guests had expressed some reservation about going through with the deed it would have given Herod the escape he needed to save face and not fulfill his oath.

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What do you believe?

- How do you think Herod could have thought Jesus was a reincarnation of John?
- Do you think offering to fulfill a person's wish up to giving them half your kingdom was generally a generous thing or a self-serving thing?
- Do you think the fulfilling Herod's oath was only about saving face, or do you think he was bound legally?

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<sup>491</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p221-222. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=221>

## Jesus teaches His disciples that they needed rest

[Mark 6:30-32](#), [Luke 9:10](#), [Matthew 14:13](#), [John 6:1](#)<sup>492</sup>

<p><a href="#">Mark 6:30</a> Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. <sup>31</sup> And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.</p> <p><sup>32</sup> So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. <a href="#">Mark 6:30-32 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 9:10</a> ... Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. <a href="#">Luke 9:10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 9:10</a> When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. ...</p> <p><a href="#">Matthew 14:13</a> ... He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. ... <a href="#">Matthew 14:13 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 6:1</a> After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is [the Sea] of Tiberias. <a href="#">John 6:1 NKJV</a></p>
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Three Gospels have the feeding of the five thousand, which will be covered in the next chapter, preceded by a brief period of seclusion and rest from the crowds. Two of them say that Jesus withdrew by Himself, Mark says they went "to a secluded place by themselves." Mark and Luke have this seclusion following the disciples being sent out in pairs, Matthew has it following the recollection of the beheading of John the Baptist.

Recall that Jesus had already been rebuked by His family for being so moved with compassion for the people, that He appeared to them, to not be taking care of His basic needs.

[Mark 3:20](#) Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." [Mark 3:20-21 NKJV](#)

I think it is possible that Jesus kept a busier pace in His public ministry than might be sustainable for an entire lifetime. But I think He knew He had a relatively short time to accomplish so much. Jesus also realized where His strength came from and I believe spent time at the start of each day with God.

[Mark 1:35](#) Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. [Mark 1:35 NKJV](#)

I believe that Jesus wanted to teach the disciples that they needed time away from the crowds and their work, to rest and rejuvenate their mind and body. I believe He also used this time of seclusion, to council and teach them after their ministry experience. I think this re-enforces what we should already know, that a human being cannot be giving all the time and, must be on the receiving end as well in order to function. But I think that Jesus' example also shows us that His time alone in prayer was a large part of His rejuvenation.

<sup>492</sup> Strong. p141. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/140/mode/2up>

Ellen White dedicated an entire chapter to this topic in the *Desire of Ages*, titled Come Rest Awhile.<sup>493</sup> Some excerpts:

Christ's words of compassion are spoken to His workers today just as surely as they were spoken to His disciples. "Come ye yourselves apart, ... and rest awhile," He says to those who are worn and weary. It is not wise to be always under the strain of work and excitement, even in ministering to men's spiritual needs; for in this way personal piety is neglected, and the powers of mind and soul and body are overtaxed. Self-denial is required of the disciples of Christ, and sacrifices must be made; but care must also be exercised lest through their overzeal Satan take advantage of the weakness of humanity, and the work of God be marred. [Desire of Ages, p362](#)<sup>494</sup>

No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: "Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." "Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." [Mark 1:35](#); [Luke 5:15-16](#); [6:12](#). [p362](#)<sup>495</sup>

What do you believe?

- Considering that at times, Jesus spent entire nights in prayer, do you believe that if necessary, time spent with God can replace sleep?
- Considering the following texts [[Matthew 4:4](#); [Luke 4:4](#); [John 4:34](#)], do you believe that if necessary, time spent with God can replace food?
- If your answer is yes to the prior questions, what does "if necessary" mean to you?

## Jesus feeds five thousand

[Mark 6:33-46](#), [Matthew 14:13-23](#), [Luke 9:11-17](#), [John 6:2-15](#)<sup>496</sup>

[John 6:4](#) Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. [John 6:4 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:33](#) But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

[Matthew 14:13](#) ... But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

[Luke 9:11](#) But when the multitudes knew [it], they followed Him;

<sup>493</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p359. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=359>

<sup>494</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p362.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=362>

<sup>495</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p362.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=362>

<sup>496</sup> Strong. p142. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/142/mode/2up>

<sup>34</sup> And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd.

[John 6:2](#) Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.

[Matthew 14:14](#) And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.

So He began to teach them many things.

[John 6:3](#) And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

[Luke 9:11](#) ... and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God,

<sup>35</sup> When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour [is] late. <sup>36</sup> "Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." [Mark 6:33-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:15](#) When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

[Luke 9:12](#) When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

[John 6:5](#) Then Jesus lifted up [His] eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" <sup>6</sup> But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

[John 6:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:37](#) But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."

[Matthew 14:16](#) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

[Luke 9:13](#) But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." ...

And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them [something] to eat?"

[John 6:7](#) Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a

<sup>38</sup> But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said,

[John 6:8](#) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

[Matthew 14:17](#) And they said to Him,

[Luke 9:13](#) ... And they said,

"Five, and two fish."

<sup>9</sup> "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

"We have here only five loaves and two fish." <sup>18</sup> He said, "Bring them here to Me."

"We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." <sup>14</sup> For there were about five thousand men.

<sup>39</sup> Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.

[John 6:10](#) Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

[Matthew 14:19](#) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. ...

[Luke 9:14](#) ... Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." <sup>15</sup> And they did so, and made them all sit down.

<sup>41</sup> And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave [them] to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among [them] all.

[John 6:11](#) And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed [them] to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

[Matthew 14:19](#) ... And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

[Luke 9:16](#) Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave [them] to the disciples to set before the multitude.

<sup>42</sup> So they all ate and were filled.

[John 6:12](#) So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." <sup>13</sup> Therefore they

[Matthew 14:20](#) So they all ate and were filled,

[Luke 9:17](#) So they all ate and were filled,

<sup>43</sup> And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

gathered [them] up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them. [Luke 9:11-17 NKJV](#)

<sup>44</sup> Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. [Mark 6:33-44 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:21](#) Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

[John 6:14](#) Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

<sup>15</sup> Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king,

[Mark 6:45](#) Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. <sup>46</sup> And when He had sent them away,

[Matthew 14:22](#) Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. <sup>23</sup> And when He had sent the multitudes away,

He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. [John 6:2-14-15 NKJV](#)

He departed to the mountain to pray. [Mark 6:33-46 NKJV](#)

He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. [Matthew 14:13-23 NKJV](#)

John places this event just before the Passover. Strong estimates the month of March, just prior to the third Passover in Jesus' public ministry. It is very clear from the Gospels that this large gathering and feeding interrupted the secluded retreat that I discussed in the previous chapter. We are not told much about what Jesus taught the people except for His common theme about the Kingdom of God, which He usually did through parables. On this occasion, as usual, He had compassion and healed those who had need of healing. The main point of the story as recorded though, is the miracle of multiplying a very small amount of food to feed a huge crowd of people. It seems that every time Jesus performed a new type of miracle, the people were amazed and in this case, they wanted to crown Him as king. White suggest that it wasn't hard for the people to imagine how invincible the Jews would be with a king who could heal wounds, raise the dead, provide unlimited supplies, and the list could go on. Since that was not His goal, Jesus knew how that effort would end, so he immediately put a stop to that movement. The disciples thought this was the golden opportunity they had been waiting for and had joined with the multitude in their plans. It is very difficult to sway a huge single minded crowd,

but in this case, Jesus was firm in His command to send the disciples across the lake and to disperse the crowd.<sup>497</sup> I suspect that some of the authority He used in cleansing the temple may have been at play here.

In case you were wondering, this is not the first story of food being miraculously multiplied in the Bible. Let's look at some:

[1 Kings 17:8](#) Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Arise, go to Zarephath, which [belongs] to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." <sup>10</sup> So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow [was] there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." <sup>11</sup> And as she was going to get [it], he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

<sup>12</sup> 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."

<sup>13</sup> And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go [and] do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring [it] to me; and afterward make [some] for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> "For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' "

<sup>15</sup> So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for [many] days. <sup>16</sup> The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah. [1 Kings 17:8-16 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 4:1](#) A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves."

<sup>2</sup> So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

<sup>3</sup> Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors--empty vessels; do not gather just a few. <sup>4</sup> "And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones."

<sup>5</sup> So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought [the vessels] to her; and she poured [it] out. <sup>6</sup> Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "[There is] not another vessel." So the oil ceased. <sup>7</sup> Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you [and] your sons live on the rest." [2 Kings 4:1-7 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 4:42](#) Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give [it] to the people, that they may eat."

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<sup>497</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p377.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=377>



<sup>43</sup> But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have [some] left over.' " <sup>44</sup> So he set [it] before them; and they ate and had [some] left over, according to the word of the LORD. [2 Kings 4:42-44 NKJV](#)

In the first and third instances mentioned, the miracle provided food to satisfy the immediate hunger of people. The multiplication of the oil was to provide money to pay off a debt and to live on.

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What do you believe?

- It wouldn't have hurt the people to miss a meal, so why do you think Jesus chose to perform this miracle?
- Is it coincidence that all the miracles, including the Old Testament, involved the multiplication of bread or its ingredients?
- Do you think there is some significance to the fact that Jesus' miracle included the multiplication of fish?

## Jesus walks on water

[Matthew 14:24-33](#), [Mark 6:47-52](#), [John 6:16-21](#)<sup>498</sup>

[John 6:16](#) Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.

[Matthew 14:24](#) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

[Mark 6:47](#) Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He [was] alone on the land. <sup>48</sup> Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.

[John 6:18](#) Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> So when they had rowed about three or four miles,

<sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. <sup>49</sup> And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; <sup>50</sup> for they all saw Him and were troubled.

they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>20</sup> But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

<sup>29</sup> So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind [was] boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out [His] hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

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<sup>498</sup> Strong. p146. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/146/mode/2up>

<sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." [Matthew 14:24-33 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:51](#) Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, <sup>52</sup> for they had not gained any insight from [the incident of] the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. [Mark 6:47-52 NKJV](#)

[John 6:21](#) Then they willingly received Him into the boat, ...

[John 6:21](#) ... and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. [John 6:16-21 NKJV](#)

The first interesting thing to note about this story is that when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they thought he was a ghost. The Greek word [φάντασμα, phantasma](#)<sup>499</sup> has the meanings, appearance, apparition or specter. This generally carries the notion of a supernatural or spirit being. I recall another incident after the resurrection of Jesus, when the disciples were wondering if they were seeing a spirit.

[Luke 24:36](#) Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." <sup>37</sup> But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. [Luke 24:36-37 NKJV](#)

In this case, the Greek word is [πνεῦμα, pneuma](#)<sup>500</sup> which was most frequently translated to the word spirit, and second most Holy Spirit. The translations to the word spirit covered the widest meanings, from Spirit or God, to evil spirits, and all the human spirit applications in between. This word was also used in reference to wind, which is probably why we have the word pneumatic, which is usually used to describe a tool powered by pressurized air. I wonder if the Greek word carries this meaning because of Jesus' wind analogy for the Holy Spirit, or if that meaning existed before. In both cases, I believe the disciples thought they were seeing something that was not human flesh and blood.

There were actually four miraculous things that happened in this story. First, Jesus walked on the water. Second, Peter walked on the water. Third, the storm was calmed. Finally, the boat was immediately transported to their destination.

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What do you believe?

- At the time, do you think the Jews believed the spirits of the deceased could appear as ghosts?
- How could the disciples be "utterly astonished" if they really believed Jesus was the Son of God?
- What do you think Mark meant when he wrote that "their hearts were hardened?"

<sup>499</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5326/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>500</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4151/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

## Many to desert Jesus after He says to eat His flesh and drink His blood

[Mark 6:53-56](#), [Matthew 14:34-36](#), [John 6:22-71](#)<sup>501</sup>

[Mark 6:53](#) When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. <sup>54</sup> And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, <sup>55</sup> ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. <sup>56</sup> Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well. [Mark 6:53-56 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:34](#) When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. <sup>35</sup> And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, <sup>36</sup> and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched [it] were made perfectly well. [Matthew 14:34-36 NKJV](#)

[John 6:22](#) On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone—<sup>23</sup> however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—<sup>24</sup> when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. <sup>25</sup> And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. <sup>27</sup> "Do not [Psalm 78:24](#) Had rained down manna on them to eat, labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which [Psalm 78:24 NKJV](#) And given them of the bread of heaven. <sup>28</sup> endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

<sup>28</sup> Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

<sup>30</sup> Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? <sup>31</sup> "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

<sup>32</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

<sup>35</sup> And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. <sup>38</sup> "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> "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."

<sup>501</sup> Strong. p147. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/146/mode/2up>

<sup>41</sup> The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

<sup>42</sup> And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

<sup>43</sup> Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'

[Isaiah 54:13](#) All your children [shall be] taught by the LORD,

Therefore everyone who has heard and

And great [shall be] the peace of your children. [Isaiah 54:13 NKJV](#)

learned from the Father comes to Me. <sup>46</sup> "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. <sup>48</sup> "I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup> "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

<sup>52</sup> The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us [His] flesh to eat?"

<sup>53</sup> 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. <sup>54</sup> "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. <sup>58</sup> "This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

<sup>59</sup> These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup> Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard [this], said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

<sup>61</sup> When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> "[What] then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? <sup>63</sup> "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and [they] are life. <sup>64</sup> "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. <sup>65</sup> And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

<sup>66</sup> From that [time] many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. <sup>67</sup> Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

<sup>68</sup> But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" <sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve. [John 6:22-71 NKJV](#)

The Bible doesn't say where the feeding of the 5000 took place, but it does say the boat landed at Gennesaret. Multiple sources on the internet pointed to a location a few miles west of Capernaum on the Northwest shore of the Sea of

Galilee.<sup>502 503 504</sup> This is consistent with [John 6:59](#), which says that Jesus made these statements in the Synagogue in Capernaum.

John first leads us to the main topic by saying that the next day some people came back to the location where the feeding took place. When Jesus had made them leave the day before, they had seen the disciples leave in the only boat. They also saw Jesus head the opposite direction up, the mountain. So, they assumed He would still be there but they couldn't find Him. John doesn't tell us how they actually learned where He had gone, but he does say they went to Capernaum and when they found Him, the first question they asked was how He got there. I think they had already heard of the storm and the walking on the water and wanted to hear the story from His own mouth. I think they were not ready to give up on their plan to make Jesus king, and wanted to pick up where they left off the day before with talk of even more miracles.

Getting to the heart of the matter, what does it mean to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood? And why did He choose to use such potentially repulsive language for this symbol? He even went so far as to emphasize, "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink" in [verse 55](#). Let's start by examining the physical, the known side of the analogy. The food we eat and the things we drink become part of us through the amazing energy conversion of digestion. We need to eat and drink to live and grow, but this life is limited (our bodies deteriorate and die). Now if we follow the analogy, we need to daily take what Jesus offers, to nourish and grow our spiritual bodies for eternal life. Just as we eat and drink daily, we need to nourish out spiritual lives daily. Maybe we can interpret [verse 55](#) to mean that physical food leads to temporary life, but true food leads to eternal life. In [verse 56](#), Jesus clarifies His statement Himself by saying, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." Those who were arguing with Jesus brought up to topic of Mana which they knew to have been food miraculously provided to their ancestors. Jesus reminded them that everyone that ate the manna was dead, so even though it was provided miraculously, it was still no better than their temporal physical food. What He now offered, would lead to growth into eternal life.

Jesus undoubtedly knew that these statements would be a major turning point in His public ministry. Up to this time, probably most of His followers, including the twelve chosen disciples, were expecting Him to take the throne of Israel and lead the nation back to world dominance as in the days of King David. This of course included getting out from under the rule of the hated Roman Empire. After Jesus had fed the 5000, there was a growing movement among the crowd to take Jesus by force and make Him king. Now that they had seen His refusal to take the throne, and His disinterest in political issues of national interest, they realized that He was not the Messiah they were looking for. [Verse 66](#) summarized this nicely by saying, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." There were people besides the twelve who followed Jesus everywhere who were also known as disciples. I believe that many, but not all of these deserted Jesus at this time.

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What do you believe?

- Obviously, Jesus wasn't cutting off His limbs and feeding the people His actual flesh, so why do you think He said His flesh was true food and His blood was true drink?
- Do you think questions of cannibalism ever arose among outsiders, hearing the early Christians talking about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus?

<sup>502</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/genesaret.html>

<sup>503</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinneret\\_\(archaeological\\_site\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinneret_(archaeological_site))

<sup>504</sup> <http://biblehub.com/topical/g/genesaret.htm>

- Why do you think so many Jews struggled to accept what Jesus was offering? Do you think it was really any harder for them than it is for anyone to accept Jesus as their Savior?

## Jesus accuses the Jews of prioritizing their law above God's

[John 7:1](#), [Mark 7:1-23](#), [Matthew 15:1-20](#)<sup>505</sup>

[John 7:1](#) After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. [John 7:1 NKJV](#)

[Mark 7:1](#) Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. <sup>3</sup> For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash [their] hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup> [When they come] from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, [like] the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

<sup>5</sup> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him,

"Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

[Matthew 15:2](#) "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

<sup>6</sup> He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

<sup>3</sup> He answered and said to them, ... <sup>7</sup> "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: -

<p><a href="#">Isaiah 29:13</a> ... "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men."</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 15:8</a> '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.'</p>
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<sup>8</sup> "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

<sup>9</sup> He said to them, "[All too] well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. <sup>10</sup> "For Moses said, God because of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> "For God commanded, saying,

'Honor your father and your mother'; and, [Exodus 20:12](#) "Honor your father and your mother, ... [Exodus 20:12 NKJV](#) 'Honor your father and your mother'; and,

'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' [Exodus 21:17](#) "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. [Exodus 21:17](#) 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

<sup>505</sup> Strong. p154. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/154/mode/2up>

<sup>11</sup> "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me [is] Corban"--' (that is, a gift [to God]),

<sup>12</sup> "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, <sup>13</sup> "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

<sup>14</sup> When He had called all the multitude to [Himself], He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: <sup>15</sup> "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. <sup>16</sup> "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" [Mark 7:1-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:12](#) Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

<sup>13</sup> But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. <sup>14</sup> "Let them alone.

They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

<sup>15</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

<sup>16</sup> So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? <sup>17</sup> "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? <sup>18</sup> "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. <sup>19</sup> "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

<sup>20</sup> "These are [the things] which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

[Matthew 15:12-20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:5](#) "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me [is] a gift [to God]"—

<sup>6</sup> 'then he need not honor his father or mother.'

Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

[Matthew 15:10](#) When He had called the multitude to [Himself], He said to them, "Hear and understand:

<sup>11</sup> "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man;

but what comes out of the mouth,

this defiles a man." [Matthew 15:1-11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:39](#) And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?" [Luke 6:39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 7:17](#) And when He [later] entered a house, away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him about the parable.

<sup>18</sup> And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding as well? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" ([Thereby] He declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> And He was saying, "That which comes out of the person, that [is what] defiles the person.

<sup>21</sup> "For from within, out of the hearts of people, come the evil thoughts, [acts of] sexual immorality, thefts, murders, [acts of] adultery, <sup>22</sup> deeds of greed, wickedness, deceit, indecent behavior, envy, slander, pride, [and] foolishness. <sup>23</sup> "All these evil things come from within and defile the person."

[Mark 7:1-23 NKJV](#)

Strong has this encounter occurring in April just after the third Passover during the public ministry of Jesus. He suggests that because of [the wrong kind] excitement about Him, and a potential plot against Him, Jesus skipped this Passover. White, in the *Desire of Ages* also suggests that Jesus skipped this Passover and since He didn't come to

them, the scribes and Pharisees came after Him in Galilee.<sup>506</sup> When they found Him, they immediately began challenging Him about the observance of some of their laws.

After the Babylonian exile, the Jews had finally come to realize that there was a correlation between their prosperity and their observance of the Laws given to Moses. They also noticed a correlation between their disobedience of God and their subservience to foreign oppressors. They began to safeguard against breaking God's Law by establishing other laws that kept them from getting close to breaking God's Law. Over time, I think they probably even made more laws to keep them from getting close to breaking their own laws. And what we see now is that they had reached to point where they were more concerned with keeping their own law, than they were the Law of God. In other words, if there was ever a conflict between the two laws, they would probably prioritize their law above God's.

In the first case, they were accusing the disciples of eating without first ceremonially washing their hands. The way it appears to me is that God had given the Israelites the Ten Commandments, which was to be the most sacred and important laws for their nation. They were even instructed to keep the tables of stone on which God wrote His Law in the Ark of the Covenant. But there were other laws that were given to them, such as civil law that were instrumental in governing the people. There were laws governing the sanctuary and the sacrificial services. There were also numerous laws given about cleanness and uncleanness that were treated as ceremonial. I believe that many of those ceremonial laws were given to teach and enforce basic hygiene practices that many today could see would increase health and wellness and reduce the spread of disease. I believe the ceremonial washing of hands fell into this category. Rather than trying to teach the people the principle behind washing your hands before you eat, they were simply taught ceremonially that they must wash hands before eating. White states:

The rules in regard to purification were numberless. The period of a lifetime was scarcely sufficient for one to learn them all. The life of those who tried to observe the rabbinical requirements was one long struggle against ceremonial defilement, an endless round of washings and purifications. While the people were occupied with trifling distinctions, and observances which God had not required, their attention was turned away from the great principles of His law. [Desire of Ages, p396](#)<sup>507</sup>

Jesus responded to these scribes and Pharisees by telling them they had their priorities upside down. They were guilty of giving more importance to their tradition than to God's own Law, the Ten Commandments. He gave an example in the practice of Corban, which was essentially willing everything you own to the Temple upon your death. I wonder if the law of Corban actually included land in the will, because God's instruction to the Israelites was that the land should always remain in the family. It is possible that this practice became a way for the priests to gain more land? No doubt the people were taught to view such persons with great admiration and respect for being willing to giving everything to the Temple. But upon closer examination, it was really kind of a selfish thing. The person was really not giving up anything because they retained everything while they lived. It was their descendants who were losing out. But what Jesus specifically pointed out was that in the current practice of Corban, in order to maximize what the Temple would get on that person's death, they were exempt from spending their wealth to care for their parents. In this case, the practice of Corban which was not a law given by God, was held in higher esteem than the commandment to honor your father and your mother.

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<sup>506</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p395. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=395>

<sup>507</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p396. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=396>



When Jesus was alone with this disciples, He explained to them that what really matters most when it comes to cleanliness are the thoughts in your mind. He added that the words a person speaks reflect what they are thinking. He also clarified His statements by saying that the things a person eats does not make them unclean in the true sense. Is Jesus actually doing away with the ceremonial law at this time as well as the Jewish laws of clean and unclean meats? I think what Jesus was doing was to try to separate the idea of ceremonial cleanliness, and the idea of trying to maintain that state, from that of true uncleanness as a result of breaking God's Law. The original laws given for ceremonial cleanliness were still beneficial from a health standpoint, but all the additional laws or tradition as Jesus called it were not a sin or salvation issue. I believe the same was applicable regarding the consumption of meat. The original laws given through Moses were still beneficial from a health and wellness standpoint but they are not a sin and salvation issue. Having said all of that, I guess there are some cases where knowingly ingesting something through the mouth that has a detrimental effect on the mind or body, which in turn directly effects our true state of cleanness as Jesus described, could be considered an issue of sin or salvation.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of something similar to this practice of corban that we do today?
- Do you think the ceremonial laws give through Moses were done away with by Jesus? If so, how do you explain that in the context of an unchanging God?
- If our bodies are considered a temple for God [[1 Corinthians 6:19](#)], do you think it could be considered sin to eat something that you know has a detrimental effect on your body even if it doesn't affect your mental capacity?

## Jesus heals a Canaanite woman's daughter

[Matthew 15:21-28](#), [Mark 7:24-30](#)<sup>508</sup>

[Matthew 15:21](#) Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

[Mark 7:24](#) From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know [it], but He could not be hidden. <sup>25</sup> For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. <sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

<sup>23</sup> But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

<sup>24</sup> But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

<sup>25</sup> Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

<sup>26</sup> But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw [it] to the little dogs."

<sup>Mark 27</sup> But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw [it] to the little

<sup>27</sup> And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

<sup>Mark 28</sup> And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

<sup>508</sup> Strong. p158. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/158/mode/2up>

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great [is] your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. [Matthew 15:21-28 NKJV](#)

<sup>Mark 29</sup> Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." <sup>30</sup> And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed. [Mark 7:24-30 NKJV](#)

Strong estimates this event to have taken place in May after the third Passover during Jesus' public ministry. This story is most notable for the way Jesus initially treated the woman, which for Him was uncharacteristic. On the other hand, it was exactly the way a Jew might be expected to treat a Canaanite. It was uncharacteristic because Jesus had shown Himself to be accepting of the most repulsive and "sinful" in Jewish society, lavishing His love and miracles on them. In this instance, I can image the disciples being a little surprised but completely happy with the way Jesus ignored the woman. White describes the scene by saying this emboldened them to ask Jesus to tell the woman to go away and stop bothering them. This no doubt saddened Jesus, but He carried on His ruse a little further. White suggests that Jesus placed Himself in the woman's path because He knew she desired to make this request of Him, but also to teach His disciples a lesson.<sup>509</sup> When He first sent them out on their training missionary trip, He told them to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel [[Matthew 10:5-6](#)]. Jesus was not being racist in His instructions. White suggests that He wished to give the Jews another chance to be His representatives on earth and He knew if the Gospel was immediately offered to Samaritans and Gentiles, they would reject it for sure.<sup>510</sup> In His great commission to them as He was leaving them, Jesus told them to go into all the world [[Matthew 28:19](#)].

Jesus was known to be very quick witted verbally and had silenced many of His opponents with His questions and responses. This is perhaps the only instance He allowed Himself to be seemingly out witted in a verbal exchange.

Through her persistence, this woman showed great faith, and like the Gentile centurion before her, believed Jesus able to heal her daughter without touching or even being present.

God does not show favoritism toward and race or gender. I believe His only purpose in choosing the Jews, was so that they could be His representatives to the rest of the world. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and others had shown a willingness to believe and obey Him and it was through them and their descendants that God wished to keep alive a knowledge of Him on the earth. God chooses people who are willing to believe in Him so they can be witnesses for Him. When the Jews eventually rejected His purpose for them, others were chosen in their place.

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe being chosen by God is a privilege or a responsibility?
- Do you think Jesus would still have healed the woman's daughter if she had been discouraged by His initial rebuffs?

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<sup>509</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p400. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=400>

<sup>510</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p351.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=351>

- Do you believe God wanted the ancient Jews to try to convert the Canaanites or to stay away from them so they would not be led astray by them?

## Jesus feeds four thousand

[Mark 7:31-8:9](#), [Matthew 15:29-39](#)<sup>511</sup>

[Mark 7:31](#) Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee.

[Matthew 15:29](#) Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, ... [Matthew 15:29 NKJV](#)

<sup>32</sup> Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. <sup>33</sup> And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

<sup>35</sup> Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

<sup>36</sup> Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed [it]. <sup>37</sup> And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." [Mark 7:31-37 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:29](#) ... and went up on the mountain and sat down there. <sup>30</sup> Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them [the] lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. <sup>31</sup> So the multitude marveled when they saw [the] mute speaking, [the] maimed made whole, [the] lame walking, and [the] blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. [Matthew 15:29-31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:1](#) In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat,

Jesus called His disciples [to Him] and said to them, <sup>2</sup> "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

<sup>3</sup> "And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

<sup>4</sup> Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

<sup>5</sup> He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

[Matthew 15:32](#) Now Jesus called His disciples to [Himself] and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

<sup>33</sup> Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

<sup>511</sup> Strong. p160. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/160/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke [them] and gave [them] to His disciples to set before [them]; and they set [them] before the multitude. <sup>7</sup> They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before [them]. <sup>8</sup> So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. <sup>9</sup> Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, [Mark 8:1-9 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. <sup>36</sup> And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke [them] and gave [them] to His disciples; and the disciples [gave] to the multitude. <sup>37</sup> So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. <sup>38</sup> Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. <sup>39</sup> And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala. [Matthew 15:32-39 NKJV](#)

According to Strong, this feeding of the four thousand took place in May approximately two months after the feeding of the five thousand. This feeding was preceded by healing many people and most like teaching as well. In fact, it says the people had been there with Jesus for three days. I imagine the people had probably brought some of their own food, which had probably all been used up after three days. They were so hungry for the teaching and healing Jesus offered, that they were not willing to leave His presence even though they had nothing to eat. When Jesus questioned the disciples about providing food for the multitude, the miraculous feeding of the five thousand should have been fresh in their minds. But they responded by asking, where could we possibly get enough food to feed all these people? Why didn't they immediately answer that they had seven pieces of bread and a few fish, assuming that Jesus would repeat His miracle? Strong implies as does White that this crowd of four thousand men plus women and children were the same that had started gathering to Him when He healed the deaf and mute man in the region of Decapolis.<sup>512</sup> So, what does that have to do with anything? Wikipedia has an article on Decapolis that sheds some light on the subject. This region was a group of ten cities, linked by their embracing of Greek and Roman culture. Except for Damascus, all the cities were founded during the period of Greek dominance after Alexander the Great. The people of the area had welcomed the Roman General, Pompey, as a liberator from Jewish Hasmonean rule.<sup>513</sup> That was all just a long way of saying these people were Gentiles and not worthy of Jesus' miracles in the eyes of the disciples. They may also have been thinking that the feeding of the five thousand almost led to the coronation of Jesus as king, so why would that same miracle be shared with Gentiles?

From the Wikipedia article, I also noticed that Gadara is one of the cities named among the ten. It was very possible that the demoniacs Jesus healed were in part responsible for the warm reception. Recall that Jesus had sent them home to tell what He had done for them. According to Strong's chronology, the demoniac healing occurred in October, about seven months earlier.<sup>514</sup> I covered that story in my chapter [Jesus heals the demoniacs](#). White provides validation for this suspicion.

It was in the region of Decapolis that the demoniacs of Gergesa had been healed. Here the people, alarmed at the destruction of the swine, had constrained Jesus to depart from among them. But they had listened to the messengers He left behind, and a desire was aroused to see Him. As He came again into that region, a crowd gathered about Him, and a deaf, stammering man was brought to Him. Jesus did not, according to His custom, restore the man by a word only. Taking him apart from the multitude, He put His fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue; looking up to heaven, He sighed at thought of the ears that would not be open to the truth, the

<sup>512</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p404. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=404>

<sup>513</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decapolis>

<sup>514</sup> Strong. p123. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

tongues that refused to acknowledge the Redeemer. At the word, "Be opened," the man's speech was restored, and, disregarding the command to tell no man, he published abroad the story of his cure. [Desire of Ages, p404.](#)<sup>515</sup>

The dialog with the Canaanite woman only days before just began to open the minds of the disciples to the idea of sharing the gifts of God with the Gentiles. Now, Jesus left no doubt by freely sharing the gifts of His miracles with a large number of Gentiles.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus told the deaf mute man and other witnesses to the healing not to tell anyone what happened?
- Why do you think the disciples didn't assume Jesus would repeat the feeding miracle for these Gentiles after healing all of them?
- Where do you think the left-over food came from? If you were part of the crowd, would you give it back?

## Jesus warns His disciples to be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees

[Matthew 15:39-16:12](#), [Matthew 5:25-26](#), [Mark 8:10-21](#), [Luke 12:54-59](#)<sup>516</sup>

[Mark 8:10](#) immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

[Matthew 15:39](#) ... and came to the region of Magdala. [Matthew 15:39 NKJV](#)

<sup>11</sup> Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. [Mark 8:10-11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:1](#) Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

[Matthew 16:2](#) He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '[It will be] fair weather, for the sky is red';<sup>3</sup> "and in the morning, '[It will be] foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' ... [Matthew 16:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:54](#) Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. <sup>55</sup> "And when [you see] the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. <sup>56</sup> "Hypocrites!

You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how [is it] you do not discern this time?

[Matthew 16:3](#) ... You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot [discern] the signs of the times. [Matthew 16:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>57</sup> "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?"

<sup>515</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p404. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=404>

<sup>516</sup> Strong. p162. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/162/mode/2up>

<sup>58</sup> "When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. <sup>59</sup> "I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite." [Luke 12:54-59 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:4](#) "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

<sup>5</sup> Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." <sup>7</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "[It is] because we have taken no bread." <sup>8</sup> But Jesus, being aware of [it], said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?" <sup>9</sup> "Do you not yet understand,

[Psalm 115:5](#) ... Eyes they have, but they do not see;

<sup>6</sup> They have ears, but they do not hear; ... [Psalm 115:5-6 NKJV](#)  
or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?

<sup>10</sup> "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?

<sup>11</sup> "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?--[but] to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not tell [them] to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. [Matthew 16:4-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:25](#) "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny." [Matthew 5:25-26 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:12](#) But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation." <sup>13</sup> And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side.

[Mark 8:14](#) Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." <sup>16</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "[It is] because we have no bread." <sup>17</sup> But Jesus, being aware of [it], said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?"

<sup>18</sup> "Having eyes, do you not see?"

And having ears, do you not hear?

And do you not remember? <sup>19</sup> "When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." <sup>20</sup> "Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven."

<sup>21</sup> So He said to them, "How [is it] you do not understand?"

[Mark 8:12-21 NKJV](#)

I suppose the first question some may have is: did they go to Dalmanutha or Magdala? As it is written, it refers to the district of Dalmanutha and the region of Magdala. A brief search on the internet showed that there is currently no knowledge of a Dalmanutha outside of the Bible. The best answer I can give to this question is that we don't have archaeological or historical evidence to locate either. As for Matthew and Mark using different names, no one really has a problem with this especially because one refers to a district and the other a region.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were political opponents and, in many cases, hated each other. Now they were united in their hatred of Jesus. White suggests that the disciples wished that Jesus would provide a sign, thinking it would win

them over, or at least silence them. Every healing He performed was a sign, but since they held most of the recipients of His miracles in such low esteem, the acts were essentially meaningless to them.<sup>517</sup>

Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He applies the symbol of leaven or yeast, to the false teachings and doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Yeast works slowly and imperceptibly, changing the entire lump of dough. In the same way the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees can be made to sound good, but they work slowly and imperceptibly to change the person into their nature.<sup>518</sup> Jesus said:

[Matthew 23:15](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. [Matthew 23:15 NKJV](#)

I found it interesting that yeast was not always a symbol of something bad.

[Matthew 13:33](#) Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." [Matthew 13:33 NKJV](#)

Based on this statement by Jesus in Matthew, it could be said that the way yeast works on the loaf of bread is also symbolic of positive changes that can take place in your life. The analogy could be used to state that turning your life over to God, can slowly and imperceptibly change you into His image.

What do you believe?

- How do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees could see all those miracles and still ask for a sign?
- If the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees were based on the original laws given to Moses by God, how could they be bad?
- Time and again, Jesus used bread as a symbol for Himself, do you think it was always only unleavened bread?

## Jesus tells His disciples that He must suffer and die

[Matthew 16:13-23](#), [Mark 8:22-30](#), [Luke 9:18-22](#)<sup>519</sup>

[Mark 8:22](#) Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. <sup>23</sup> So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

<sup>24</sup> And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

<sup>25</sup> Then He put [His] hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. <sup>26</sup> Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."

[Mark 8:22-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>517</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p406. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=406>

<sup>518</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p408.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=408>

<sup>519</sup> Strong. p165. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/164/mode/2up>

- [Matthew 16:13](#) When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"
- [Mark 8:27](#) Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"
- [Luke 9:18](#) And it happened, as He was alone praying, [that] His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"
- <sup>14</sup> So they said, "Some [say] John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
- [Mark 8:28](#) So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some [say], Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."
- [Luke 9:19](#) So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some [say] Elijah; and others [say] that one of the old prophets has risen again."
- <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
- [Mark 8:29](#) He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ...
- <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ...
- <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- [Mark 8:29](#) ... Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." [Mark 8:27-29 NKJV](#)
- <sup>20</sup> ... Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." [Luke 9:18-20 NKJV](#)
- <sup>17</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> "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. <sup>19</sup> "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."
- <sup>20</sup> Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.
- [Mark 8:30](#) Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.
- [Luke 9:21](#) And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one,
- <sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
- [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, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke this word openly. ...
- [Luke 9:22](#) saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised on the third day." [Luke 9:21-22 NKJV](#)
- <sup>22</sup> Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." [Matthew 16:13-23 NKJV](#)
- [Mark 8:32](#) ... Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. <sup>33</sup> But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." [Mark 8:30-33 NKJV](#)

So, what was going on with the healing of this blind man? Did Jesus not do a proper job in His first attempt? Elizabeth Talbot suggested that this two-step healing was an enacted parable. The first part of the healing was like the disciples' knowledge that the Messiah would come, but they didn't understand the reason. Touching the man again, Jesus completed the healing and the man could see clearly. Now Jesus attempts to help the disciples to clearly see that His true mission is to suffer and die.<sup>520</sup>

<sup>520</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Mark Good News*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2012. p37.  
[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=14](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=14)



The next thing I want to discuss is the statement, "upon this rock I will build my church," in Matthew 16:18:

[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](#)

Is Peter the rock on which the church is built? Let's take a look at a few other verses. I did a New Testament word search on foundation, stone and rock and included the relevant verses below.

[Luke 6:47](#) "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 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 6:47-48 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 3:11](#) For no other **foundation** can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 3:11 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 2:20](#) having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner[**stone**], [Ephesians 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:10](#) 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 21:10-14 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:42](#) Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

'The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**.  
This was the LORD's doing,  
And it is marvelous in our eyes' ? [Matthew 21:42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:44](#) "And whoever falls on this **stone** will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Matthew 21:44 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:10](#) "Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**. [Mark 12:10 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:17](#) Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

'The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**'?

<sup>18</sup> "Whoever falls on that **stone** will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Luke 20:17-18 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:8](#) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: <sup>9</sup> "If we this day are judged for a good deed [done] to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, <sup>10</sup> "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, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> "This is the '**stone** which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief **cornerstone**.' <sup>12</sup> "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:8-12 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:30](#) What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; <sup>31</sup> but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because [they did] not [seek it] by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. <sup>33</sup> As it is written:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling **stone** and **rock** of offense,  
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." [Romans 9:30-33 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 2:4](#) Coming to Him [as to] a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God [and] precious, <sup>5</sup> you also, as living **stones**, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion  
A chief **cornerstone**, elect, precious,  
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, to you who believe, [He is] precious; but to those who are disobedient,

"The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**,"

<sup>8</sup> and

"A **stone** of stumbling  
And a **rock** of offense."

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. [1 Peter 2:4-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:24](#) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the **rock**: <sup>25</sup> "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the **rock**. [Matthew 7:24-25 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 10:1](#) Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual **Rock** that followed them, and that **Rock** was Christ. [1 Corinthians 10:1-4 NKJV](#)

In the Old Testament, the references to God as a rock were too many to list. Not surprisingly, many of them came from Moses, and David. In summary:

- Jesus is the chief cornerstone ([Matthew 21:42](#), [Mark 12:10](#), [Luke 20:17](#), [Acts 4:11](#), [1 Peter 2:6-7](#))

- Jesus is the stone which was rejected, a stumbling stone, and rock of offense to the Jews ([Matthew 21:42](#), [Mark 12:10](#), [Luke 20:17](#), [Acts 4:11](#), [Romans 9:33](#), [1 Peter 2:6-8](#))
- Christ's words are the rock on which we can lay a secure foundation to build ([Matthew 7:25](#), [Luke 6:48](#))
- Jesus Christ is the foundation ([1 Corinthians 3:11](#))
- The apostles and prophets are the foundation and Jesus is the cornerstone ([Ephesians 2:20](#))
- The twelve foundation stones in the New Jerusalem in heaven have the names of the twelve apostles ([Revelation 21:14](#))
- The rock that provided water to the Israelites in the wilderness represents Christ ([1 Corinthians 10:4](#))
- Jesus is the stone on which we must fall to break our sinful nature ([Matthew 21:44](#), [Luke 20:18](#))

Without question, the apostles are the foundation with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone or the rock on which the foundation is built. Christ's words or teachings are the rock on which we can build. Nowhere does Peter claim it, or is he clearly called out above his fellow apostles as THE rock on which the church is built. In fact, one could argue, if that is what Jesus had intended, there should have been no debate among the disciples about who would be the greatest after that statement. One could also argue that when Peter denied Jesus not long after this conversation, the gates of Hell did prevail against him. I think what Jesus may have meant is: You are Peter, a part of the foundation, but your declaration that I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is the foundation of the Church.

By Strong's estimation, this healing and the following conversation took place around May. The disciples may have still been on a high from the feeding of the 5000 and the more recent feeding of the 4000. With great conviction, Peter has declared his belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Being the Christ meant only one thing to them, and that was being their long looked for Messiah and deliverer. To most Jews of the time, that meant driving out the Romans, and the restoration of David's dynasty to the throne of Israel. I think the disciples still believed the Jewish leaders would eventually come around or be forced to recognize who Jesus really was. I believe they still envisioned a temporal kingdom and positions high in the government for each of them. It was like throwing a bucket of water on a bed of hot coals when Jesus began talking about how He must suffer and die. To them, this didn't even compute. How can their all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal God suffer and die? A suffering Messiah and a dying God, were oxymoron's to them, which they just couldn't fathom. Since this was unthinkable, they must have thought it was another of Jesus' symbols, like the leaven or His body being flesh and His blood drink. In fact, this was a real downer which Peter was just not going to put up with. The Bible literally says Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him for talking like this. As the time of His death approached, Jesus must have been feeling increased pressure from the knowledge that His disciples still did not understand His mission. What's worse, He often found them bickering about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. Satan must have used this knowledge to discourage Jesus and make Him feel like His mission was a failure. In fact, that is exactly what Satan was doing through one of Jesus' closest followers. I don't believe Jesus was literally calling Peter Satan, but he did recognize the sentiments as coming from the devil.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus' initial healing of the blind man had him seeing incorrectly?
- Who do you think was the leader of the early church?
- Why do you think it was so hard for the disciples to understand Christ's mission?

## The cost of following Jesus

[Matthew 16:24-28](#), [Matthew 10:32-33,38](#), [Mark 8:34-38](#), [Luke 9:23-26](#), [Luke 12:8-9](#), [Luke 14:27](#)<sup>521</sup>

<a href="#">Matthew 16:24</a> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself,	<a href="#">Luke 9:23</a> Then He said to [them] all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, ...	<a href="#">Mark 8:34</a> When He had called the people to [Himself], with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, ...
<a href="#">Matthew 10:38</a> "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.	Luke 9:23 ... and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.	<a href="#">Luke 14:27</a> "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. <a href="#">Luke 14:27 NKJV</a>
<sup>26</sup> "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? <a href="#">Matthew 16:24-26 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Luke 9:25</a> "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?	<a href="#">Mark 8:36</a> "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? <a href="#">Mark 8:37</a> "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

<a href="#">Matthew 10:32</a> "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.	<a href="#">Luke 12:8</a> "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. <a href="#">Luke 12:8 NKJV</a>	
<sup>33</sup> "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. <a href="#">Matthew 10:32-33 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Luke 12:9</a> "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. <a href="#">Luke 12:9 NKJV</a>	
<a href="#">Matthew 16:27</a> "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.	<a href="#">Luke 9:26</a> ... when He comes in His [own] glory, and [in His] Father's, and of the holy angels. <a href="#">Luke 9:23-26 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Mark 8:38</a> "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed ... <a href="#">Mark 8:34-38 NKJV</a>

<sup>28</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." [Matthew 16:27-28 NKJV](#)

The first thing we read in this text is probably not something we like to talk about, perhaps especially with new believers. What does Jesus mean by denying yourself? To me, this means not gratifying your own wants and desires. Must we deny all our wants and desires? I don't think God expects us to deny ourselves everything we want or desire. It seems pretty logical, that God would want us to deny ourselves the sinful pleasures that are harmful to us, but does He want our self-denial to go beyond that? Is denying yourself related to taking up your cross and following Him? It is very interesting to me that Jesus used this language before He was crucified. It was customary for people to be forced to

<sup>521</sup> Strong. p168. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/168/mode/2up>

carry their cross to their own crucifixion, but this was not something they willingly volunteered to do. Jesus tells us that we must take up our own cross and follow Him. I think the self-denial and the cross do go together. If the cross is symbolic of crucifying our sinful nature, does that mean our sinful wants and desires can be suppressed? Let's see what Paul has to say about the topic.

[Romans 6:1](#) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be [in the likeness] of [His] resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin. [Romans 6:1-7 NKJV](#)

[Romans 8:13](#) For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [Romans 8:13 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 2:20](#) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. [Galatians 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 5:24](#) And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. [Galatians 5:24 NKJV](#)

From what we have just read, we can see that Paul really believed in this idea of crucifying one's sinful nature, resulting in freedom from sin. So how do we accomplish this? From [Romans 6:3-4](#), we can see that baptism is a part of this, but all who have been baptized realize that this is not a permanent death of our sinful natures. [Luke 9:23](#) recorded Jesus as saying that we must take up our cross daily. In fact, I would even say we must take up our cross continually. I know it doesn't sound easy, but I think the point is that we must not live our lives struggling to overcome each individual sin we repeatedly commit. There is one thing we must do, and that is to crucify self and let Christ live in us, and the sins will not be a problem as long as we leave our sinful nature in the grave. I know this doesn't really tell us exactly how to do it, but I think that God intends for us to use our freedom of choice and choose continually to kill our sinful nature and let Christ live in us.

Next, Jesus says that if you confess Him before men, He will confess you before His father. If you deny Him before men, He will deny you before His father. Do you think this means an overt denial as Peter did during Jesus' trial when three times, he denied any association with Jesus? I think confessing Him means more than just talk. I think the way we live our lives must be consistent with the things we say. If we are hard to get along with and dishonest and then try to share our belief in Jesus, it will not be very effective. In fact, it may cause the person to say, if that's what it means to be a Christian, I want nothing to do with it. In this way our negative actions can in a way deny Jesus. On the flip side, what does confessing Jesus before men mean? Every person is different, and we don't all relate to people in the same way. Some are much more outgoing and love talking to people, and some are very reserved. Some are very good at speaking to large crowds, and many are more afraid of public speaking than of death. For those that find this difficult, I would suggest looking at it another way. Imagine you are shopping for a particular item and you find it at a great discount, how easy and natural is it for you to share that find with others? Another way to look at it is, what if you had some knowledge of a coming disaster, would you share that news? I think we each know the answers to those questions. For me, what it means is that if I truly believe that I have salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ, and I see it as exciting news, I will share it with others.

Jesus concluded this conversation in a strange way in [Matthew 16:28](#) by saying that there were some present who would not die before they saw the Son of Man come in His kingdom. What did He mean by that? Clearly there are no survivors from that time waiting for His second coming. I think the answer to this mystery lies in an event that was soon to happen, known as the transfiguration which will be the topic of the next chapter.

What do you believe?

- Do you think there are degrees of self-denial and does our salvation require complete denial of self?
- How can you crucify your sinful nature so that Christ can live in you?
- Do you think working alongside someone without ever sharing your faith with them would be denying Jesus?

## The transfiguration

[Luke 9:28-36](#), [Matthew 17:1-13](#), [Mark 9:2-13](#)<sup>522</sup>

[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. <sup>34</sup> While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud.

<sup>35</sup> And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

<sup>36</sup> When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told

[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> Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup> For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them,

and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" <sup>8</sup> All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

[Matthew 17:1](#) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; <sup>2</sup> 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> Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them,

and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

<sup>522</sup> Strong. p170. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/170/mode/2up>

no one in those days any of the things they had seen. [Luke 9:28-36 NKJV](#)

[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."

[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>10</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.

[Mark 9:11](#) And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>12</sup> Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. ...

<sup>12</sup> "But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. [Matthew 17:9-13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:13](#) "But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."—  
<sup>12</sup> ... And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? [Mark 9:9-13 NKJV](#)

The voice of God was also heard audibly when Jesus was baptized saying, "this is my beloved Son." It would be heard one more time before the crucifixion. How many actually heard the words and understood them at the first and third occurrences is not known, but there were many people present. Only the disciples Peter, James and John were present when God spoke this time, and they undoubtedly heard and understood what was said. We don't know what Moses and Elijah said to Jesus, but I suspect that among other things they may have offered encouragement. With the life of self-denial Jesus lived and rejection He received from His own chosen people, I'm sure some love, thankfulness and affirmation would be welcome. Even more so from some who not only understood but would be the beneficiaries of His sacrifice.

Let's backtrack a little now and re-visit some of Jesus' words that were perhaps a little hard to understand.

[Matthew 16:28](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." [Matthew 16:28 NKJV](#)

As I stated in the previous chapter, clearly there are no survivors from that time waiting for the second coming of Christ. I believe that this is what Jesus had in mind when He made that statement. He was glorified, and his face shown bright like the sun. He was accompanied by Moses who was resurrected and Elijah who never died, both of whom were taken to heaven. It was a mini representation of Jesus' second coming where the dead in Christ would be resurrected and the righteous living would both be taken to heaven with Him.

As they came down the mountain, the disciples asked Jesus about the prophecy of the Elijah who was prophesied to come.

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. [Malachi 4:5 NKJV](#)

I don't know if this line of questioning had anything to do with the fact that they had just seen Elijah and maybe were wondering if this was the fulfillment of that prophecy. I for one question whether this prophecy was actually intended for the first coming because that coming was not really the great and terrible day of the Lord. But if there was any debate before, that John the Baptist was the Elijah that was prophesied to come before the Messiah, Jesus cleared that

up. So perhaps the Elijah, or maybe more appropriately, the message of Elijah is to prepare the way for both the first and second comings of Jesus. The next verse in Malachi, should not be overlooked.

[Malachi 4:6](#) And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." [Malachi 4:6 NKJV](#)

What do you think this verse means next to the following words of Jesus describing His first coming?

[Luke 12:51](#) "Do [you] suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. <sup>53</sup> "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." [Luke 12:51-53 NKJV](#)

It's not hard to imagine how Jesus may have turned Jewish families against each other. If part of the family accepted Him as the Messiah and the other part didn't, that would have caused severe strife and division in a Jewish home. Is it possible that Jesus' first coming caused division, but the Elijah message will bring families back together before the second coming?

What do you believe?

- Why do you think God didn't speak more often to affirm Jesus to the Jews?
- Why do you think Moses and Elijah were sent and not Enoch, or the most powerful angel?
- What do you think they talked about?

## Jesus casts out a demon the disciples couldn't

[Mark 9:14-29](#), [Matthew 17:14-18](#), [Luke 9:37-43](#)<sup>523</sup>

[Mark 9:14](#) And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. <sup>15</sup> Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to [Him], greeted Him. <sup>16</sup> And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

<sup>17</sup> Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. <sup>18</sup> "And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. ... —

<sup>22</sup> It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him ... —

[Matthew 17:14](#) And when they had come to the multitude, ...

Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to [Him], greeted Him.

"What are you discussing with them?"

[Matthew 17:14](#) And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, <sup>15</sup> "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; ...

[Matthew 17:14](#) ... for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. [Matthew 17:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:37](#) Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him.

[Luke 9:38](#) Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. <sup>39</sup> "And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams [at the mouth]; ...

[Luke 9:39](#) ... and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.

<sup>523</sup> Strong. p173. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/172/mode/2up>



<sup>18</sup> ...So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." <sup>19</sup> He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." <sup>20</sup> Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. <sup>22</sup> ... But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things [are] possible to him who believes." <sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" <sup>25</sup> 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!" <sup>26</sup> Then [the spirit] cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." <sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

<sup>28</sup> And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

<sup>29</sup> So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

[Mark 9:14-29 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:16](#) "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

[Matthew 17:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:18](#) And Jesus rebuked the demon,

and it came out of him;

and the child was cured from that very hour.

[Mathew 17:19](#) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

[Matthew 17:18-21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:40](#) "So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." <sup>41</sup> Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." <sup>42</sup> And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed [him]. ... [Luke 9:38-42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:42](#) ... Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit,

healed the child, and gave him back to his father. <sup>43</sup> And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. ... [Luke 9:42-43 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:5](#) And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

<sup>6</sup> So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. [Luke 17:5-6 NKJV](#)

This is a really strange case to me. Are there actually some demons that are harder to cast out than others? Not that casting out a demon would ever be done casually. But if God had given the disciples authority to cast demons out in the name of Jesus, what happened in this case? Jesus actually implied that there was something different in this case by saying, "this kind." White suggests in the book *Desire of Ages*, that the nine disciples were jealous of the preferred

treatment of Peter, James and John.<sup>524</sup> They all wanted the highest place in the kingdom, and they could see their chances slipping as Jesus continued to favor those same three. I can just see them griping to each other after Jesus left the night before with only the three, leaving them at the foot of the mountain. What was so special about those three anyway? They could all perform the same miracles couldn't they? Perhaps it was this state of mind that left them without the faith to perform this or any miracle.

I have alluded to the rules of engagement that I think must exist between God and Satan in the battle for human souls. Does the possession of children seem fair? I have always thought that a person had to make a deal with the devil or invite him in before he could take possession. How old would someone have to be to adequately understand this type of choice? Is it possible that some of the cases of demon possession in the Bible are really what we call seizures today? There would be no point in Jesus trying to correct the people about their diagnosis, would there? Since people rarely pause to discuss questions as they read a paragraph, I will include some of them again next.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe Satan is allowed to possess children?
- If parents of a child invite possession of themselves and try to teach their child to do the same, would God allow it?
- Do you think some of the cases of demon possession in the Bible were what we call seizures today?

## Who is the greatest?

[Matthew 17:22-27](#), [18:1-5](#), [Mark 9:30-32](#), [Luke 9:43-48](#)<sup>525</sup>

[Mark 9:30](#) Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know [it].<sup>31</sup> For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

<sup>32</sup> But they did not understand this saying,

and were afraid to ask Him. [Mark 9:30-32 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:22](#) Now while they were staying in Galilee,

Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,<sup>23</sup> and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful. [Matthew 17:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:43](#) ... He said to His disciples,  
<sup>44</sup> "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

<sup>45</sup> But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying. [Luke 9:43-45 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:24](#) When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the [Mark 9:33](#) Then He came to Capernaum. ... [temple] tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the [temple] tax?"

<sup>524</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p431. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=431>

<sup>525</sup> Strong. p176. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/176/mode/2up>

<sup>25</sup> 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?"

<sup>26</sup> Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. <sup>27</sup> "Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you." [Matthew 17:24-27 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:33](#) ... And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"

[Matthew 18:1](#) At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ... [Matthew 18:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>34</sup> But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who [would be the] greatest.

[Luke 9:46](#) Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. <sup>47</sup> And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, ... [Luke 9:46-47 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." [Mark 9:33-35 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:1](#) ... "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup> and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

[Mark 9:36](#) Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, [Luke 9:47](#) ... took a little child and set him by Him,

<sup>5</sup> "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. [Matthew 18:1-5 NKJV](#)

<sup>37</sup> "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." [Mark 9:36-37 NKJV](#)

<sup>48</sup> and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. ... [Luke 9:47-48 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:48](#) ... For he who is least among you all will be great." [Luke 9:48 NKJV](#)

Jesus again tells His disciples that He will be killed and resurrected on the third day. Mark and Luke tell us straight out that they did not understand. His words were very straight forward and unambiguous, so the must have assumed He was talking to them in symbols or parables and didn't really want to hear the interpretation because it says, they were afraid to ask.

The next thing that happened was another occasion where I believe Jesus' opponents were trying to find some fault with Him. They had never had any success trying to trap Jesus with their questions, so this time they approached Peter. They asked if Jesus paid the two-drachma tax. Apparently, this was the temple tax which we discussed in detail in the chapter on His [first Passover](#). I mentioned that the temple tax was approximately half of a shekel in silver. That is why Jesus paid this tax for two people with one shekel. In that same chapter we also discussed the reasoning behind the tax. The origin of the temple tax which was to be used for the upkeep and operation of the temple, was one of the laws given to Moses

by God. When the Jews were numbered they were instructed to pay a half-shekel so that a plague would not break out among the people [[Exodus 30:11-16](#)]. That's why Jesus called it a poll tax. But there was another purpose behind the temple tax system that Jesus wanted to point out. In that same chapter on His first Passover, we also discussed the amount of the tax which had its basis in the redemption price the Jew were to pay so that the Levites would serve full time in the temple instead of each first born who belonged to God. From the perspective of a tax paid so that a Levite would serve full time in place of you, it would seem that the Levite wouldn't have to pay. By extension, Rabbi's, who dedicated their life to the learning and instruction of religious teachings, were probably also granted exemption. While He may have been entitled to an exemption as a Rabbi, I believe Jesus was also claiming exemption as the Son of God. I'm not sure how relevant it is but I found a Jewish library website that said, "rabbis and scholars were supposed to be exempt from communal taxation." The same website also stated, "In the geonic period it was laid down that rabbis were to be exempted from taxes imposed on the community by the king and his ministers."<sup>526</sup> In any case, Peter missed the opportunity to express both his belief in Jesus as a legitimate religious teacher, but also as the Messiah. Jesus on the other hand showed His divinity in the way He obtained the money for the tax that He need not have paid.

Next, we find the disciples arguing, not for the first time or the last, about which of them is the greatest. This really was mostly about who would have the highest or most important position in the kingdom which they still believed Jesus would set up. Jesus' response to this was to turn their thinking upside-down. The one who strives to make himself first, will be last and servant of all. Whoever humbles himself will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The one who is least, is the greatest. Jesus said essentially the same thing three different ways to make sure that He was being clear. While His statements seem to be made with respect to the kingdom of God in heaven, I think that some of the elements apply even in this sinful world. For example, I think that people are less resistant to elevating someone to a position of power and authority if they have seen in that person some humility and a willingness to serve others. I think business owners and CEO's with humble serving attitudes have seen their employees being more dedicated and harder working.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the disciples had such difficulty understanding or believing Jesus' statements about His soon coming death and resurrection?
- How do you think the tax-collectors would have responded if Peter had claimed exemption from the tax for Jesus?
- Do you think the principle of the greatest is the least works all the time even now, or is it a principle for a perfect world?

## He who is not against us is for us

[Mark 9:38-42](#), [49-50](#), [Matthew 18:6-7](#), [Matthew 5:13](#), [Luke 9:49-50](#), [Luke 17:1-2](#), [Luke 14:34-35](#)<sup>527</sup>

[Mark 9:38](#) Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. <sup>40</sup> "For he who is not against us is on our side.

[Luke 9:49](#) Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." <sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid [him],  
for he who is not against us is on our side." [Luke 9:49-50 NKJV](#)

<sup>526</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/ancienttaxation.html>

<sup>527</sup> Strong. p179. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/178/mode/2up>

<sup>41</sup> "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

<sup>42</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. [Mark 9:38-42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:6](#) "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

[Luke 17:2](#) "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.—

<sup>7</sup> "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! [Matthew 18:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:1](#) Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe [to him] through whom they do come! [Luke 17:1,2 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:49](#) "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. <sup>50</sup> "Salt [is] good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?

[Matthew 5:13](#) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. [Matthew 5:13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:34](#) "Salt [is] good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> "It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, [but] men throw it out. ..." [Luke 14:34 NKJV](#)

Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." [Mark 9:49-50 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:10](#) "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. [Matthew 18:10 NKJV](#)

This section begins with a conversation Jesus had with the disciples where He tells them, "For he who is not against us is for us." [[Mark 9:40](#), [Luke 9:50](#)] But I seem to recall another verse where it seems Jesus is saying the opposite:

[Matthew 12:30](#) "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. [Matthew 12:30 NKJV](#)

It sounds like Jesus is contradicting Himself. Well as is usually the case in resolving these contradictions, the first step is to look at the entire context. In this case, we have someone who is doing good deeds, God's work, and in general giving credit to Jesus. He just happens to not have been personally instructed or commissioned directly by Jesus or the disciples. In the second case, Jesus had just cast a demon out of a man and was having a discussion with the Pharisees about whose power was used to perform this action. Ken Collins had an interesting explanation, quoting an ancient commentator, Theophylact, on the text. His explanation is that the second text is about the power used for casting out demons, specifically spirits.<sup>528</sup> Let's read more of the context and then come back to what Collins says.

[Matthew 12:22](#) Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup> And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

<sup>528</sup> <http://www.kencollins.com/answers/question-43.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Now when the Pharisees heard [it] they said, "This [fellow] does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup> "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast [them] out? Therefore they shall be your judges. <sup>28</sup> "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>29</sup> "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. <sup>30</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. [Matthew 12:22-30 NKJV](#)

If Collins is right, the controversy immediately vanishes, because we're talking about people in one case and spirits in the other. I think it's pretty widely accepted that spirits, more specifically demons and the Devil, are on the opposite sides in a conflict, from angels and God. Hence, if a spirit is not of or from God, then it is against Him.

If you are not willing to accept this spirit explanation, I think there is still another. In the first case, the statement is made regarding "us," meaning Jesus and the twelve disciples. I think Jesus is saying just because he is not part of our little group of thirteen, doesn't mean he cannot perform miracles and help our cause. I think Jesus is not talking about people's choices for good or evil in general, but those who are doing good works in His name. So, to modernize this a little, I might put it this way. Just because someone is not part of our Christian denomination, doesn't mean we should try to shut down their evangelizing and good works. In the second case, I think it is true in general that ultimately there is no neutral ground. If you are not with God, ultimately you will be against Him and with Satan. So, the first case could be a statement referring to other Christians performing good works in God's name, and the second to a person's decision in the battle between good and evil.

Jesus' discussion immediately flows into a couple other statements that He may or may not have intended to be related. I think if we set the right context we can tie them together. In reprimanding His disciples for trying to stop the man from casting out demons in the name of Jesus, we could envision Him reprimanding church leaders for trying to stop an outreach by members of their own congregation because they haven't sanctioned it. I could also see Him reprimanding the same people for even trying to stop or discredit the outreach of people from another denomination. With that context in mind, Jesus then directs His conversation to little ones who believe. This could represent either physically young, such as children, or spiritually young believers. Envision an older church member, in their zealousness to defend or enforce their view of what is acceptable or not, causing the young to lose their faith in Jesus. Unfortunately, in this day and age, another scenario that comes to mind is the sexual exploitation of children by those in authority over them. With the soft spot He has in His heart for the defenseless, I can see Jesus saying to the perpetrators, it would have been better for you to have died before you did that.

I placed the last couple verses about salt and fire in parallel, but I think the part in Mark that talks about salt and fire may be talking about something different or may be from a different conversation than the verses in Matthew and Luke. The latter I think are more straight forward in their meaning. The right amount of salt clearly can make food taste better, but too little will be ineffective and too much may be offensive. The same could be said about our Christianity to the world. Christians should make the world a better place, and non-Christians should appreciate them as a person enjoys a well flavored meal. I think an example of this could be Hospitals and schools such as are operated by Catholics and the Seventh-Day Adventists. On the other hand, is picketing a gay event with a sign that says homosexuals will burn in hell, an example of too much salt? Salt and fire in Mark is more difficult. In his commentary Henry says there is little

consensus on this verse.<sup>529</sup> It is interesting and possibly helpful that the KJV reads a little different and includes a whole other phrase.

[Mark 9:49](#) "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. [Mark 9:49 NKJV](#)

A couple options offered by David Guzik are that fire refers to tribulation, or the Holy Spirit. As followers of Jesus, being seasoned with either should make us better and more fit representatives of Him.<sup>530</sup>

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus was referring to when He talked about being salted or seasoned with fire?
- Can you think of other ways in which Christians can be like just the right amount of salt?
- Can you also think of other ways in which Christians can be like too much salt?

## Giving and receiving forgiveness for sins?

[Matthew 18:15-35](#), [Luke 17:3-4](#)<sup>531</sup>

[Matthew 18:15](#) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' <sup>17</sup> "And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

[Luke 17:3](#) "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. [Luke 17:3 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 19:15](#) "... by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. [Deuteronomy 19:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

[Luke 17:4](#) "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." [Luke 17:4 NKJV](#)

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup> "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I

<sup>529</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar\\_009.cfm?a=966049](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar_009.cfm?a=966049)

<sup>530</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide\\_Mar/Mar\\_9.cfm?a=966049](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Mar/Mar_9.cfm?a=966049)

<sup>531</sup> Strong. p181. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/180/mode/2up>

will pay you all.'<sup>27</sup> "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took [him] by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' <sup>29</sup> "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>30</sup> "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. <sup>32</sup> "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup> 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' <sup>34</sup> "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup> "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." [Matthew 18:15-35 NKJV](#)

Jesus gave some counsel on how to deal with a church member who has sinned against you. Jesus gave three steps, but if the issue is resolved, the remaining steps are not needed.

1. First approach them yourself in private. If you can get them to see their wrong, you have not only resolved the issue but you have kept the matter private.
2. If the first step was not effective, the next step is to take along two or three witnesses, preferably church leaders, the next time you go talk to the offending person. These witnesses can listen to both sides and can mediate and also help you to see if you are also in the wrong.
3. If the witnesses still believe there is a wrong being committed and the second step did not help, the third step is to bring the whole church into it. This seems pretty extreme and I guess it rarely comes to this, but what does this mean? Does it mean to bring the issue up to a church business meeting? Or does the church board represent the entire church enough to confront the person and take action. I would hope it doesn't mean to announce it to the entire congregation during church from the pulpit.

I believe these steps are intended for something pretty serious and not just a disagreement. The two or three witnesses can help to determine that. I believe that this process is partly intended to keep the person from doing the same to other members of the church, but knowing the love Jesus has for sinners, it also has the salvation of the offender in mind. In the ultimate negative outcome, Jesus says to treat the person as a Gentile or a tax collector. What does that mean? Is He saying to treat the person the way a typical Jew would treat a Gentile or tax collector, or the way He would, because we know that was very different. I think before we can answer these questions and conclude this topic, we need to consider the answer Jesus gave to Peter's question about how many times he should forgive.

Some have said without providing sources that the Jews taught you only had to forgive someone three times. I couldn't really find a source for this but I did find multiple places which said that one seeking forgiveness need only ask three times if they were not being forgiven.<sup>532 533 534</sup> In this case, Peter probably thought he was being generous by going up to seven. Jesus' answer to Peter was to keep forgiving seventy times seven, but clearly He did not intend you to stop after that. Luke really abbreviated and even wrote it differently, saying you should forgive even seven times a day. Again the implication is not to stop at seven and to continue day after day. I think what He is trying to say is that since God will

<sup>532</sup> <http://www.dailyhalacha.com/m/halacha.aspx?id=679>

<sup>533</sup> <http://www.jewishexponent.com/understanding-yom-kippur-s-focus-on-atonement-and-forgiveness>

<sup>534</sup> [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0007\\_0\\_06619.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0007_0_06619.html)



forgive no matter how many times we sin and ask for forgiveness (with one exception which we'll talk about in the next paragraph), we must be willing to do the same. With this in mind, we can now go back to my question in the previous paragraph about what Jesus meant when He said to treat the person as a Gentile or tax collector after the third attempt. Clearly Jesus is not teaching that you should stop forgiving after the third confrontation. The example He lived was to treat Gentiles and tax collectors as people who should be loved and won over to the Kingdom of God.

Next Jesus told a parable that illustrated one case where God would refuse to forgive us. In fact, Jesus repeated this teaching on at least one other occasion.

[Matthew 6:14](#) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. [Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:26](#) "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." [Mark 11:26 NKJV](#)

So, by Jesus' own words and teachings, if we are unwilling to forgive others for sins they have committed against us, God will not forgive us for our sins. If you believe that forgiveness for your own sins is a prerequisite to salvation, you must reach a point of forgiveness to everyone who has sinned against you. This is a sobering thought for people who have had very serious sins and crimes committed against them, who are unwilling to forgive.

What do you believe?

- From your perspective, how different is that three step process if you apply it to any sin rather than just sins committed against you?
- We just mentioned that God will not forgive us if we will not forgive those who have sinned against us. Do you think there is anything else that would cause God not to forgive?
- Do you think there is any sin so terrible that God cannot forgive?

## Jesus sends out seventy

[Luke 10:1-12](#), [6:40](#), [Matthew 7:6](#), [10:23-25](#), [John 13:16](#)<sup>535</sup>

[Luke 10:1](#) After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> "Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. <sup>5</sup> "But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' <sup>6</sup> "And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> "And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. <sup>8</sup> "Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. <sup>9</sup> "And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' <sup>10</sup> "But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' <sup>12</sup> "But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. [Luke 10:1-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>535</sup> Strong. p183. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/182/mode/2up>

[Matthew 7:6](#) "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. [Matthew 7:6 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.

<sup>24</sup> "A disciple is not above [his] teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more [will they call] those of his household! [Matthew 10:23-25 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:40](#) "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. [Luke 6:40 NKJV](#)

[John 13:16](#) "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. [John 13:16 NKJV](#)

As usual, the harmony and sequence are from Strong. However, since I am not trying to use every single word in the Gospels just once in the entire arrangement, I am including the instructions to the seventy again even though it was used in parallel with the instructions to the twelve ([Jesus sends His disciples out in pairs to teach and preach](#)). One big difference that I noticed was that there was no mention of healing powers for the seventy, although it does mention on their return that they were able to cast out demons in the name of Jesus [[Luke 10:17](#)]. I guess that doesn't mean they weren't given those powers, but Luke doesn't mention it. This also reinforces the idea that there was a larger group of people that were following Jesus around. I think these seventy were not just the casual crowd but were also disciples according to the definition of the word. These seventy were sent out to the towns where Jesus planned to go, to announce that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and to prepare the people for His arrival.

What do you believe?

- What do you think the phrase, "the kingdom of God is at hand," meant to the Jews of the day?
- When Jesus said not to give what is holy to dogs, do you think he meant it literally?
- It's pretty obvious that a slave is not above his master, so what is Jesus trying to teach with this statement?

## Jesus goes through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem

[John 7:2-10](#), [Luke 9:51-56](#), [17:11-19](#)<sup>536</sup>

[John 7:2](#) Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. <sup>3</sup> His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. <sup>4</sup> "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

<sup>6</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. <sup>7</sup> "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> "You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

<sup>536</sup> Strong. p185. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/184/mode/2up>

<sup>10</sup> But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

[John 7:2-10 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:11](#) Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

<sup>12</sup> Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. <sup>13</sup> And they lifted up [their] voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

<sup>14</sup> So when He saw [them], He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

<sup>15</sup> And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, <sup>16</sup> and fell down on [his] face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where [are] the nine? <sup>18</sup> "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" <sup>19</sup> And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." [Luke 17:11-19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:51](#) Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, <sup>52</sup> and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. <sup>53</sup> But they did not receive Him, because His face was [set] for the journey to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> 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?"

<sup>55</sup> But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. <sup>56</sup> "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save [them]." And they went to another village. [Luke 9:51-56 NKJV](#)

According to Strong it is September, just prior to the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, which on our calendar usually varies between late September and late October. By his chronology, we are just beginning the fourth and final year of Jesus' ministry. It begins with John's telling of an exchange Jesus had with his brothers that showed their lack of belief, but at the same time the desire for the Jewish leaders to see more of His miracles. I think they felt the sting and the stigma of being related to Jesus whom the Jewish leaders rejected, but they couldn't deny His power. I think they would have been happy for Jesus to use His power to force the Jewish leaders to recognize and accept Him as King. Instead, Jesus was content to spend most of his time in Galilee, gathering around Himself common working class people, performing miracles far from the capital city of Jerusalem.

The book of John says Jesus went to Jerusalem in secret, which could be interpreted to mean, not travelling with the large caravans of people going to Jerusalem for the feast. The only way to avoid the travelling crowds would be to go at a different time or to take a route no one else would take. So Strong cleverly inserts these two encounters with Samaritans, both of which indicated He was on His way to Jerusalem. I reversed the order of the two from Strong because one says he was passing between Samaria and Galilee, which I assume is where He started.

The first one doesn't actually say it was a Samaritan village, in fact it probably wasn't because only one of the ten lepers was a Samaritan. Furthermore, Jesus instructed them to go to the Temple to be inspected so they could be pronounced clean. In any case, it clearly states that Jesus was travelling between Galilee and Samaria.

In the second incident, Jesus is apparently looking to spend the night in a Samaritan village. I'm sure the disciples were very uncomfortable with this but there is no record of them arguing with Him. I think they probably felt that Jesus was

gracing them with His presence and hence became severely offended when the Samaritan town turned them away. Probably remembering how Prophet Elijah from the past had called down fire from heaven to destroy people who were trying to capture him, James and John asked Jesus if they should call down fire on this Samaritan town. I can just imagine Jesus looking at them with a look of shock and amazement and saying, are you kidding Me? I came to save people, not to kill them!

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus lied to his brothers about not going to the feast?
- I think the brothers and the disciples would have both liked to see Jesus take the throne of Israel, so what was the difference between them?
- Do you think people usually thanked Jesus for healing them?

## The feast of Tabernacles

[John 7:11-8:1](#), [Matthew 11:28-30](#),<sup>537</sup>

[John 7:11](#) Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?"<sup>12</sup> And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people."<sup>13</sup> However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

<sup>14</sup> Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.<sup>15</sup> And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.<sup>17</sup> "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or [whether] I speak on My own [authority].

<sup>18</sup> "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.<sup>19</sup> "Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

<sup>20</sup> The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

<sup>21</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel.<sup>22</sup> "Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.<sup>23</sup> "If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?<sup>24</sup> "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

<sup>25</sup> Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill?<sup>26</sup> "But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?<sup>27</sup> "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.<sup>29</sup> "But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

<sup>537</sup> Strong. p187. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/186/mode/2up>

<sup>30</sup> Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup> And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this [Man] has done?"

<sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. <sup>33</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and [then] I go to Him who sent Me. <sup>34</sup> "You will seek Me and not find [Me], and where I am you cannot come."

<sup>35</sup> Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup> "What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

<sup>37</sup> On the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ... [John 7:11-37 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:28](#) "Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke [is] easy and My burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV](#)

[John 7:37](#) ... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. <sup>38</sup> "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." <sup>39</sup> But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified.

<sup>40</sup> Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." <sup>41</sup> Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? <sup>42</sup> "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" <sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people because of Him. <sup>44</sup> Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

<sup>45</sup> Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

<sup>46</sup> The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

<sup>47</sup> Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? <sup>48</sup> "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? <sup>49</sup> "But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, <sup>51</sup> "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

<sup>52</sup> They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

<sup>53</sup> And everyone went to his [own] house.

[John 8:1](#) But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [John 7:37-8:1 NKJV](#)

According to Strong, the feast of Tabernacles must have occurred in September of this particular year. It seems Jesus was the topic of many conversations and everyone was wondering where He was. Naturally, one would expect Him to be present at one of the major feasts, but the people also knew that His life was being threatened by the Jewish leaders.

The Feast of Tabernacles also known as the Feast of Booths is one of three Jewish pilgrimage festivals. These were times each year that every adult male was required to appear before the Lord at the place appointed. These festivals are known by multiple names, but in English, the first is commonly known as Passover and commemorates the Exodus and more specifically the night before when the Israelite first born were passed over by the angel of death. The Exodus from Egypt is start of the Israelite nation and by God's command was to be the beginning of their year. The second is known as the feast of Weeks or Pentecost. It was to be celebrated seven weeks after Passover, which corresponded to the seven weeks between the Exodus and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. I actually never realized before, that there were exactly seven weeks between the two events. This second festival also corresponded to the first fruits of the early harvest, some of which were to be brought as an offering, and hence was also a celebration of God's providence. The third and last pilgrimage is commonly called the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. They were to camp in temporary booths made from sticks and branches to remember the forty years wandering in the wilderness. This festival also corresponded to the end of the harvest. [[Exodus 23:14–17](#), [Exodus 34:18-23](#), [Deuteronomy 16](#)]<sup>538</sup>

Three full years into His ministry and Jesus' relationship with the rulers is so strained, even the general public knows there are plans to kill Him. The rulers feel they are justified because they claim Jesus is breaking their laws and undermining their authority. This they are afraid will lead to popular uprisings which the Romans will step in to squash with violence, as they have done before. They also claim Jesus is a sinner and is leading the people astray. Jesus responds to one of these accusations, that of healing on the Sabbath. He cites precedence in how they will perform circumcision on the eighth day, even if it falls on the Sabbath, to keep the Law of Moses? He reasons, isn't making a person healthy and whole better for them than circumcision? The rulers are plotting murder, and when Jesus confronts them on that, they lie by denying it, thus breaking the ninth Commandment, while planning to break the sixth (murder).

In His own defense, Jesus gave a valuable test to judge whether someone can be trusted or not. If someone is seeking to gain power and glory for themselves, you would be right to question their motivation. But if they are promoting someone else's, especially God's glory, they should not be so easily dismissed.

On the last day of the feast Jesus spoke out to everyone listening, that all who were thirsty should come to Him and He would be like thirst quenching water to their soul. He added, those who believe in Him as the Scripture taught, would not only quench their thirst, but it would be as if they had a stream of life-giving water flowing out of them, presumably to the benefit of others. The life of a Jew who tried to follow the endless laws placed upon them by the religious rulers was a never-ending struggle of do's and don'ts, which did nothing to satisfy the thirst in their soul. Strong fittingly inserted a statement from Matthew along a similar theme. Jesus said:

[Matthew 11:28](#) "Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke [is] easy and My burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV](#)

Jesus used the example of a yoke which allowed two oxen to pull a load together. He said that those who came to Him weary from carrying a heavy load would not only find His yoke like rest in comparison, but it would bring satisfaction to their soul.

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<sup>538</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Pilgrimage\\_Festivals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Pilgrimage_Festivals)

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What do you believe?

- If the rulers wanted Jesus dead, why didn't they just do it?
- Do you think the rulers had legitimate grounds for wanting Jesus dead, or was it mostly about jealousy?
- In what way do you think believing in Jesus is a light and easy load?

## Jesus is asked to judge a woman caught in adultery

[John 8:2-11](#)<sup>539</sup>

[John 8:2](#) Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup> they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup> "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" <sup>6</sup> This they said, testing Him, that they might have [something] of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with [His] finger, as though He did not hear.

<sup>7</sup> So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." <sup>8</sup> And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> Then those who heard [it], being convicted by [their] conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest [even] to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. <sup>10</sup> When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

<sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." [John 8:2-11 NKJV](#)

The punishment for adultery in the Law of Moses was clearly death.

[Leviticus 20:10](#) 'The man who commits adultery with [another] man's wife, [he] who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. [Leviticus 20:10 NKJV](#)

But these scribes and Pharisees were not after justice. If they were they would have brought the other participant along as well. In fact, I don't think I'm alone in suspecting they framed the woman and the male participant was one of their own. Verse six says these accusers were actually after Jesus and they thought they had Him, no matter which decision He made. But as He had done every other time they tried to trap Him into saying or doing something they could accuse Him of, He left them slinking away into the shadows defeated. John doesn't actually say what Jesus was writing in the sand, but many believe that He was writing the secret sins of the accusers. I think it is interesting that having left out the detail of what Jesus was writing, John did think to mention that the accusers left starting with the older and ending with the younger? Does that mean Jesus wrote the sins of the older first, or maybe once word got around what was happening, they immediately left because they had more to hide?

Matthew Henry added some interesting insight, that if the male participant was not known, it was the husband who was to bring his wife, accusing her of adultery [[Numbers 5:15](#)]. In the test of the bitter water, God was actually the judge of the woman, and it was thought and apparently confirmed by experience that if the husband was also guilty, the bitter

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<sup>539</sup> Strong. p193. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/192/mode/2up>

water would not take effect on the woman. So, by their own tradition and their refusal to take action when Jesus invited those without sin to cast the first stone, He set the woman free.<sup>540</sup> Not because she was without sin, or because He condoned the sin, but because He was merciful and forgiving. Then Jesus told the woman to go and stop repeating this sin.

Some in historical fiction and movies have made the assumption that this woman was Mary Magdalene. Some have also written without citing a reference that the sixth century Pope Gregory stated in a sermon that the woman who washed Jesus' feet, Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and the woman caught in adultery were all Mary Magdalene. But some also claim that in 1969 Pope Paul IV reversed this stance.<sup>541 542</sup> The author of the second reference makes another claim, that if the woman caught in adultery was Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had been cast out, it would have provided a legal way for Jesus to not condemn her to death. It makes for more of an interesting character to be able to tie these Bible stories together, but there is no solid evidence that she is the same person. I think it's fine if someone wants to think or believe that she is the same person, but not to teach it as Biblical fact.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus was writing in the sand?
- Why do you think the older accusers left before the younger?
- Do you think Jesus broke the Law of Moses in not condemning the woman to death?

## The truth will make you free

[John 8:12-59](#)<sup>543</sup>

[John 8:12](#) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. <sup>15</sup> "You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I [am] with the Father who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>18</sup> "I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

<sup>19</sup> Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

<sup>20</sup> These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

<sup>540</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_008.cfm?a=1005002](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_008.cfm?a=1005002)

<sup>541</sup> <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/main-articles/mary-of-magdala.aspx>

<sup>542</sup> <https://www.wake-up.org/newsletter-archive/day-star-newsletter/the-mystery-of-mary-magdalene-july-2007.html>

<sup>543</sup> Strong. p194. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/194/mode/2up>



<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

<sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come?'"

<sup>23</sup> And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins."

<sup>25</sup> Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [He], and [that] I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. <sup>29</sup> "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." <sup>30</sup> As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

<sup>32</sup> "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

<sup>33</sup> They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How [can] You say, 'You will be made free'?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, [but] a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

<sup>37</sup> "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

<sup>38</sup> "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

<sup>39</sup> They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. <sup>40</sup> "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. <sup>41</sup> "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God."

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. <sup>43</sup> "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. <sup>44</sup> "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. <sup>45</sup> "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. <sup>46</sup> "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? <sup>47</sup> "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

<sup>48</sup> Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

<sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. <sup>50</sup> "And I do not seek My [own] glory; there is One who seeks and judges. <sup>51</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

<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>53</sup> "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

<sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. <sup>55</sup> "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. <sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw [it] and was glad."

<sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

<sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. [John 8:12-59 NKJV](#)

This teaching followed the incident of the woman caught in adultery, possibly even the same day. If it immediately followed, then this teaching would have occurred in one of the outer courts of the temple. Teaching in the innermost temple courtyard would have limited His audience to only male Jews.

I feel that this teaching is along similar lines to Jesus' teaching on the last day of the feast. On that day He said He could give rest to the weary and quench their soul thirst. On this day He says believing in Him brings true freedom from slavery to sin. The Pharisees were at their wits end trying to figure out how to deal with Jesus. They were so angry and at the same time helpless. They were like the mean kid with a powerful dad getting in arguments and fights on the playground, but not being able to respond with logic. The Pharisees claimed they had a famous father (Abraham and God) and essentially called Jesus a bastard (born of fornication). While they were at it calling names, they called Him a Samaritan (purely as an insult), and demon possessed. And finally, they picked up rocks to throw at Him.

At this time Jesus also called Himself the Light of the world. He was teaching in a courtyard of the Temple which was packed with symbols of Himself and His sacrifice to save. Light and fire has always been a symbol for God. In the temple was the seven-branch lampstand. Recall that God appeared to Moses in a burning bush [[Exodus 3:2](#)]. His presence with the Israelites was in the form of a pillar of fire [[Exodus 13:21](#)]. David said, "The Lord is my light and my salvation" [[Psalm 27:1](#)]. Isaiah prophesied, "I will also make You a light of the nations" [[Isaiah 49:6](#)]. John describing Jesus said, "His face was like the sun shining in its strength" [[Revelation 1:16](#)]. These are just a few of the verses referring to God as light. Physically and scientifically speaking, light is a form of energy, darkness is only the absence of it. If you shine a light, darkness is eliminated wherever the light shines, but you cannot do the opposite. Can you carry on with the analogies between light and dark, God and Satan, good and evil, life and death?

Jesus knew His time with the disciples was running out. From a human perspective, it might seem like Jesus was a failure. The leaders of the nation wanted to kill Him, His own disciples still didn't understand His mission, He had crowds of people following Him around for the wrong reasons.

What do you believe?

- How do you picture a sinner being a slave to sin?
- Do you think we can receive freedom from slavery to sin while still living in this sinful world?
- Do you think Jesus felt discouraged, or do you think He knew things were going as expected?

## The Good Samaritan

[Luke 10:17-37](#), [Matthew 11:25-27](#)<sup>544</sup>

[Luke 10:17](#) Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

<sup>18</sup> And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. <sup>20</sup> "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

<sup>21</sup> In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from [the] wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>22</sup> "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and [the one] to whom the Son wills to reveal [Him]."

[Matthew 11:25](#) At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from [the] wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. <sup>26</sup> "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>27</sup> "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and [the one] to whom the Son wills to reveal [Him]. [Matthew 11:25-27 NKJV](#)

<sup>23</sup> Then He turned to [His] disciples and said privately, "Blessed [are] the eyes which see the things you see;

<sup>24</sup> "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen [it], and to hear what you hear, and have not heard [it]."

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading [of it]?"

<sup>27</sup> So he answered and said,

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "

[Deuteronomy 6:5](#) "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

[Leviticus 19:18](#) ... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: ...

<sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

[Leviticus 18:5](#) 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I [am] the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

<sup>544</sup> Strong. p200. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/200/mode/2up>

<sup>30</sup> Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain [man] went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded [him], and departed, leaving [him] half dead. <sup>31</sup> "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> "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. <sup>35</sup> "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave [them] to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' <sup>36</sup> "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

<sup>37</sup> And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." [Luke 10:17-37 NKJV](#)

Strong has the seventy missionaries that Jesus sent out the month before returning to Him now. It wasn't stated that they were given healing powers, but they did cast out demons in the name of Jesus. But it does say that they were given immunity to scorpions and snakes and in general had God's supernatural protection from any attempt to harm them. I know this doesn't mean that every follower of Jesus will have his life miraculously protected all the time, because Jesus, John the Baptist, and His own disciples were all killed by their opponents. But clearly, He did not intend for any of the seventy to be harmed on this particular mission. Finally, He gave them a warning not be proud of supernatural power that they may have been allowed to tap into, but to be happy their names were written in heaven.

The story of the Good Samaritan is possibly the most well-known parable of Jesus. In fact, the title given to the story, "The Good Samaritan," is probably known and used by many who don't even know the story, but use the phrase as an expression of doing a good deed for someone. The story came about because a lawyer tested Jesus with a question. We don't really know if this was an honest question or if it was an attempt to get Jesus to say something they could use against Him. This time Jesus decided to respond with a question. The lawyer responded with a summary of the law that the Jews had been given in Deuteronomy, which had been incorporated into the Shema which was a prayer that was supposed to be recited by Jews every morning and evening.<sup>545 546</sup> But I think this lawyer was already ahead of the game so to speak because he added a second part to his summary of the law, that being to love your neighbor as yourself. After Jesus had commended him for his good answer, he seemed unsatisfied because he asked a follow-on question which led to the well-known story.

We cannot know from the Bible whether this story was told from an actual occurrence or not, but since the road from Jericho to Jerusalem was well known for its danger, everyone could easily relate. Ellen White stated that it was an actual occurrence and that the Priest and the Levite in the story were actually in attendance.<sup>547</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Do you believe that stopping for a stranded motorist or hitch hiker today is any more or less dangerous than it was for the Samaritan to stop and help the man?

<sup>545</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema\\_Yisrael](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael)

<sup>546</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/shemaref.htm>

<sup>547</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p499

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=499>

- Deuteronomy and the Shema say: with heart, soul, might; but the lawyer answered with: heart, soul, strength, and mind. Where do you think that difference came from? Someone else summarized the Law of God the same way, who do you think said it first?
- Do you think the priest had good reasons even beyond the danger for rationalizing not helping the wounded man?

## Only one thing is necessary

[Luke 10:38-42](#)<sup>548</sup>

[Luke 10:38](#) Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

<sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

<sup>42</sup> "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." [Luke 10:38-42 NKJV](#)

When people gather together the serving of food is often a key element in promoting time for mingling and socialization. Often gatherings are planned around mealtimes and in some cultures, the serving of food is a necessary part of showing hospitality. But when there is food, there must also be those who prepare and serve it. It is a necessary role and those who benefit from it would do well to express their appreciation. In the Gospels, Martha has always been known for her dedication and excellence in the role of preparing and serving food. At that time and in that culture it was, I think, generally thought that the kitchen was the only appropriate place for women. The women would socialize over the preparation and serving of food, while the men would socialize over the consumption of it. I'm not debating whether these cultural norms are right or not, but clearly Martha saw her sister's role as helping her in the kitchen, and not socializing with the men who were being served. It must have been very difficult for Martha to take what sounded a lot like a rebuke for what was a very reasonable request. But here Jesus is giving us some priorities by which we should pattern our life. "Only one thing is necessary." Since we cannot sit physically at Jesus' feet, I substitute in its place personal time studying the Words of God and praying. I believe this is necessary in order to develop the relationship with Jesus which will lead us to be proper representatives of Him on earth and to be ready for Him when He returns.

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What do you believe?

- What do you believe is the "one thing" Jesus said is necessary?
- What is it necessary for?
- Do you think Martha could have served and sat at the feet of Jesus as well?

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<sup>548</sup> Strong. p203. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/202/mode/2up>

## The Lord's Prayer

[Luke 11:1-13](#), [Matthew 6:9-15](#), [Mark 11:25-26](#)<sup>549</sup>

[Luke 11:1](#) Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, [that] one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup> So He said to them, ... [Luke 11:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:9](#) "In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as [it is] in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

<sup>14</sup> "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. [Matthew 6:9-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:2](#) ... "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as [it is] in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> Give us day by day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins,

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one." [Luke 11:2-4 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:25](#) "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. <sup>26</sup> "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." [Mark 11:25-26 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:5](#) And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup> 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? <sup>8</sup> "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if [he asks] for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup> "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" [Luke 11:5-13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:7](#) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

<sup>11</sup> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! [Matthew 7:7-11 NKJV](#)

<sup>549</sup> Strong. p204. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/204/mode/2up>

The Lord’s Prayer is one that many have memorized and recited in groups. I believe that Jesus probably gave it as an example of how to pray rather than as something we would just recite over and over again. Noticing how short it is, I recalled Jesus actually having something to say about long prayers in public.

[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](#)

The length of your prayer says nothing about what is in your heart. But Jesus did say that if you pray long prayers to make yourself look more holy, but are really a hypocrite, your condemnation will be worse. I know the point of this statement is not about how long our public prayers should be, but clearly long prayers for outward show is frowned upon by Jesus. I think one could have a general rule of short in public, long in private. Whether public or private, we can use the Lord’s Prayer as a template.

1. Address with familiarity and exaltation
  - a. Acknowledge God as our Father
  - b. Acknowledge His greatness, holiness, righteousness, etc...
2. Request His will be done
  - a. On earth
  - b. In our lives
3. Request or thanks for daily sustenance
  - a. Food
  - b. Shelter
4. Request forgiveness for our sins
5. Close with some exaltation

Strong diagramed the prayer in a unique way:

<i>Gradations</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Homage</i>	<i>Petitions</i>	<i>Doxology</i>	
<i>General</i>	Father	Hallowed be Your name	Give us this day our daily bread	For Yours is the kingdom	
<i>Christian</i>	our	Your kingdom come	And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors	and the power	forever
<i>Consummation</i>	Who is in heaven	Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven	And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	and the glory	

Some time back I wrote a chapter on [The unpardonable sin](#). In that chapter I discussed the idea that there was no sin so bad that God would not forgive, if we repent and ask forgiveness. Well, I guess we should add one more condition for receiving forgiveness. If we refuse to forgive those who sin against us, God will refuse to forgive us when we ask for forgiveness. It really couldn't be stated any more clearly than it is in [Matthew 6:15](#). Perhaps another way to look at it is, if you refuse to forgive someone for something they did to you, perhaps that means you are not truly repentant of your sins?

The next section in [Luke 11:5-8](#) is a little puzzling. Is Jesus teaching that if we keep asking God over and over for something He will eventually tire of our nagging and grant our request? There was another occasion where Jesus talked about persistence in asking. In [Luke 18:1-8](#), He related a story of a widow who was being taken advantage of and how she appeared before the judge every day begging for justice. In Luke 11, He is talking about giving the Holy Spirit to those who ask, and in Luke 18, the example was about seeking justice.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus meant when He prayed, "lead us not into temptation?"
- Is holding a grudge an unpardonable sin?
- Why should we have to be persistent in asking God for the Holy Spirit? Shouldn't asking once be enough?

## Jesus heals a blind man

[John 9](#)<sup>550</sup>

[John 9:1](#) Now as [Jesus] passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

<sup>4</sup> "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; [the] night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

<sup>6</sup> When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. <sup>7</sup> And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

<sup>9</sup> Some said, "This is he." Others [said], "He is like him." He said, "I am [he]."

<sup>10</sup> Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

<sup>12</sup> Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."



<sup>13</sup> They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

<sup>16</sup> Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

<sup>17</sup> They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup> But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. <sup>19</sup> And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

<sup>20</sup> His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup> "but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said these [things] because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed [that] He [was] Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup> 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."

<sup>25</sup> He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner [or not] I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

<sup>26</sup> Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

<sup>27</sup> He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear [it] again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

<sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. <sup>29</sup> "We know that God spoke to Moses; [as for] this [fellow], we do not know where He is from."

<sup>30</sup> The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! <sup>31</sup> "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. <sup>32</sup> "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. <sup>33</sup> "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

<sup>34</sup> They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

<sup>36</sup> He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

<sup>37</sup> And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

<sup>38</sup> Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

<sup>39</sup> And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

<sup>40</sup> Then [some] of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains. [John 9 NKJV](#)

I'm sure this is not the first time Jesus has healed a person who was blind from birth, but with the disciples' question, it was a good time to correct a common misconception. The Jews and probably most people of the time believed that if you suffered from some physical sickness or handicap, it was a punishment for something you or your parents had done. Even though people in the past may not have known the scientific and physical causes, they could easily have seen the relationship between certain actions and their physical effects. Unfortunately, many natural consequences are even passed from parent to innocent child. Combining these observations with the belief that God punished them as a nation if they weren't faithful to Him, it's not that hard to see how they could have come to those conclusions. Jesus however, made it clear that God does not inflict an arbitrary sickness or physical handicap on someone because of a sin they or their parents committed. It does trouble me though that Jesus said the man was born blind so that: "the works of God might be displayed in him." I don't think He meant that literally but said it as a statement of the good that would come out of the healing.

An interesting question that ensued, with the healing having been performed on the Sabbath, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" Apparently, some people saw the miracles of Jesus as signs of His power rather than as acts to relieve suffering. Maybe this is one reason they were so opposed to Him healing on the Sabbath, or maybe not.

I found it interesting in [verse 17](#) where it said: "And there was a division among them." It is not clear to me whether this was a division among the Pharisees, or between them and others who were not Pharisees. Apparently, the miracles of Jesus were signs to these people, who were not willing to ascribe them to Satan's power. Those on the other side of the divide, as they always did, began to try to disprove or discredit the miracle. We have seen many cases where Jesus was questioned by these sceptics, and answered so wisely, they were silenced or reduced to name calling. Here I believe is an example of the Holy Spirit giving words to a man, so that he was able to so thoroughly win the verbal debate, that the Pharisees were again reduced to name calling.

In the last part of this encounter Jesus establishes an interesting principle. "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." [\[verse 41\]](#) There is a principle in Western civilization called *Ignorantia juris non excusat* or *ignorantia legis neminem excusat* which is Latin for "ignorance of the law excuses not" and "ignorance of law excuses no one."<sup>551</sup> I guess one reason for the Latin is that it is adopted from Roman law. The basis of this principle is that if you are living under protection and authority of a government, it is your responsibility to be aware of the laws of the land. If this were not the case, all defendants could claim they were not aware of the law and since people cannot read minds, how can the claim be disproved? There are some measures in place to encourage the learning of applicable and relevant laws, for example, a driver's license test. In spite of the principle, there are cases where leniency is given, for example: a new law makes something illegal that was formerly legal, but insufficient notice has been given. It doesn't mean that law was not broken, but the ignorance in this case combined with the failure on the side of law enforcement may lead to a reduced penalty. I think another case for leniency could be, if a country conquers another, they cannot expect to judge all the conquered people by their laws until the new people have been informed of the laws. Finally, getting to Jesus' comment, does ignorance really excuse sin? I think in most cases a person knows that

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<sup>551</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignorantia\\_juris\\_non\\_excusat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignorantia_juris_non_excusat)

murder is wrong whether they've read the Ten Commandments or not. But if someone has never heard of God, it doesn't seem fair to hold them responsible for their ignorance.

What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus choose to heal the man with clay made from His own spit?
- Why do you think Jesus kept healing on the Sabbath, when He knew how much trouble it would cause with the Pharisees?
- How do you think people who have never heard of God or seen a Bible will be judged by Him?

## The Good Shepherd

[John 10:1-21](#)<sup>552</sup>

[John 10:1](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

<sup>7</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> "All who [ever] came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly.

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> "But a hireling, [he who is] not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; and I know My [sheep], and am known by My own. <sup>15</sup> "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock [and] one shepherd.

<sup>17</sup> "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup> "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

<sup>19</sup> Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. <sup>20</sup> And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

<sup>21</sup> Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

[John 10:1-21 NKJV](#)

The shepherd as a symbol for God goes all the way back to the Old Testament. It is generally applied in the context of care and protection of His people. David, the shepherd who became king wrote numerous Psalms depicting God as a

<sup>552</sup> Strong. p211. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/210/mode/2up>

Shepherd for His followers. In this teaching Jesus drew parallels to several of the well-known characteristics of good shepherds. Sheep are known to be able to recognize faces and even remember them for years.<sup>553 554</sup> Presumably the same applies to voices as well. Jesus painted a verbal picture of Himself as the Good Shepherd, which should have been very familiar to the people listening. The following is my description of ancient shepherding based on the Bible and what I have heard from various places, provided without secular reference. Shepherds would stay with their flocks twenty-four hours a day. Possibly depending on the size of the flock, they might know each sheep by name. They were patient and tender with their flock, doing their best to protect them from unsafe terrain, predators and pests. At night they would usually try to find some kind of enclosure to contain and protect their sheep. Once the sheep were safely inside, the shepherd would sleep across the one entry-way, thus making themselves the door. Good shepherds would put their life at risk to protect their sheep from thieves or predatory animals. Hired shepherds were known to not risk their life to protect their sheep. This relationship was not only fitting for God, but it was one the hearers could easily relate to.

So, why were the people saying Jesus was demon possessed or insane? Was it because of the shepherd analogy, which was clearly ascribed to God in the Old Testament? Or was it because He said He can lay down His life and take it back up again? It seems that some were still not willing to ascribe the ability to heal the blind to Satan's power.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the people were calling Jesus demon possessed or insane?
- Do you think shepherding was looked down on by these people?
- Do you think they saw God as their shepherd?

## If you are the Christ, tell us plainly

[John 10:22-42](#)<sup>555</sup>

[John 10:22](#) Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. <sup>23</sup> And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. <sup>24</sup> Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. <sup>26</sup> "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> "My Father, who has given [them] to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of My Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> "I and [My] Father are one."

<sup>31</sup> Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. <sup>32</sup> Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

<sup>33</sup> 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."

<sup>553</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheep#Intelligence\\_and\\_learning\\_ability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheep#Intelligence_and_learning_ability)

<sup>554</sup> [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/11/1107\\_TVsheep.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/11/1107_TVsheep.html)

<sup>555</sup> Strong. p213. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/212/mode/2up>

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '?" <sup>35</sup> "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), <sup>36</sup> "do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" <sup>37</sup> "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; <sup>38</sup> "but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father [is] in Me, and I in Him." <sup>39</sup> Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

<sup>40</sup> And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. <sup>41</sup> Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." <sup>42</sup> And many believed in Him there. [John 10:22-42 NKJV](#)

Strong says, according to the Apocrypha and Josephus, this Temple dedication anniversary was for the reinstatement of Jewish religion after it had been abolished by Antiochus.<sup>556</sup>

Jesus was not in the practice of calling Himself God or the Son of God. In fact, in one conversation with the disciples and Peter, Jesus told them not to tell people who He was.

[Matthew 16:16](#) Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ... <sup>20</sup> Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. [Matthew 16:16,20 NKJV](#)

But can you guess who did know and call Jesus the Son of God? In two of his temptations, Satan tempted Jesus to prove that He was the Son of God.

[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](#)

[Mark 3:11](#) And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [Mark 3:11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:41](#) And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking [them], did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ. [Luke 4:41 NKJV](#)

Well, why did Jesus not want the disciples and demons calling Him the Son of God? One possible reason is that He knew the Jewish leaders would use it as evidence to crucify Him rather than believe in Him.

[Matthew 26:63](#) But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

<sup>64</sup> 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."

<sup>65</sup> 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!" <sup>66</sup> "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." [Matthew 26:63-66 NKJV](#)

<sup>556</sup> Strong. p213. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/212/mode/2up>

[Luke 22:70](#) Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You [rightly] say that I am."

<sup>71</sup> And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

[Luke 22:70-71 NKJV](#)

Getting back to our story, can you just picture Jesus teaching in one of the outer courtyards of the temple, and the people start picking up stones. First of all, one might ask, why are their stones in the temple courtyard? I envisioned the temple courtyard being paved. Nevertheless, these men are picking up stones, feeling them out for the right size and shape, maybe trying to intimidate by tossing them in the air and catching them like a baseball. They are doing this because they feel Jesus has indirectly insinuated that He is the Son of God. But after Jesus' questioning response to them, they feel they couldn't get away with it that time, and no doubt angrily restrain themselves.

What do you believe?

- What do you think the term "Son of God" meant to the Jews?
- Do you think the Jews equated "Son of God" with the God who gave the Law on Mount Sinai?
- Why do you think the Jews restrained themselves from throwing the stones?

## The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus

[John 11:1-54](#)<sup>557</sup>

[John 11:1](#) Now a certain [man] was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was [that] Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. <sup>3</sup> Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

<sup>4</sup> When Jesus heard [that], He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. <sup>7</sup> Then after this He said to [the] disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

<sup>8</sup> [The] disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> "But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

<sup>16</sup> Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

<sup>557</sup> Strong. p215. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n285/mode/2up>

<sup>17</sup> So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. <sup>19</sup> And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

<sup>20</sup> Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. <sup>21</sup> Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

<sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

<sup>26</sup> "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

<sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

<sup>28</sup> And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> As soon as she heard [that], she arose quickly and came to Him.

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. <sup>31</sup> Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

<sup>32</sup> Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

<sup>33</sup> Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. <sup>34</sup> And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

<sup>37</sup> And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been [dead] four days."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone [from the place] where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up [His] eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said [this], that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" <sup>44</sup> And he who had died 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."

<sup>45</sup> Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. <sup>46</sup> But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. <sup>47</sup> Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. <sup>48</sup> "If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

<sup>49</sup> And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup> "nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> Now this he did not say on his own [authority]; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

<sup>53</sup> Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. <sup>54</sup> Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. [John 11:1-54 NKJV](#)

I have mentioned his name a couple times, but this is the first time we read about Lazarus in the Gospel account. We have read of Mary and Martha before, in the chapter, [Only one thing is necessary \[Luke 10:38-42\]](#). There is no mention of parents and it appears that the sisters Mary and Martha live together in a household with their brother. If the sisters do live together with their brother, it would strongly suggest that they are not married. There is every indication that Jesus has been in the home before, when Martha served and Mary sat at His feet [\[Luke 10:38-42\]](#). In the current story, the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "he whom you love is sick" [\[John 11:3\]](#). And "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." [\[John 11:5\]](#). In the next chapter of John, we will find Jesus again being served by Martha, with Lazarus present. On another occasion, Matthew said, "And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there" [\[Matthew 21:17\]](#) Although Matthew doesn't say where in Bethany they stayed, when you put all these statements together, it is easy to assume where they may have stayed. All of these statements together seem to indicate a great deal of familiarity. John also tells us that it was only about two miles between Jerusalem and Bethany [\[John 11:18\]](#). A picture begins to emerge of the household of Lazarus, Martha and Mary in Bethany, as a home away from home, for Jesus and His disciples. My guess is that they would often spend the night there whenever they were in Jerusalem. I think it was probably also a place where Jesus could feel safe that His words were not being parsed to use against Him.

In [verse 2](#), John tells us that this Mary is the one who anointed Jesus' feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair. This is a puzzle piece to another story we know, but what is also interesting about it is that John doesn't relate this story until the next chapter. Some including myself have taken this to mean that Jesus' feet could have been anointed by Mary earlier in His ministry, when He was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee [\[Luke 7:37-38\]](#).

It used to bother me that Jesus said the sickness will not end in death [\[verse 4\]](#), when He knew He was going to let Lazarus die. But I believe what Jesus meant was that death was not the end for him. It does seem strange however, that the story says Jesus loved them so when He heard Lazarus was sick, He waited two days before leaving the place to go to them. The Jews had been asking for a sign, and Jesus was planning a big one. He knew it would strengthen the faith of Mary, Martha and Lazarus as well as His disciples. But in order to perform this sign, Lazarus had to take one for the team.

The other resurrections Jesus performed had all taken place shortly after death, and in one case Jesus even said the girl is not dead but sleeping [\[Matthew 9:24\]](#). Even though the people in that story laughed at Him because they knew she was dead, it left room for doubters to claim she had not been resurrected but had merely been revived. This time there would be no doubt about it.

As it turned out [verse 45](#) says that many people who came to Mary (presumably those who came to mourn), believed. But apparently there were some spies even among the mourners, because they ran to the chief priests and reported what had happened. If you will recall, multiple times the Jews had asked Jesus for signs, but now the truth comes out, that they had considered His miracles signs. [Verse 47](#) says, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs."



In the end, their jealousy and hatred of Jesus not only led them to ignore this sign, but they resolved to kill Him. What's more, [verse 10](#) of the next chapter says, they even planned to kill Lazarus.

What do you believe?

- How many other people had Jesus resurrected from death?
- Why did Jesus cry considering that He was just about to bring Lazarus back to life?
- Why do you think the chief priests were even plotting to kill Lazarus?

## Jesus heals a hunchbacked woman on Sabbath

[Mark 10:1](#), [Matthew 19:1-2](#), [Luke 13:10-17](#)<sup>558</sup>

[Mark 10:1](#) Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. [Mark 10:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:1](#) ... and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. <sup>2</sup> And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there. [Matthew 19:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:10](#) Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise [herself] up. <sup>12</sup> But when Jesus saw her, He called [her] to [Him] and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." <sup>13</sup> And He laid [His] hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. <sup>14</sup> But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." <sup>15</sup> The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead [it] away to water it? <sup>16</sup> "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" <sup>17</sup> And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him. [Luke 13:10-17 NKJV](#)

I'm a little puzzled by the notion that this hunchback condition is caused by a spirit. In "typical" demon possession, it seemed that Jesus usually addressed the demon in casting it out and there was often a departing exclamation from it. Perhaps this is a case of a physical ailment caused by Satan without possession? Or is it possible that she had some seizures that led the people to believe she was possessed by a demon? Finally, as the one who introduced sin into our world, isn't it fair to credit Satan with all physical ailments.

Having taken that little diversion, I think the primary concern of this story is the appropriateness of performing certain actions on the Sabbath. This question has come up many times before because of the frequency with which the Jews accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath by healing. But it certainly hasn't changed His behavior and again He defends His action without setting aside the Sabbath commandment. His justification has generally been, it is lawful to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. Now I think there is a difference between what Jesus did without charge, and a physician setting up clinic on Sabbath and charging for his services. So, I think motivation for the action plays an important role in determining its appropriateness.

<sup>558</sup> Strong. p221. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/220/mode/2up>

What do you believe?

- If you are a doctor or nurse, do you think it's ok to keep the money you earn on Sabbath?
- Do you think it is ok to have a full-on FREE health clinic for the needy on Sabbath?
- Obviously, we accept performing some health services on Sabbath at least in part because of Jesus' example. Are there other non-health related services that you would also feel comfortable including?
- If you had a plumbing emergency on Sabbath and are willing to call a stranger within your gates to work on it, should you as a plumber also be willing to answer someone else's emergency? If so, would you charge?

## Narrow is the way that leads to life and few find it

[Luke 13:22-30](#), [Matthew 7:13-14](#), [22-23](#), [8:11-12](#)<sup>559</sup>

[Luke 13:22](#) And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, <sup>24</sup> "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, ... [Luke 13:22-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:13](#) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide [is] the gate and broad [is] the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> "Because narrow [is] the gate and difficult [is] the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. [Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:24](#) ... for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup> "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' <sup>26</sup> "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

[Matthew 7:22](#) "Many will say to Me in that day,

'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

<sup>27</sup> "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'  
[Psalm 6:8](#) Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; ... [Psalm 6:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

[Matthew 7:22-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>28</sup> "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

[Matthew 8:12](#) ... There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 8:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>29</sup> "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

[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. ... [Matthew 8:11-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>30</sup> "And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." [Luke 13:24-30 NKJV](#)

<sup>559</sup> Strong. p222. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/222/mode/2up>

It is very popular these days among those who call themselves followers, that God is love and will take them all to heaven. In fact, sometimes I think these followers have the old Jewish mentality, that they are God's chosen, and will automatically be saved. But this is not what Jesus taught. His exact words are "Because narrow [is] the gate and difficult [is] the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." [[Matthew 7:14](#)] I believe the popular view is a tactic of Satan to get people to be complacent. Now the question is: is this statement directed specifically at the Jews, and I think by extension, to any who consider themselves God's chosen? [Luke 13:24](#) implies that Jesus is talking about people who are trying or expecting to get to heaven. So, these are people who know about heaven. They even prophesied, cast out demons and performed miracles in the name of Jesus. But He will say, "depart from me, all you evildoers" [[Luke 13:27](#)]. But here's where it gets interesting. While Jesus says few of them will get in, He says many will come from the east and west, while the sons of the kingdom will be cast out [[Matthew 8:11-12](#)]. I don't think Jesus is necessarily saying a lower proportion of those who profess to be followers of Him will be in heaven than those who do not. But I do think He means that many who we think will not be saved will be there, while many who we think will be saved will not. Finally, Jesus throws out one more surprise. It is fairly natural for people to place or see themselves in a hierarchy. But Jesus says that some who think they are at the top of the hierarchy, and most important will be surprised to find themselves at the bottom when they get to heaven. And some who humbly go about their business serving Christ through their fellow man will be surprised to see themselves at the top.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the statement that few will get to heaven applied just to the Jewish religious leaders, or to all who call themselves chosen, or to everyone in the world?
- How do you think that people who are even able to cast out demons and heal could be lost?
- It sounds like there will be some sort of hierarchy in heaven. How do you envision that working?

## Jesus heals a man of dropsy in a Pharisee's house on Sabbath

[Luke 13:31-35](#), [14:1-6](#)<sup>560</sup>

[Luke 13:31](#) On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You." <sup>32</sup> And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third [day] I shall be perfected.' <sup>33</sup> "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the [day] following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

<sup>34</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen [gathers] her brood under [her] wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until [the time] comes when you say,

'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " [Luke 13:31-35 NKJV](#) [Psalm 118:26](#) Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! ... [Psalm 118:26 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:1](#) Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy.

<sup>3</sup> And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

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<sup>560</sup> Strong. p224. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/224/mode/2up>

<sup>4</sup> But they kept silent. And He took [him] and healed him, and let him go. <sup>5</sup> Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" <sup>6</sup> And they could not answer Him regarding these things. [Luke 14:1-6 NKJV](#)

As I contemplated these verses from Luke, I wondered to myself, why would a Pharisee be warning Jesus of a plot to kill Him? Assuming they were in Herod's territory, I would think the jealous Pharisees would be happy to have Herod take care of their problem. One possible reason I could think of was that these were sympathetic Pharisees, perhaps one such as Nicodemus. By calling him a fox, Jesus was essentially calling Herod a sly cunning man. His response was also a slam against the wicked kings of Judah who had killed prophets in Jerusalem. I think He was also implying that as long as He was following God's plan and had unfinished business, no one could touch Him. At the end of that conversation, Jesus said the next time He entered Jerusalem, it would be a fulfillment of the prophecy of Him riding on a donkey to the praises of the people.

On Sabbath, Jesus was dining at the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees. Here we again find either a sympathetic Pharisee or one who was laying a trap for Jesus, inside the confines and walls of his own home. It is unlikely that a sick man would just happen to find himself in front of Jesus in the home of one of leaders of the Pharisees. In fact, I can't imagine the Pharisees allowing such a man, whom they probably considered a sinner, into their house except to lay a trap for Jesus.

I was curious what dropsy was and I found this in biblestudytools.com:

drop'-si (hudropikos, "a man afflicted with hudrops or dropsy"):

Both forms of this disease occur in Palestine, that in which the limbs and body are distended with water called anasarca, depending generally on cardiac or renal disease, and the form confined to the abdomen, usually the result of liver infection. The latter is the commoner, as liver disease is a frequent result of recurrent attacks of malarial fever. The man was evidently able to move about, as he had entered into the Pharisee's house ([Luke 14:2](#)). <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/dropsy.html>

Jesus kept hammering His theme that it is lawful to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. His point, of them being willing to pull their son or ox out of the ditch on Sabbath, was obviously true because they didn't disagree. So, if it was their son Jesus was healing on Sabbath, I bet they would be much less antagonistic. Their whole attitude kind of makes you feel like they cared more for their own livestock than the sick common people whom they considered sinners.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think either of these instances were sympathetic Pharisees?
- What thoughts come to your mind when you read [verse 34](#)? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen [gathers] her brood under [her] wings, but you were not willing!"
- I could envision a Pharisee pulling their son out of the ditch, but why would they pull their livestock out on the Sabbath day?

## The parable of the marriage feast

[Matthew 22:1-14](#), [Luke 14:16-24](#)<sup>561</sup>

[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.' " [Matthew 22:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:18](#) "But they all with one [accord] began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' <sup>19</sup> "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' <sup>20</sup> "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' [Luke 14:18-20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 22:5](#) "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.

[Luke 14:16](#) Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, <sup>17</sup> "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' [Luke 14:16-17 NKJV](#)

" [Matthew 22:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:21](#) "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ... —<sup>24</sup> "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "—<sup>21</sup> ... 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here [the] poor and [the] maimed and [the] lame and [the] blind.' <sup>22</sup> "And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' <sup>23</sup> "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel [them] to come in, that my house may be filled. [Luke 14:21-24 NKJV](#)

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 22:5-14 NKJV](#)

As He did with many of His parables in Matthew, Jesus began by saying, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to. No analogy is perfect, and I do not believe having a list of selected guests reflects God's desire for who will be saved. In this case it actually fit what the Jews thought of themselves as the favored and perhaps the only people of God. It is pretty clear that the mistreatment of the king's slaves was symbolic of the way the Jews had treated some of the prophets who had been sent by God. As a result, the Jews suffered at the hands of armies, no longer held back by God's protection. I believe the next part of the parable was to be an analogy of what would take place after His death, when all people from every nation would be invited to join the Christian movement. It mattered not whether they were poor, crippled, blind, lame, evil or good, as long as they were willing to wear the wedding garment. I find the language, "compel them to come

<sup>561</sup> Strong. p226. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/226/mode/2up>

in,” to show God’s great desire to save as many as possible. The parable covers all the way to the second coming and entry to heaven. I do not believe it literally means that everyone will be brought up to heaven first, and then those who did not accept Christ’s righteousness will be expelled. I believe the point is that the garment symbolizes the righteousness of Christ that is freely offered to cover our imperfections. Without this garment we are unworthy to enter His Kingdom.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the use of the wedding analogy goes deeper than just the idea of invited and admitted guests?
- What does it mean to you for someone to be in the wedding hall without the wedding clothes?
- What does the symbolism of binding the man hand and foot before he is cast out mean to you?

## Test of discipleship

[Luke 14:25-35](#), [Matthew 10:37](#)<sup>562</sup>

[Luke 14:25](#) Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,<sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."<sup>27</sup> "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."<sup>28</sup> "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has [enough] to finish [it]—<sup>29</sup> "lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see [it] begin to mock him,<sup>30</sup> "saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"<sup>31</sup> "Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?<sup>32</sup> "Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace."<sup>33</sup> "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

[Matthew 10:37](#) "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. [Matthew 10:37 NKJV](#)

<sup>34</sup> "Salt [is] good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?<sup>35</sup> "It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, [but] men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" [Luke 14:25-35 NKJV](#)

Wow, this seems really harsh. Does Jesus really want us to hate our parents and family? Let look at a few verses to see what Bible teaches.

[Exodus 20:12](#) "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. [Exodus 20:12 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 21:15](#) "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. ...<sup>17</sup> "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. [Exodus 21:15, 17 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 19:3](#) 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I [am] the LORD your God. [Leviticus 19:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>562</sup> Strong. p229. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/228/mode/2up>

[Ephesians 6:1](#) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [Ephesians 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 3:20](#) Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. [Colossians 3:20 NKJV](#)

I think the Bible is pretty clear that we are not to disrespect our parents. So, can we hate and respect our parents at the same time. I think in the context of everything the Bible teaches and the way Jesus lived, the best possible interpretation is what we read in [Matthew 10:37](#), which says we must love God more than we love our father, mother and family. To me, that means we should love God so much more than we love our parents and family, that by comparison, it would be like the opposite extreme.

I think Jesus is giving us a way to measure whether we can be a true follower of His. If we don't love God enough, then we will not be willing to pay the cost of following Him. Using very graphic language Jesus added, that we must be willing to carry the cross to our own crucifixion as He knew He would be doing. At the time everyone knew what carrying the cross meant, and how horrible crucifixion was. There were probably constant reminders of it around them which is one of the reasons they hated the Romans so much. This is not the first time Jesus has used this language of the cross. We discussed it in an earlier chapter, [The cost of following Jesus](#).

But He didn't stop there, Jesus gave a couple more examples. Counting your funds before starting to build, to make sure you have enough, and considering whether your army is big or strong enough to win before going into battle. Finally, Jesus said none of them could be His disciples without giving up all their possessions. I have claimed before that God doesn't expect every follower to give up all their possessions, but is this true in light of what we just read? In the Bible we can find examples for both sides of the argument. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had great possessions and didn't liquidate them. Job had great possessions as well but showed that he was willing to trust God in spite of losing everything. The very generation that Jesus was speaking to at the time demonstrated their willingness precisely as He said they should.

[Acts 4:34](#) Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> and laid [them] at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. [Acts 4:34-35 NKJV](#)

So, would the church and true followers of Jesus be better off if they followed this example? It clearly shows the level of commitment and finally I think as Jesus said, that it is hard for a rich man to be saved. I think this is true for at least two reasons.

1. I think the more you have, the harder it is to give it all up
2. When you have the ability to buy whatever you want, it's harder to develop a true trust and dependence on God.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think we must love God so much?
- Is loving God more for His benefit or ours?
- Is the cost of discipleship the same for everyone or do some pay more?
- If some end up paying more, is that fair?
- Is Jesus suggesting that we should count the cost first and if we don't think we are willing to pay the price, not to become a disciple?

- Why don't we advocate selling all we have to followers of Jesus today?

## The lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son

[Luke 15:1-32](#), [Matthew 18:12-14](#)<sup>563</sup>

[Luke 15:1](#) Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." <sup>3</sup> So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

<sup>4</sup> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> "And when he has found [it], he lays [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> "And when he comes home, he calls together [his] friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' <sup>7</sup> "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

[Matthew 18:12](#) "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? <sup>13</sup> "And if he should find it,

assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that [sheep] than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. <sup>14</sup> "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. [Matthew 18:12-14 NKJV](#)

<sup>8</sup> "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds [it]? <sup>9</sup> "And when she has found [it], she calls [her] friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' <sup>10</sup> "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

<sup>11</sup> Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> "And the younger of them said to [his] father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls [to me].' So he divided to them [his] livelihood. <sup>13</sup> "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. <sup>14</sup> "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

<sup>15</sup> "Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

<sup>16</sup> "And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him [anything].

<sup>17</sup> "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup> 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup> "and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." '

<sup>20</sup> "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

<sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put [it] on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on [his] feet. <sup>23</sup> 'And bring the fatted calf here and kill [it], and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup> 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

<sup>563</sup> Strong. p230. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/230/mode/2up>



<sup>25</sup> "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.  
<sup>26</sup> "So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

<sup>28</sup> "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> "So he answered and said to [his] father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.  
<sup>30</sup> 'But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

<sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> 'It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' " [Luke 15:1-32 NKJV](#)

This is a series of three related parables that illustrate God's love for lost souls and His joy over their repentance and salvation. In the first story, I have always thought of the "nine-nine who need no repentance," as people who are already believers and followers of Jesus. But really, we are all sinners, in need of repentance. I like Matthew Henry's commentary which likens the ninety-nine to vast majority of God's creation who did not rebel against Him and hence need no repentance.<sup>564</sup> Examining this parable literally, God went looking for the soul who possibly felt lost and alone but was not looking for Him. But why does God need to look for us when He knows exactly where we are? There must be a different interpretation to the verb look in this parable. I think God wishes to save every soul, but maybe He can only save those who allow themselves to be found. I know this deviates from the symbolism of the parable because the sheep doesn't really have any influence over whether it is found or not. Clearly if God knows where everyone is and not everyone is found, there must be some reason He cannot find some.

In the second parable, the condition of the lost soul is different, in that it doesn't even feel lost. I wonder, how does God go looking for this class of people without violating their free will? Will the sinfulness in this world eventually create a need that God can use? But if that is the case, how is this parable different from the lost sheep? It seems in this case the coin is not capable of even knowing it is lost or in need of anything? If God can save this class of people, why can't He save everyone then?

Finally, the symbolism in the last story is about someone who rejects God, then comes back when he realizes what He lost. After the son is welcomed back, we learn of another class of people who serve God begrudgingly and are not willing to accept the repentant son back.

In all three cases it is made abundantly clear that God is overjoyed when someone is found or finds his way back. This is a strong reminder of how much God loves us.

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What do you believe?

- Can you think of specific examples or at least types of people for each of the three stories?
- Can God save people who aren't looking for Him without violating their free will?
- Do you think the older son in the last story is lost?

<sup>564</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk\\_015.cfm?a=988007](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk_015.cfm?a=988007)

## The shrewd steward

[Luke 16:1-9](#)<sup>565</sup>

[Luke 16:1](#) He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. <sup>2</sup> "So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

<sup>3</sup> "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup> 'I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

<sup>5</sup> "So he called every one of his master's debtors to [him], and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup> "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' <sup>7</sup> "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' <sup>8</sup> "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

<sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. [Luke 16:1-9 NKJV](#)

The story begins by introducing the main character as a dishonest steward squandering his master's possessions. He was obviously lazy, and maybe even padding his pockets on both sides of his dealings. When he got wind that he was going to lose his job, characteristically he applied his shrewdness toward his own survival. He proceeded to show compassion toward the master's creditors (at the master's expense) to put them in his debt. The troubling part of the story is that the master commends the ingenuity and shrewdness of the fired steward, and it seems that Jesus does as well. This strange story culminates with [verse 9](#) saying, "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home."

Ok, let's take a deep breath and see if we can make sense of this story in terms of it being a recommendation from Jesus. Based on the master's casualness with the situation, I'm going to say that he must have been very rich and though the steward was losing money, it really wasn't hurting him at all. One reason I say that is that there is no mention of punishment or forcing the steward to pay back what he squandered. Another is that the way Jesus told it, I can almost see the master chuckling to himself when he heard what the fired steward did. So, what is Jesus recommending we take from this story? Let's look at His two wrap up statements and try to understand them.

1. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.
2. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

Although doing it for selfish reasons, the steward showed compassion to the master's debtors to gain their friendship. The master represents God, who is so rich, it is impossible for Him to become poor by us squandering his blessings. Those in debt to Him could be lost sinners, whose friendship we can try to gain by channeling some of God's blessing their direction. Maybe Jesus is saying the sons of light should use more strategy and psychology to try to gain the friendship and trust of sinners.

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<sup>565</sup> Strong. p233. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/232/mode/2up>

The second statement, it turns out is really related to the first, if you think of “unrighteous mammon” as being worldly wealth. In fact, that is exactly what the NLT does.

[Luke 16:9](#) Here’s the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home. [Luke 16:9 NLT](#)

So, if you use your worldly wealth to gain friends and win them to Christ, they will be able to welcome you into their eternal homes.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus told this parable to the disciples, I thought He didn’t need to speak in parables to them?
- Why would the master praise the steward for his shrewdness?
- What does it mean to you that “For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light?”

## No man can serve two masters

[Luke 16:10-13](#), [Matthew 6:24](#)

[Luke 16:10](#) "He who [is] faithful in [what is] least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in [what is] least is unjust also in much. <sup>11</sup> "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true [riches]? <sup>12</sup> "And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

<sup>13</sup> "No servant 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](#) "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](#)

<sup>14</sup> Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. <sup>15</sup> 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 16:10-15 NKJV](#)

Before we go into the main topic of serving two masters, Jesus made another oft quoted statement, “He who [is] faithful in [what is] least is faithful also in much.” This a general principle of life and someone may very well have uttered it before Jesus. However, as He does with the next principle, He applies it to our spiritual life. In the previous discussion on [the shrewd steward](#), we interpreted “unrighteous mammon,” to mean worldly wealth. I believe in this case “unrighteous mammon,” has the same meaning. The NLT confirms this, and interprets “true riches,” as “true riches of heaven.” Now what is Jesus saying here? Is true riches of heaven something given on this earth, or is this something we receive in heaven? I don’t believe Jesus is saying that those who are not good managers of their money on earth will not make it to heaven. There are many people who are unfaithful in the use of worldly wealth, but does that mean they cannot be trusted with heavenly wealth? I think what Jesus may be saying here is that if a person is not faithful in using their worldly wealth to benefit those on earth who need help, that shows them to be unfit for heavenly wealth.

The title of this chapter, “no man can serve two masters,” sounds like a principle of life that has been around forever. I guess we can’t really know if Jesus was the first to say it or not. In any case, Jesus extended the principal to say, “You

cannot serve God and mammon." As I have stated before, I do not believe that a person with great worldly wealth cannot be taken to heaven. But I would be comfortable saying as Jesus did, that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Many people think of wealth as something that can serve them, to give them things, to make them happy. But what often happens is that those with great wealth are consumed with acquiring more of it, and with not losing it. So, if wealth is like a master to those consumed with acquiring it, and that person also wishes to serve God, there will often be a conflict. As a side note to this conversation, one of the biggest problems with worldly wealth is that a person who can buy anything they want may feel need for nothing including God. Having said all of that I am not saying a wealthy person cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but as Jesus said, it is hard. If you feel God has given you the ability to earn great wealth, by freely giving of it to help others, you may avoid falling into the trap of becoming a slave to acquiring it.

The last principle covered in this chapter is that, whatever is highly desirable to us is detestable to God. This is generally true unless you have God living in your heart and your desires are influenced by His.

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What do you believe?

- Can you think of someone who has demonstrated the principle that being faithful in little things means they can be trusted with big things?
- Do you think it is possible to be consumed with acquiring wealth and to serve God whole heartedly?
- Can you think of exceptions to the principle that things that are desirable to people are detestable to God?

## The rich man and Lazarus

[Luke 16:19-31](#)<sup>566</sup>

[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](#)

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<sup>566</sup> Strong. p235. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/234/mode/2up>

For people who believe that we do not go immediately to heaven or hell when we die, this is one of those parts of the Bible that needs explanation. I wrote a whole chapter discussing what the Bible tells us about [what happens after death](#). In that chapter we mentioned this parable and rather than try to write something new about it I will include that text here.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus, might possibly be 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 that chapter on [what happens after death](#), I showed 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.

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?

The following questions are partially obtained from a small booklet devoted entirely to this topic.<sup>567</sup>

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What do you believe?

- 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?

## The persistent widow

[Luke 17:20-21](#), [Luke 18:1-8](#)<sup>568</sup>

[Luke 17:20](#) Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; <sup>21</sup> "nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." [Luke 17:20-21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:1](#) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, <sup>2</sup> saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. <sup>3</sup> "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' <sup>4</sup> "And he would not for a while; but afterward he

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<sup>567</sup> Crews, Dennis, [The Rich Man and Lazarus](#), Amazing Facts, Roseville CA, 2009, p11-12. [[online pdf](#)]

<sup>568</sup> Strong. p237. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/236/mode/2up>

said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup> 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "

<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup> "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" [Luke 18:1-8 NKJV](#)

After reading this parable, I struggled to understand the true meaning of it, even though it seems that Jesus straight up explained it. The two possible lessons here are:

1. Be persistent in praying
2. God will bring justice quickly

The two points seem to be somewhat at odds with each other. Why must we be persistent if God will bring justice quickly? The story seems to be teaching that the widow only had to be persistent because the judge was unjust, but there are other places where Jesus taught prayer persistence. In fact, this other illustration from Jesus seems to be teaching very similar lessons.

[Luke 11:5](#) And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup> 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? <sup>8</sup> "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

<sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [Luke 11:5-10 NKJV](#)

Jesus straight up explained the first parable in [verse 8](#), but I think His explanation, "God will bring about justice for them quickly," needs explaining. The reason I say this is that I think we all know of instances when we or others have cried out to God for justice and did not get the immediate relief from the oppression. In fact, in this sinful world, many would argue, justice is more often than not denied to those who are poor and powerless. In the second story or parable, Jesus said, "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." [[Luke 11:9-10](#)] I think this is also far from the experience many people have with prayer. Let's look at some more verses:

[1 John 5:14](#) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

<sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. [1 John 5:14-15 NKJV](#)

[James 4:3](#) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend [it] on your pleasures. [James 4:3 NKJV](#)

I will admit that there are more verses without conditions that say, ask and you will receive. But let's look at the relationship between parent and child which is a pretty good analogy for the relationship between God and us. Does a good parent give a child any and everything they ask for? Do they immediately grant requests that they know are good for their child? What usually becomes of a child who gets everything they want? Don't they usually become spoiled and worse off for it in the end? If God loves us more than our parents do, and can more clearly see the big picture, does it

make sense why He doesn't grant every request? But this still doesn't answer or explain why God doesn't always give justice immediately to those that ask. Clearly justice is one of those types of requests that a good parent would always grant a child. I can come up with one explanation, but it is a little unsatisfactory. The word that was translated to "speedily" is [τάχος, tachos](#)<sup>569</sup>, is used in Revelation as "shortly."

[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, [Revelation 1:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:6](#) 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. [Revelation 22:6 NKJV](#)

I realize it may be like chasing myself in circles to use these verses to explain that God's definition of speedily or shortly is not the same as ours. But if we believe that God will return to take us to heaven, it seems that we may need to do just that. If I come up with a better explanation, I will revisit this, but for the time being, that is the best I have.

I think using this parent child relationship as an analogy flows nicely into the discussion of prayer persistence. We can probably all think of cases where a child repeatedly asks for something a parent does not want to give. The term nagging immediately comes to mind. A good parent will usually resist giving in to the nagging, or they will eventually grant and then hopefully try to use it as a teaching experience when it turns out as they knew it would. So why would one need to be persistent when praying for something according God's will? If we are praying for change in ourselves, perhaps repeating our request over and over has an effect on our own minds and actions. Maybe God is granting but we are not accepting, or perhaps need to keep reminding ourselves that we are making this request for our own good. Here's one more thought. If you think of prayer as a means to give God permission to intervene without violating our free will, then perhaps continually praying for the same thing over and over could give Him more permission to take action.

What do you believe?

- So, do you think we can affect God's actions by nagging Him in prayer?
- Can you come up with a better explanation or understanding of the promise for a quick response to the prayer for justice?
- Do you think prayer has value if God already knows what is best for you?

## The Pharisee and the tax collector

[Luke 18:9-14](#)<sup>570</sup>

[Luke 18:9](#) Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' <sup>13</sup> "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise [his] eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' <sup>14</sup> "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." [Luke 18:9-14 NKJV](#)

<sup>569</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5034/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

<sup>570</sup> Strong. p238. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/238/mode/2up>

Jesus' message is pretty clear: we are not justified by our own actions, but by our repentance and God's forgiveness. The Pharisee apparently felt no need for forgiveness and assumed that his "good works" justified himself. The tax collector realized his unworthiness and saw that his only hope was to receive God's mercy. The Pharisee was not only guilty of thinking his own works justified him but he was proud of it. Let's look at a few of the many verses in the Bible about pride.

[Proverbs 11:2](#) When pride comes, then comes shame;  
But with the humble [is] wisdom. [Proverbs 11:2 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 16:18](#) Pride [goes] before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before a fall. [Proverbs 16:18 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 29:23](#) A man's pride will bring him low,  
But the humble in spirit will retain honor. [Proverbs 29:23 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 13:9](#) "Thus says the LORD: 'In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.'  
[Jeremiah 13:9 NKJV](#)

[Mark 7:21](#) "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,  
<sup>22</sup> "thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> "All these  
evil things come from within and defile a man." [Mark 7:21-23 NKJV](#)

[1 John 2:16](#) For all that [is] in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the  
Father but is of the world. [1 John 2:16 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](#)

[Isaiah 2:12](#) For the day of the LORD of hosts  
[Shall come] upon everything proud and lofty,  
Upon everything lifted up--  
And it shall be brought low-- [Isaiah 2:12 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 2:4](#) "Behold the proud,  
His soul is not upright in him;  
But the just shall live by his faith. [Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV](#)

[James 4:6](#) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble." [James 4:6 NKJV](#)

I think some of these statements about pride are general life principles, meaning that people who don't even believe in God or the Bible would agree with. As for the sin of pride, it is listed right alongside murder, adultery, coveting, deceit,



sensuality and lust. The thing is, in addition to pride, the Pharisees were even guilty of the other sins they accused other of.

[Matthew 23:23](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. [Matthew 23:23 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:25](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. [Matthew 23:25 NKJV](#)

It seems that these Pharisees were proud that they were keeping their thousands of laws, and yet were breaking the spirit of God's Law.

What do you believe?

- Is there such thing as a good pride?
- Do you think you look differently on a murderer than on a proud person?
- Is it possible to be proud of yourself for sharing the Gospel or doing good deeds for the poor?
- Is it possible to be proud of your own humility?

## Is it lawful to divorce your spouse?

[Matthew 19:3-12](#), [Matthew 5:31-32](#), [Mark 10:2-12](#), [Luke 16:18](#)<sup>571</sup>

[Matthew 19:3](#) The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for [just] any reason?"

[Mark 10:2](#) The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce [his] wife?" testing Him. <sup>3</sup> And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"—<sup>6</sup> "But from the beginning of the creation, ...

<sup>4</sup> And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made [them] at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

[Genesis 1:27](#) So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. [Genesis 1:27 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:6](#) ...

God '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'?

[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](#)

[Mark 10:7](#) 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup> 'and the two shall become one flesh'; ...

<sup>571</sup> Strong. p239. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/238/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." <sup>7</sup> They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

<sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

<sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

<sup>10</sup> His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with [his] wife, it is better not to marry."

<sup>11</sup> But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only [those] to whom it has been given: <sup>12</sup> "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from [their] mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept [it], let him accept [it]." [Matthew 19:3-12 NKJV](#)

This question about the sin of divorce has been a sticky situation ever since Jesus spoke these words. The Law of Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife for just about any reason. There are two notable cases where a man was not allowed to divorce his wife. 1) If a man falsely accused his bride of not being a virgin [[Deuteronomy 22:13-19](#)]. 2) If a man had sex with a virgin, (it doesn't say whether consensual or rape) and they are discovered, he must marry her and can never divorce her [[Deuteronomy 22:28-29](#)]. It sounded like a divorced woman could be remarried but could not marry a former husband if she had been married to someone else after [[Deuteronomy 24:4](#)]. I didn't see anywhere in the old testament where a woman could divorce her husband, which is not surprising given their status in that culture.<sup>572</sup>

Jesus, the Law giver, gave His interpretation of the Law of marriage and divorce. Interestingly as a side note, He actually mentioned the case of a woman divorcing her husband in [Mark 10:12](#). Unlike the Law of Moses which allowed a man to divorce his wife for almost any reason, Jesus said the only valid grounds were sexual unfaithfulness. According to Jesus, if there was no sexual infidelity, then remarriage on either side would be adulterous. Not meaning to contradict Jesus,

[Mark 10:8](#) ...

[Deuteronomy 24:1](#) "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house, [Deuteronomy 24:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:31](#) "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' [Matthew 5:31 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:32](#) "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. [Matthew 5:32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:18](#) "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from [her] husband commits adultery. [Luke 16:18 NKJV](#)

so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."—<sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses permitted [a man] to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss [her]." <sup>5</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.—

[Mark 10:11](#) So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife

and marries another commits adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."—<sup>10</sup> In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same [matter]. [Mark 10:2-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>572</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/divorce-in-the-old-testament.html>

thing are rarely as global or simple as that. The Apostle Paul repeated Jesus' interpretation, but then added his own counsel (not the Lord's) in the case of a marriage between believer and unbeliever.

[1 Corinthians 7:10](#) Now to the married I command, [yet] not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from [her] husband.

<sup>11</sup> But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to [her] husband. And a husband is not to divorce [his] wife.

<sup>12</sup> But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. <sup>13</sup> And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

<sup>15</sup> But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [cases]. But God has called us to peace. <sup>16</sup> For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save [your] husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save [your] wife? [1 Corinthians 7:10-16 NKJV](#)

It seems that Paul is saying that if an unbelieving spouse leaves, the believer can remarry without committing adultery, through his statement "the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases." But he was clear to say these were not God's words. He also said earlier in verses [8](#), [11](#) that it is better not to remarry, but not if you will be burning with passion [[verse 9](#)]. Now this is me speaking, not Paul and not Jesus. I think Paul's position could also apply to the case where there is abuse by one spouse against the other. I believe the problem with remarriage in this case is the person who marries an abuser, often tends to be attracted to that type of person, and hence keeps ending up in the same type of relationship. I think acknowledgement and counseling may help in selection of future relationships.

Now the reason I think this has been such a sticky situation in the Church down through the years is because it's not really clear what Jesus means when He says the person who remarries is an adulterer. I know it sounds pretty clear, but I think, often churches have treated divorced people as continuing sinners and shunned them. Is that what Jesus meant or intended? Did He mean the person is in a continuing state of adultery as long as they continue in that marriage, or have they committed adultery but can be forgiven if they ask without compounding the problem by dissolving the marriage? I lean toward the latter but again this is me and not the Bible's elaborated position. Does this thinking lower the barrier or incentive to not divorce? It used to be that if there was a divorce without infidelity, if one person waited until the other married, the other could be considered an adulterer and hence make the waiting one free to remarry without the stigma of adultery themselves. Do you think this little gamesmanship makes any difference in God's eyes? As with so many of Jesus' commands, there was an underlying reason for them, above and beyond the simple prohibition. I think the biggest casualty of divorce is children. Think of the lifelong impact of divorce on children, compounded with remarriage.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think in this day and age that it is still reasonable to expect marriage for life?
- Why do you think God intended marriage to last a lifetime?
- Do you think being loving and accepting of divorced people lowers the barrier to divorce?

## Do not block the children from coming to me

[Mark 10:13-16](#), [Matthew 19:13-15](#), [Luke 18:15-18](#)<sup>573</sup>

[Mark 10:13](#) Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought [them]. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw [it], He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." <sup>16</sup> And He took them up in His arms, laid [His] hands on them, and blessed them.

[Mark 10:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:13](#) Then little children were brought to Him that He might put [His] hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

<sup>14</sup> But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

<sup>15</sup> And He laid [His] hands on them and departed from there. [Matthew 19:13-15](#)

[NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:15](#) Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw [it], they rebuked them.

<sup>16</sup> But Jesus called them to [Him] and said,

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>17</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." [Luke 18:15-17 NKJV](#)

Three of the four Gospel writers thought this incident was important enough to include it in their account. Is this where the religious concept of baby dedications comes from? Matthew and Mark say children but Luke says infants. I would guess it was mostly mothers who were bringing both little children and babies to Jesus. When the disciples rebuked "them," I interpret that to mean they rebuked the mothers, essentially telling them Jesus was too busy and they and their children were not important enough. But Jesus turned the rebuke back onto his own disciples, saying permit them to come, in fact He even added, "do not hinder them." This brings to mind another verse:

[Matthew 18:2](#) Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup> and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>5</sup> "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

<sup>6</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. [Matthew 18:2-6 NKJV](#)

There are three main points in this story.

- Every human being, no matter how small, is important to Jesus
- We must receive the Kingdom of God as a child
- Jesus laid hands on the children and blessed them

It is pretty natural for us to think of some people as more important than others. For example, comparing the president of a country with a homeless person, or comparing a billionaire with a baby, or a well-respected person with a criminal. But I believe that every single person who has ever existed in this world is unique to God and is of equal and irreplaceable importance to Him. It would be better if we were dead than to ever impede someone's path to God.

<sup>573</sup> Strong. p241. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/240/mode/2up>

What does Jesus mean when He says we must accept the Kingdom of God as a child? Is He talking about the Kingdom of God on earth or in Heaven? I think of a child being read Bible stories and singing Sabbath School songs. Their trust and belief in the truth of the stories and the existence of God is implicit. It is only as they get older that they start questioning these things.

Finally, Jesus gave us the example of laying hands on a child and blessing them. Is there actually an effect from laying hands on someone? How does blessing someone, especially when they can't even comprehend what is happening, benefit them? There is also the tradition in laying hands on deacons, elders and pastors when they are commissioned or ordained. Is there a difference between blessing someone with and without touching them? Finally, it is clear how Jesus can pronounce a blessing on someone, but does He want us to follow His example even though it is not within our power to grant a blessing. I guess I have many more questions than answers on this last point. Let's start by stating and hopefully agreeing that there is lots of evidence that physical touch is incredibly important in a baby's physical and emotional development. A Scientific American article states:

Many children who have not had ample physical and emotional attention are at higher risk for behavioral, emotional and social problems as they grow up.<sup>574</sup>

An article in Pediatrics and Child Health states:

Touch has emerged as an important modality for the facilitation of growth and development; positive effects of supplemental mechanosensory stimulation have been demonstrated in a wide range of organisms, from worm larvae to rat pups to human infants.<sup>575</sup>

An article in Psychology Today stated:

A study released on October 8, 2013 confirms the importance of human touch to healthy brain development. Researchers in the UK found that loving touch, characterized by a slow caress or gentle stroking increases the brain's ability to construct a sense of body ownership and plays a big part in creating and sustaining a healthy sense of self.<sup>576</sup>

Studies also show the importance of talking to babies.

New research from Stanford psychologists shows that by talking more to their toddler, parents help the child learn to process language more quickly, which accelerates vocabulary growth.<sup>577</sup>

Are these developmental benefits from touching and speaking, (laying on hands and blessing) all we should expect, or is there a spiritual element to it as well? I guess I don't really know that answer to that, but I would think the words of blessing have an effect on the parents and caregivers of the child.

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<sup>574</sup> Harmon, Katherine. 2010. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/infant-touch/>

<sup>575</sup> Rankin, Cathrine H, Ardiel, Evan L. 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2865952/>

<sup>576</sup> Berglund, Christopher. 2013. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201310/loving-touch-is-key-healthy-brain-development>

<sup>577</sup> Stanford Report. 2013. <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2013/october/ferald-vocab-development-101513.html>

What do you believe?

- Do you think dedicating a child to God as an infant in any way takes away from their freedom to choose whether they will accept or reject God? If not, what good does it do?
- What does it mean to you to need to become like a little child in order to accept the Kingdom of God?
- Are there people that you struggle to see how God can love them as much as He loves you?

## The rich young ruler

[Mark 10:17-29](#), [Matthew 19:16-28](#), [Luke 18:18-29](#)<sup>578</sup>

[Mark 10:17](#) Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"<sup>18</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God.<sup>19</sup> "You know the commandments:

[Matthew 19:16](#) Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"<sup>17</sup> 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."<sup>18</sup> He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said,

[Luke 18:18](#) Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God.<sup>20</sup> "You know the commandments:

'Do not commit adultery,'  
'Do not murder,'  
'Do not steal,'  
'Do not bear false witness,'  
'Do not defraud,'  
'Honor your father and your mother.' "

[Exodus 20:13](#) "You shall not murder."<sup>14</sup> "You shall not commit adultery."<sup>15</sup> "You shall not steal."<sup>16</sup> "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor...—"<sup>12</sup> "Honor your father and your mother, ... [Exodus 20:12-16 NKJV](#)

"'You shall not murder,'  
'You shall not commit adultery,'  
'You shall not steal,'  
'You shall not bear false witness,'  
'Honor your father and [your] mother,' and,

'Do not commit adultery,'  
'Do not murder,'  
'Do not steal,'  
'Do not bear false witness,'  
'Honor your father and your mother.' "

[Leviticus 19:18](#) ... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: ...

[Leviticus 19:18 NKJV](#)

'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "

[Mark 10:20](#) And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

[Matthew 19:20](#) The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

[Luke 18:21](#) And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

[Mark 10:21](#) Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

[Matthew 19:21](#) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

[Luke 18:22](#) So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

<sup>578</sup> Strong. p242. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/242/mode/2up>

Mark 10:22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Matthew 19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Luke 18:23 But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

Mark 10:23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"  
24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!

Matthew 19:23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"  
27 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men [it is] impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
25 When His disciples heard [it], they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"  
26 But Jesus looked at [them] and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Luke 18:25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
26 And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"  
27 But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Mark 10:28 Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."  
29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, ...

Matthew 19:27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"  
28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 18:28 Then Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You."  
29 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, ...

Mark 10:29 ... there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's,  
30 "who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.  
31 "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Mark 10:17-31 NKJV](#)

Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.  
30 "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Matthew 19:16-28 NKJV](#)

Luke 18:28 ... there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,  
30 "who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life." [Luke 18:18-30 NKJV](#)

A few things that I found interesting about this story are:

- In the Bible, the answers to the question of how to be saved varied.

- This young man wanted to know what good things he could do to inherit eternal life. Even though in some places Bible teaches that we cannot earn our salvation with good works, Jesus said to keep the commandments, and followed that up with give everything to the poor.
- In at least a couple instances when asked this question about salvation, Jesus started with keeping the commandments and then expounded from there.
- In more than a couple cases, Jesus ended up answering this question with, “acts of love and mercy for the poor and needy.”

Let’s look at some of the answers given in the Bible to the question of how to be saved.

[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 13:13](#) "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

[Matthew 13:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:13](#) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved. [Matthew 24:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:16](#) Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" <sup>17</sup> 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 19:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:29](#) "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. [Matthew 19:29 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 25:44](#) "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." [Matthew 25:44-46 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:16](#) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. [Mark 16:16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 10:25](#) And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading [of it]?" <sup>27</sup> So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" <sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." [Luke 10:25-28 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:23](#) Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, <sup>24</sup> "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. [Luke 13:23-24 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

[John 3:36](#) "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." [John 3:36 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](#)

[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 into life. [John 5:24 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](#)

[John 6:47](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. [John 6:47 NKJV](#)

[John 6:54](#) "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [John 6:54 NKJV](#)

[John 10:27](#) "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. [John 10:27-28 NKJV](#)

[John 10:9](#) "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. [John 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:21](#) And it shall come to pass [That] whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.' [Acts 2:21 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:12](#) "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Acts 15:11](#) "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." [Acts 15:11 NKJV](#)

[Acts 16:30](#) And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." [Acts 16:30-31 NKJV](#)

[Romans 6:22](#) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:9](#) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. [Romans 5:9 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, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. <sup>13</sup> For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." [Romans 10:9-13 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, [Ephesians 2:8 NKJV](#)

[Titus 3:5](#) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, [Titus 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Titus 3:7](#) that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [Titus 3:7 NKJV](#)

[1 John 5:9](#) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. <sup>10</sup> He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God. [1 John 5:9-13 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](#)

There are many more verses that talk about how to be saved but I think this is a good sample to work with. Based on these verses, my bullet list of how to be saved is:

- Statements by Jesus
  - Keep the commandments
    - Love God
      - With all your heart, soul, mind, strength
      - More than your own family
      - More than your own life
    - Love your neighbor
      - Be kind and compassionate to those who are in need
      - Give your money to the poor
  - Endure to the end
    - Endure hatred by men as they hated Me
  - Through Me
    - Believe
    - Drink the water of life I offer
    - Eat My flesh and drink My blood
  - Be baptized
- Statements by the Apostles
  - Call on the name of the Lord
  - Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
  - By grace
  - Through faith
  - Justified by His blood
  - It is a free gift
  - Persevere through trial
  - Not through good works or by anything we have done

So, do you feel like Jesus taught truly keeping the commandments, while the Apostles focused more on belief in Jesus and the free gift of salvation that cannot be earned? Clearly the Jews were very works oriented and maybe Jesus was trying to meet them where they were. They were keeping commandments and laws that scarcely resembled the

commands He had given on Mt. Sinai. Jesus' emphasis on loving their neighbor and caring for the poor and needy seemed to have little to do with commandment keeping. To be fair, keeping the commandments was not the entire answer, because Jesus also said to follow Him. In another conversation, He did say that He was the only way to the Father. Maybe an analogy could be made that keeping the commandments is like getting your cart going in the right direction. You could push your cart which wouldn't get you very far very fast, or you could attach it to the horse who could pull you all the way. In this analogy, attaching your cart to the horse will keep your cart going in the right direction which implies the commandment keeping. I think to get the best picture of how to be saved, we should put together all the answers in the proper order. It is only through Jesus and His sacrifice that we can be saved. If we truly love Him and accept the free gift of salvation, we will naturally keep the commandments which means we will love our neighbor and care for the needy.

What do you believe?

- We cannot be good enough, and all you need to do is believe and claim the free gift. On the other hand, there are statements about the persecution, and persevering and few being saved. Is it easy or hard to be saved?
- Do you think a person who truly loved their neighbor, but never heard about Jesus, can be saved?
- Do you think you can truly be keeping the commandments if you are unwilling to give up everything and follow Jesus?

### **Day laborers in the vineyard (the last will be first and the first will be last)**

[Luke 17:7-10](#), [Matthew 20:1-16](#), [Matthew 19:30](#), [Mark 10:31](#)<sup>579</sup>

[Luke 17:7](#) "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? <sup>8</sup> "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? <sup>9</sup> "Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. <sup>10</sup> "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' " [Luke 17:7-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:1](#) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> "Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> "And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, <sup>4</sup> "and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. <sup>5</sup> "Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. <sup>6</sup> "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup> "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

<sup>8</sup> "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them [their] wages, beginning with the last to the first.' <sup>9</sup> "And when those came who [were hired] about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> "But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. <sup>11</sup> "And when they had received [it], they complained against the landowner, <sup>12</sup> "saying, 'These last [men] have worked [only] one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' <sup>13</sup> "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no

<sup>579</sup> Strong. p245. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/244/mode/2up>

wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> 'Take [what is] yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man [the same] as to you. <sup>15</sup> 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

<sup>16</sup> "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." [Matthew 20:1-16 NKJV](#) [Matthew 19:30](#) "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Matthew 19:30 NKJV](#) [Mark 10:31](#) "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Mark 10:31 NKJV](#)

The verses in Luke that we started out with don't really have anything to do with the main story. I included them there because Strong chose to place those words of Jesus chronologically before the parable of the laborers in the field and I didn't want to make a chapter out of it. I don't think there is really much to say about it so I will move on to the main topic.

Depending on your perspective, the landowner in this story could be considered generous, or a mischievous trouble maker. You could say there was unfairness, but clearly no injustice was done in payment to any of the workers because they all got a fair day's wage which they agreed to when they began working. This story is another one of the many teachings of Jesus that point out the upside down (to our way of thinking) nature of grace and salvation. Jesus suffered what He didn't deserve, so we can receive what we don't deserve. Ellen White said it well in the *Desire of Ages*.

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. [Desire of Ages, p25](#).<sup>580</sup>

You can look at following Jesus as the labor in the parable. He did not promise an easy life and He said His followers would be persecuted for their beliefs. He said we would have to endure to the end. But the reward of eternal life so outweighs any cost in this comparatively short life on earth. The workers who only worked one hour might be seen as people who enjoy life's pleasures and on their deathbed accept Jesus. The thing is, I think chasing life's pleasures may be overrated. I would never say that there are not sinful pleasures to be had for one who is not a disciple of Jesus, but I believe they do not truly leave you fulfilled. In fact, many leave you worse off than before, feeling empty and lacking. So, while choosing to be a follower of Jesus may be labor, it is also fulfilling and a privilege.

However you choose to look at it, the message is clear. Whether you have the privilege of laboring with Christ for your whole life, or whether you live a life of sinful pleasure and surrender to Him on your deathbed, the pay is the same in the end.

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What do you believe?

- If you are a follower of Jesus, do you look at it as labor that is causing you to miss out on life's pleasures?
- Can you think of an example of doing something that is hard and painful but rewarding and fulfilling in the end?
- Can you think of an example of a sinful pleasure that does not leave you empty or guilty in the end?

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<sup>580</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p25.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=25>

## James and John request the top two positions in the kingdom

[Mark 10:32-45](#), [Matthew 20:17-28](#), [Luke 18:31-34](#)<sup>581</sup>

[Mark 10:32](#) Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: <sup>33</sup> "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem,

and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; <sup>34</sup> "and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

<sup>36</sup> And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

<sup>37</sup> They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

<sup>38</sup> But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

<sup>39</sup> 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; <sup>40</sup> "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."

[Matthew 20:17](#) Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem,

took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, <sup>18</sup> "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem,

and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, <sup>19</sup> "and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." [Matthew 20:17-19 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:20](#) Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

[Matthew 20:21](#) And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him,

"Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

[Matthew 20:22](#) But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They said to Him, "We are able." <sup>23</sup> 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."

[Luke 18:31](#) Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

<sup>32</sup> "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. <sup>33</sup> "They will scourge [Him] and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

<sup>34</sup> But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken. [Luke 18:31-34 NKJV](#)

<sup>581</sup> Strong. p247. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/246/mode/2up>

<sup>41</sup> And when the ten heard [it], they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. <sup>42</sup> But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. <sup>44</sup> "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Mark 10:32-45 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:24](#) And when the ten heard [it], they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. <sup>25</sup> But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. <sup>27</sup> "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—<sup>28</sup> "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Matthew 20:20-28 NKJV](#)

This is not the first time Jesus has predicted His soon coming death, but He did get very detailed and graphic this time. It's hard to image how the disciples could have misunderstood Him, but once again, they seemed to have completely ignored these statements that didn't fit in with their own plans. We know this because of the very next thing that occurred.

Mark simply says that James and John approached Jesus and directly asked for the top two position in His Kingdom. Matthew says their Mom made this request for them. Perhaps these requests are two different occasions, or one writer simply left out some detail. In either case, the conversation went mostly the same in both cases. Now if you knew Jesus was going to be crucified and there was not going to be an earthly kingdom, why would you be asking for the top two positions? The next verses in both Mark and Matthew say, the rest of the disciples were indignant with James and John because of this request. I think they were indignant because they all wanted the same thing for themselves.

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What do you believe?

- How could the disciples not understand what Jesus was saying about His torture and death?
- How could the disciples, this close to the end of their time with Jesus, still be so out of sync with Him?
- How do you think this made Jesus feel?

## Blind men by the road request healing

[Mark 10:46-52](#), [Luke 18:35-43](#), [Matthew 20:29-34](#), [Luke 19:1](#)<sup>582</sup>

[Mark 10:46](#) Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

[Luke 18:35](#) Now as Jesus was approaching Jericho, a man who was blind was sitting by the road, begging. <sup>36</sup> But when he heard a crowd going by, he [began] inquiring what this was.

[Luke 19:1](#) Then [Jesus] entered and passed through Jericho. [Luke 19:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:29](#) Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.

<sup>30</sup> And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, ...

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<sup>582</sup> Strong. p249. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/248/mode/2up>

Mark 10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"<sup>48</sup> Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"<sup>49</sup> So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."<sup>50</sup> And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.<sup>51</sup> So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

[Mark 10:46-52 NKJV](#)

Luke 18:37 They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.<sup>38</sup> And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"<sup>39</sup> Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"<sup>40</sup> And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him;

and when he came near,

He asked him,

<sup>41</sup> "What do you want Me to do for you?"

And he said, "Lord, [I want] to regain my sight!"<sup>42</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Regain your sight; your faith has made you well."

<sup>43</sup> And immediately he regained his sight and [began] following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw [it,] they gave praise to God. [Luke 18:35-43 NKJV](#)

Matthew 20:30 ... when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

<sup>31</sup> Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"<sup>32</sup> So Jesus stood still and called them,

and said, ...

Matthew 20:32 ... "What do you want Me to do for you?"<sup>33</sup> They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."<sup>34</sup> So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

[Matthew 20:29-34 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18](#), has Jesus and the disciples meeting a blind man as they were entering Jericho, but the [Matthew](#) and [Mark](#) have the encounter on the way out of Jericho. I suppose it is possible that Jesus healed a blind man on the way into Jericho and another one or two on the way out. Mark and Luke only mention one blind man and only Mark names him, while Matthew mentions two. We don't really know if all three accounts were the same incident but because of the great similarity in conversation, surrounding events and proximity to Jericho, I will treat them as the same.

Believe it or not, people directly addressing Jesus with the title "Son of David," is not as common as you might think. Aside from the Hosanna's to the Son of David at the triumphal entry, the Canaanite woman [[Mark 7:24-30](#)] and blind men [the ones included above and [Matthew 9:27](#)] were the only ones who directly addressed Jesus with this title. How is it, that blind men and a Canaanite woman were the only ones who directly addressed Jesus with this title in all the recorded Gospels?

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What do you believe?

- Why was the crowd telling the blind man/men to be quiet rather than bringing them to Jesus?
- Why do you think they addressed Jesus as "Son of David?"
- Why do you think Jesus asked what the man wanted, wasn't it kind of obvious?

## Zaccheus

[Luke 19:2-9](#)<sup>583</sup>

[Luke 19:2](#) Now behold, [there was] a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. <sup>3</sup> And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that [way]. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." <sup>6</sup> So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. <sup>7</sup> But when they saw [it], they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."

<sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; [Luke 19:2-9 NKJV](#)

People who went to Sabbath or Sunday school as a child may remember a song about Zaccheus being a wee little man. Verse 3 is where this idea comes from, because it says he was small in stature. It doesn't say how small he was but considering it was worth mentioning, I would guess he was pretty short. Zaccheus must have been very good at collecting taxes for Rome, because they made him the chief. I wonder if that meant he didn't even have to collect directly from the people anymore but only from other tax collectors. The following are small excerpts from a very comprehensive article on taxation throughout Israel's history. It is specifically from the section pertaining to the time of Jesus.

The publicans of the New Testament "examined the goods and collected tolls on roads and bridges" (Stapfer, op. cit., 216; compare Mt 9:9). These tolls (Latin, portoria; Greek tele) were collected in Israel at Caesarea, Capernaum and Jericho (Josephus, BJ, II, xiv, 4). Those collected at Capernaum went into the treasury of Herod Antipas. At Jericho there was a chief publican (architelones), but most of the publicans mentioned in the New Testament were probably subordinate to men higher in authority.

...

The tax-gatherer, if a Jew, was a renegade in the eyes of his patriotic fellows. He paid a fixed sum for the taxes, and received for himself what he could over and above that amount. The ancient and widespread curse of arbitrariness was in the system. The tariff rates were vague and indefinite (see Schurer, HJP, I, ii, 67 f). The collector was thus always under the suspicion of being an extortioner and probably was in most instances. <http://www.bible-history.com><sup>584</sup>

It seems possible that Zaccheus was the chief publican described above, considering that he lived in the outskirts of Jericho and was called the chief tax collector by Luke. In any case, he must have been a very wise investor, to give away half his wealth and still be able to repay four times what he unjustly collected. He may not have been left with very much at the end, but it seems he passed the test of being able to sell what he owned and give it to the poor.

<sup>583</sup> Strong. 251. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/250/mode/2up>

<sup>584</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/T/TAX;+TAXING/>



There was precedent in Jewish culture to repay four times for something stolen.

[Exodus 22:1](#) "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. [Exodus 22:1 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- What do you think gave Zaccheus the idea that maybe there was hope for him when the Jews treated him as the worst kind of sinner?
- Do you think Zaccheus would still have given half his money to the poor and made amends if Jesus hadn't stopped to speak to him?
- Is there any precedent for paying back multiple times to make restitution today?

## He who is faithful in small things will also be faithful with more important matters

[Matthew 25:14-29](#), [Luke 19:11-27](#),<sup>585</sup>

[Matthew 25:14](#) "For [the kingdom of heaven is] like a man traveling to a far country, [who] called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

[Luke 19:11](#) Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. <sup>12</sup> Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. <sup>13</sup> "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' <sup>14</sup> "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this [man] to reign over us.'

<sup>15</sup> "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. <sup>16</sup> "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. <sup>17</sup> "And likewise he who [had received] two gained two more also. <sup>18</sup> "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

<sup>19</sup> "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[Luke 19:15](#) "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

<sup>20</sup> "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

<sup>16</sup> "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'

<sup>21</sup> "His lord said to him, 'Well [done], good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

<sup>17</sup> "And he said to him, 'Well [done], good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

<sup>585</sup> Strong. p252. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/252/mode/2up>

<sup>22</sup> "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' <sup>23</sup> "His lord said to him, 'Well [done], good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

<sup>Luke 19:18</sup> "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' <sup>19</sup> "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

<sup>24</sup> "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, [there] you have [what is] yours.'

<sup>Luke 19:20</sup> "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. <sup>21</sup> 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

<sup>26</sup> "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. <sup>27</sup> 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give [it] to him who has ten talents.'

<sup>Luke 19:22</sup> "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, [you] wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. <sup>23</sup> 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' <sup>24</sup> "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give [it] to him who has ten minas.' <sup>25</sup> ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

<sup>29</sup> 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.'

<sup>26</sup> 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. <sup>27</sup> 'But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay [them] before me.' " [Luke 19:11-27 NKJV](#)

<sup>30</sup> 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'  
[Matthew 25:14-30 NKJV](#)

The first observation is that these stories are pretty similar but differ in some details. My guess is that Jesus reused stories in different settings and they need not have been exactly the same every time. For our purpose it makes sense to put them in parallel because clearly the lessons are the same. Let's list them:

- Each is given something according to their ability
- Those who are faithful with the little they have will be faithful with more and will be given more
- Those who do not use what they have been given will be cast out

The slaves were given talents or minas, both of which were forms of money. They were expected to do business with the money and hopefully end up with more. It was to be like a grant, for there is no indication that the first two slaves had to return the money. I suspect the nobleman would not have been upset if the third man had tried and failed, but the fact that he did nothing and didn't even earn interest on the money apparently angered him.

With the Matthew version using the word talent, it has become very easy to apply the principle to ourselves, using the modern English definition of the word. Obviously, God doesn't give most of us cash, but we each have certain abilities or talents. We should all be aware of the concept of working on your talents and honing them or improving them, so they grow or get better.

What do you believe?

- Most of us will eventually be placed in a position to decide whether to hire someone for a job. Do you feel that judging from how they handle small or insignificant things is a good way to decide?
- When Jesus said, "For to everyone who has, more shall be given," do you think He was giving a spiritual or general life principle?
- Do you think that not using our God-given talents is grounds for not being allowed into heaven?

## Mary anoints Jesus' head and feet with the expensive ointment of Spikenard

[John 11:55-57](#), [John 12:1-11](#), [Matthew 26:6-13](#), [Mark 14:3-9](#)<sup>586</sup>

[John 11:55](#) And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think--that He will not come to the feast?" <sup>57</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report [it], that they might seize Him. [John 11:55-57 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>9</sup> 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>10</sup> But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.—

<sup>2</sup> There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

[Matthew 26:6](#) And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,

[Mark 14:3](#) And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, ...

<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

[Matthew 26:7](#) a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured [it] on His head as He sat [at the table].

[Mark 14:3](#) ... a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured [it] on His head.

<sup>4</sup> But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], who would betray Him, said,

[Matthew 26:8](#) But when His disciples saw [it], they were indignant, saying, ...

[Mark 14:4](#) But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, ...

<sup>5</sup> "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

[Matthew 26:8](#) ... "Why this waste? <sup>9</sup> "For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to [the] poor."

[Mark 14:4](#) ... "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? <sup>5</sup> "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.

<sup>586</sup> Strong. p256. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/256/mode/2up>

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. <sup>8</sup> "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." [John 12:1-11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:10](#) But when Jesus was aware of [it], He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. <sup>11</sup> "For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. <sup>12</sup> "For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did [it] for My burial. <sup>13</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." [Matthew 26:6-13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:6](#) But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. <sup>7</sup> "For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. <sup>8</sup> "She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. <sup>9</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." [Mark 14:3-9 NKJV](#)

I have pointed out in an earlier chapter that there was potentially another occasion that Jesus' feet were anointed by a woman in a Simon's house, [Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house](#). There are similarities and differences in the two accounts. Some believe it to be the same incident as portrayed in the three parallel accounts in this chapter. Luke's account is so early in his book, and different enough that I went with Strong's chronology. I do believe it is likely that it was the same woman who anointed His feet in all four accounts. The host in In Luke's earlier account was Simon the Pharisee, but in this account, was someone called Simon the leper. It was unlikely that a leper would be inviting people to his house, so there is the assumption that he must have been previously healed of leprosy by Jesus. If it was the same Simon, he may have been more of a believer, especially if he had been healed by Jesus, and he didn't criticize Mary this time.

Let's begin by mentioning that the chief priests at least had some accusations against Jesus, to back their desire to kill Him. But their intent to murder an innocent man, Lazarus, just because his resurrection caused many to believe in Jesus, showed their desperation. If Simon was a Pharisee, it is possible that other priests and Pharisees may have been invited or invited themselves to be present at this supper.

It would typically be the wife of the host who would be the serving as the hostess, but we have little to no reason to believe that Martha was the wife of Simon. So, when we read between the lines, we think there must have been some kind of connection, or familial relationship between Simon and the three siblings, Lazarus, Martha and Mary. It has been assumed by many that Martha and Mary were unmarried, which begs the question why, because most women their age would have been married. Some of these assumptions are also based on the other mentions in the Gospels of the three siblings, which pictured them as living together.

There was no mention of Mary being a sinner here, but clearly she was expressing her gratitude and love to Jesus in an extravagant way. In fact, Mary was a very common name and while John did choose to mention the name, he didn't clarify which Mary he was talking about. It is also a little strange that in the chapter prior to this one, John says that Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus was the one who anointed Jesus with ointment.

[John 11:1](#) Now a certain [man] was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was [that] Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. [John 11:1-2 NKJV](#)

This is one of the reasons some assume there was an earlier anointing by Mary. In any case, the fact that Lazarus and Martha are also mentioned, leads me to believe that the Mary in John 12 was their sister and hence needed no clarification.

Why would the disciples be indignant of someone showing love and gratitude to their Master? Indignant is a pretty strong word, and I wonder if there was some hostility toward Mary by the disciples. According to the text, the perfume was worth over three hundred denarii. In the parable of the day laborers, we can see that a denarius was an acceptable pay for a day's work [[Matthew 20:1-16](#)]. If we equated that to minimum wage today and used the round numbers of \$10/hour 8 hr/day and 300 days, that would make the ointment worth \$24000 in today's terms. That's a lot of money but it doesn't explain why the disciples would be indignant about \$24000 being spent on their Master. I doubt they really cared more about the poor than their Master whom they claimed to love. I suspect they may have known something about Mary and couldn't understand how Jesus could love her and accept her the way He did. They might have been protective of their Master and jealous of Mary at the same time, causing them to be critical of anything she did.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Simon was currently a leper, or if he had been healed, why was he still called a leper?
- How do you think Mary could have gotten her hands on that much money?
- Why do you think John mentioned a Mary who anointed Jesus before he tells the story?

## Triumphal entry to Jerusalem

[Matthew 21:1-9](#), [Mark 11:1-10](#), [Luke 19:29-44](#), [John 12:12-16,19](#)<sup>587</sup>

[Matthew 21:1](#) Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose [them] and bring [them] to Me.

<sup>3</sup> "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."—

<sup>6</sup> So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

[Mark 11:1](#) Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; <sup>2</sup> and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring [it]. <sup>3</sup> "And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

<sup>4</sup> So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. <sup>5</sup> But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?" <sup>6</sup> And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

[Luke 19:29](#) And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, [that] He sent two of His disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, "Go into the village opposite [you], where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring [it here]. <sup>31</sup> "And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing [it]?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' "

<sup>32</sup> So those who were sent went their way and found [it] just as He had said to them. <sup>33</sup> But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" <sup>34</sup> And they said, "The Lord has need of him."

<sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set [Him] on them.—

Mark 11:7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

Luke 19:35 Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him.

[John 12:14](#) Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; ...

<sup>4</sup> All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: [John 12:14](#) ... as it is written:

<sup>5</sup> "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.' "—

[Zechariah 9:9](#) "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He [is] just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. [Zechariah 9:9 NKJV](#)

[John 12:15](#) "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and [that] they had done these things to Him.—

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. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

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. <sup>9</sup> Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ...

Luke 19:36 And as He went, [many] spread their clothes on the road. <sup>37</sup> Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying: " ...

[John 12:12](#) The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup> took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: ...

"Hosanna to the Son of David!  
'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!' "

Mark 11:9 ... "Hosanna! [Psalm 118:26](#)

Luke 19:38 ...

[John 12:13](#) ... "Hosanna!  
'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" [John 12:12-16 NKJV](#)

Hosanna in the highest!" [Matthew 21:1-9 NKJV](#)

Hosanna in the highest!" [Mark 11:1-10 NKJV](#)

Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! ... [Psalm 118:26 NKJV](#)

'Blessed [is] the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" [Luke 19:29-38 NKJV](#)

[John 12:19](#) The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" [John 12:19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 19:39](#) And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

<sup>40</sup> But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

<sup>41</sup> Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things [that make] for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>44</sup> "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." [Luke 19:39:44 NKJV](#)

I wonder how many of you realized that Matthew said the disciples brought both the donkey and its colt. Mark and Luke only mention a colt and John a young donkey. It makes sense to me that the donkey and its colt would not want to be separated from each other. But why a donkey and not a war horse? And why a colt, or foal and not the full-grown animal? Well, in addition to the prophecy, there was somewhat of a precedent for using a pack animal for this type of thing.

[1 Kings 1:33](#) The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup> "There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, '[Long] live King Solomon!' <sup>35</sup> "Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah." [1 Kings 1:33-35 NKJV](#)

Emotions were running very high in the crowd and they probably had one thing on their mind, the restoration of David's kingdom to Israel. While most Israelites were looking forward to this event, the leadership in Jerusalem were not in favor of Jesus being the one. I would guess that in addition to putting Rome in its place, some looked forward to Jesus as king putting the current Jewish leadership in their place as well. After shying away from the adulation of the crowd in the past and showing no interest in the throne of Israel, the disciples must have been both surprised and elated at this turn of events. They probably could see no other purpose to this parade than to march Jesus into Jerusalem and place a crown on His head. On the contrary, Jesus knew this would strengthen the resolve of the priests to put Him to death. John tells us that the supper at Simon's house the previous day was only six days before Passover. We know this to be the last Passover of Jesus' life on earth because that was when He would be sacrificed as the true substitute for our sins. I believe Jesus knew this as well.

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What do you believe?

- We know this triumphal entry was a fulfillment of prophecy, but did it serve any other purpose?
- What do you think it would be like to know your actions were prophesied but also to know they would lead to your death?
- Do you think Jesus was tempted to take the throne rather than the cross?

## The second cleansing of the Temple

[Matthew 21:10-17](#), [Mark 11:11,15-17](#), [Luke 19:45-46](#)<sup>588</sup>

[Matthew 21:10](#) And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" <sup>11</sup> So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

[Mark 11:15](#) So they came to Jerusalem. ...

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

[Luke 19:45](#) Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,

[Mark 11:15](#) ... 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.

[Mark 11:16](#) And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

<sup>13</sup> And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'

[Isaiah 56:7](#) ... For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." [Isaiah 56:7](#)

[Luke 19:46](#) saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' ...

[Mark 11:17](#) 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.' "

[Jeremiah 7:11](#) "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? ...

[NKJV](#)

[Luke 19:46](#) ... but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

[Mark 11:17](#) ... But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

[Jeremiah 7:11 NKJV](#)

<sup>14</sup> Then [the] blind and [the] lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. <sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant <sup>16</sup> and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?'"

[Psalm 8:2](#) Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, ... [Psalm 8:2 NKJV](#)

<sup>17</sup> Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. [Matthew 21:10-17 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:11](#) ... He went out to Bethany with the twelve. [Mark 11:11 NKJV](#)

Once before at the start of His ministry, Jesus cleansed the Temple [[Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry](#)]. I'm pretty sure the merchants were ashamed of themselves for running from a humble homeless man the first time Jesus cleansed the Temple. They may even have said to themselves that they would never let it happen again. White describes this potential conversation with themselves in the *Desire of Ages*.

Again the piercing look of Jesus swept over the desecrated court of the temple. All eyes were turned toward Him. Priest and ruler, Pharisee and Gentile, looked with astonishment and awe upon Him who stood before them with the majesty of heaven's King. Divinity flashed through humanity, investing Christ with a dignity and glory He had never manifested before. Those standing nearest Him drew as far away as the crowd would permit. Except for a few of His disciples, the Saviour stood alone. Every sound was hushed. The deep silence seemed unbearable. Christ spoke with a power that swayed the people like a mighty tempest: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." His voice sounded like a trumpet

<sup>588</sup> Strong. p262. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/262/mode/2up>



through the temple. The displeasure of His countenance seemed like consuming fire. With authority He commanded, "Take these things hence." John 2:16.

Three years before, the rulers of the temple had been ashamed of their flight before the command of Jesus. They had since wondered at their own fears, and their unquestioning obedience to a single humble Man. They had felt that it was impossible for their undignified surrender to be repeated. Yet they were now more terrified than before, and in greater haste to obey His command. There were none who dared question His authority. Priests and traders fled from His presence, driving their cattle before them. [\*Desire of Ages\*, p590-591](#)<sup>589</sup>

I know that [John 2:16](#) was about the first cleansing, but I'm sure similar language was used. If Jesus called it a "den of thieves", clearly the practice of selling sacrifices and exchanging money had become a corrupt business that took advantage of the people. The religious leaders taught that donations must be made, and sacrifices offered or the people would not receive God's blessings or forgiveness.

Every Jew was required to pay yearly a half shekel as "a ransom for his soul;" and the money thus collected was used for the support of the temple. [Exodus 30:12-16](#). Besides this, large sums were brought as freewill offerings, to be deposited in the temple treasury. And it was required that all foreign coin should be changed for a coin called the temple shekel, which was accepted for the service of the sanctuary. The money changing gave opportunity for fraud and extortion, and it had grown into a disgraceful traffic, which was a source of revenue to the priests.

The dealers demanded exorbitant prices for the animals sold, and they shared their profits with the priests and rulers, who thus enriched themselves at the expense of the people. The worshipers had been taught to believe that if they did not offer sacrifice, the blessing of God would not rest on their children or their lands. Thus a high price for the animals could be secured; for after coming so far, the people would not return to their homes without performing the act of devotion for which they had come. [\*Desire of Ages\*, p155](#)<sup>590</sup>

We have probably all at one time or another experienced righteous indignation. That feeling when you saw another person being taken advantage of, either in person or in a movie or the news. Human trafficking and physical or sexual abuse are some of the big ones today. In His own way, this is what Jesus experienced, and that is why He chased these people out of the Temple courtyard.

As soon as the Temple courtyard was cleared, it was filled with people who were not afraid of Jesus. The blind and lame and probably many others who desired healing came. Children and mothers with infants came. And probably many other people who were typically excluded from the Temple courtyard by the priests for one reason or another. There was probably plenty of commotion, disorder, and children shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David." When the priests finally had the courage to return and found the Temple courtyard in this condition, I think they were angry that all this ruffraff, these "sinners," and children had invaded their space. The Bible says they were indignant over what the children were shouting.

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<sup>589</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p590-591.

<http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=590>

<sup>590</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p155.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=155>

What do you believe?

- If the priests who hated Him were behind the “den of thieves,” why did Jesus cleanse the Temple, knowing it would endanger His life, and that they would just return the next time He wasn’t there?
- Why were the priests specifically angry that the children were shouting “Hosanna to the son of David?”
- Why do you think Jesus has such a soft spot for the poor, the unpopular, the sick, the abused, the helpless, ...?

## The barren fig tree

[Mark 11:12-15,18-24](#), [Matthew 21:18-22](#), [Luke 21:37-38](#), [Luke 19:47-48](#)<sup>591</sup>

[Mark 11:12](#) Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. <sup>13</sup> 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 ... [Mark 11:12-15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:19](#) When evening had come, He went out of the city.—

<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>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."

<sup>22</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

<sup>23</sup> "For assuredly, I say to you,

whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

[Matthew 21:18](#) Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. <sup>19</sup> 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 21:18-19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:37](#) And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, ...

<sup>38</sup> Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.—

[Luke 21:37](#) ... but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. [Luke 21:37-38 NKJV](#)

[Luke 19:47](#) And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, <sup>48</sup> and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. [Luke 19:47-48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:20](#) Seeing [this,] the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither [all] at once?"

[Matthew 21:21](#) And Jesus answered and said to them,

"Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what [was done] to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,'

it will happen.

<sup>591</sup> Strong. p263. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/262/mode/2up>

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them]. [Mark 11:18-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:22](#) "And whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive it all." [Matthew 21:20-22 NKJV](#)

There seems to be a difference in the stories between Matthew and Mark, but I do not find this to be a problem. Matthew doesn't mention the day's activities in the Temple at all and just went from the cursing of the tree to the end result. As slow as trees grow, completely withering up in one day could have been considered "all at once."

The bigger question to me is, what is Jesus doing cursing the tree? I would guess this seemed very out of character to the disciples. Some might try to portray this as a case of Jesus getting mad and cursing something, like people sometimes do. I do not believe this at all. I actually think Jesus may have done the owner a favor, making it easier for them to make the decision to remove the tree and replace it. The following parable of Jesus showed this decision making process, but I think it is also related to our current fig tree story.

[Luke 13:6](#) 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]. [Luke 13:6-8 NKJV](#)

I believe in both cases; Jesus was using the tree as a symbol for the nation of Israel. The fact that the tree was barren symbolized that Israel was not bearing the fruit for which it was planted. The second parable showed that it had received extra time, care and attention, but still did not bear fruit.

Looking at the growth of the early Christian Church, is that is what God had intended for the nation of Israel? Whether God actually intended them to bear fruit by converting people to Judaism or not, clearly, He intended for them to spread the knowledge of Him.

I think this story was an enacted parable of what would happen to Israel if they did not start bearing fruit.

The end of the story is a topic that I believe has always been somewhat controversial. Jesus said to ask for anything in prayer and if you have enough faith, you will receive? I know that many times people have tried to explain some of Jesus' statements about prayer by saying that if we ask according to His will, we will receive. Some also have said that if it is forgiveness we ask for, He always grants our request immediately. But Jesus didn't say that in this case, in fact He gave an outlandish example that seemed to have nothing to do with forgiveness, or His will, or even anything useful. Does that mean I can ask for a million-dollar mansion, and if I don't doubt, I will receive it? Does that mean I can ask for healing from cancer for myself or someone else, and don't doubt, it will happen? Does that mean I can ask for God to stop an evil person from abusing the helpless under his power, and don't doubt, it will just happen? Is not having doubt a black and white thing? Either you have it or you don't, or is it more of a grey area and more subjective? I know this is a whole other topic, but if Jesus was human and didn't use His own power to perform miracles, then He is the best example of asking and receiving miraculous results. It seems that everything He asked for, He received. But what about His prayer in Gethsemane, that the cup be taken from Him?

[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](#)

The key to this prayer request by Jesus is that He surrendered to God's will. One way I can reconcile this statement of Jesus is that if we have the kind of faith that has absolutely no doubt in God's power to grant any request, then maybe we are also at the place where our requests will be what God wills.

What do you believe?

- When the disciples asked about the withered tree, why did Jesus talk about their ability to do the same rather than explain why He did it?
- Have you ever prayed for something and then when you didn't receive it, think to yourself, I didn't really think it was going to happen? Would that be considered doubt?
- Do you think it is easier to have pure un-doubting faith as a child?

## Authority of Jesus questioned, parable of the two sons and the vineyard

[Matthew 21:23-32](#), [Mark 11:27-33](#), [Luke 20:1-8](#)<sup>592</sup>

[Matthew 21:23](#) Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

<sup>24</sup> But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things:

<sup>25</sup> "The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>26</sup> "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

[Mark 11:27](#) Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. <sup>28</sup> And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

[Mark 11:29](#) But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things:

<sup>30</sup> "The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me." <sup>31</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>32</sup> "But if we say, 'From men' "--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. <sup>33</sup> So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

[Mark 11:27-33 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:1](#) Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, [that] the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted [Him] <sup>2</sup> and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

[Luke 20:3](#) But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me:

<sup>4</sup> "The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men?" <sup>5</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>6</sup> "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." <sup>7</sup> So they answered that they did not know where [it was] from. <sup>8</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." [Luke 20:1-8](#)

<sup>28</sup> "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' <sup>29</sup> "He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. <sup>30</sup> "Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I [go], sir,' but he did not go. <sup>31</sup> "Which of the two did the will of [his] father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you

<sup>592</sup> Strong. p266. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/266/mode/2up>

did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw [it], you did not afterward relent and believe him. [Matthew 21:23-32 NKJV](#)

The priests and scribes and elders were always trying to trap Jesus into saying something they could use against Him. This almost sounded like an honest question, but Jesus must have seen through it. He knew that giving them an answer would not change their minds about Him, so He turned the tables on them. He did to them what they often tried to do to Him, by asking them a question that only had answers that could be used against them. But I think it was more than that. Jesus essentially took their question about where His authority came from and asked them the same question about John. If they believed John's authority came from heaven, then they would have the answer to their original question. Here is what John said about Jesus.

[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!"<sup>30</sup> "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'<sup>31</sup> "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him."<sup>33</sup> "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'[John 1:29-34 NKJV](#)

Clearly they didn't believe John's or Jesus' authority came from heaven, otherwise it would have been an easy answer for them.

We can't really say whether the following conversation starting with [Matthew 21:28](#), was with the same people, but the interpretation of the parable including the mention of the rejection of John, seems to make it a possibility. I don't believe Jesus was telling them it was too late for them to repent and be saved, but rather that if they did not, they would not be saved. Finally, I don't believe there are degrees of getting into heaven, or that some will be more worthy than others. I do not take the saying that the tax-collectors and prostitutes would get into heaven before the religious leaders, to mean that the former would get in based on their repentance and the latter on their credentials, and that those who get in by repentance would be better. I think Jesus meant that regardless of one's religious credentials, they would not get in unless they repent.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the priests, scribes and elders wanted to know whose authority Jesus acted on?
- Why would the priests, scribes and elders be afraid of what the people thought of their beliefs? Was it not already obvious what they believed?
- Why do you think Jesus didn't say whose authority He was acting on?

## The parable of the vineyard and the wicked caretakers

[Matthew 21:33-46](#), [Mark 12:1-12](#), [Luke 20:9-18](#)<sup>593</sup>

[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. <sup>34</sup> "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.

<sup>35</sup> "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

<sup>36</sup> "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.

<sup>37</sup> "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

<sup>38</sup> "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' <sup>39</sup> "So they took him and cast [him] out of the vineyard and killed [him].

<sup>40</sup> "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

<sup>41</sup> 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."

[Mark 12:1](#) Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around [it], dug [a place for] the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. <sup>2</sup> "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers.

<sup>3</sup> "And they took [him] and beat him and sent [him] away empty-handed.

<sup>4</sup> "Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded [him] in the head, and sent [him] away shamefully treated.

<sup>5</sup> "And again he sent another, and him they

[Mark 12:6](#) "Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>7</sup> "But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' <sup>8</sup> "So they took him and killed [him] and cast [him] out of the vineyard.

[Mark 12:9](#)

"Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do?

He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others.

[Luke 20:9](#) Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. <sup>10</sup> "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard.

But the vinedressers beat him and sent [him] away empty-handed.

<sup>11</sup> "Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated [him] shamefully, and sent [him] away empty-handed.

<sup>12</sup> "And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast [him] out.

[Luke 20:13](#) "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect [him] when they see him.' <sup>14</sup> "But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' <sup>15</sup> "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed [him]. ...

[Luke 20:15](#) ...

Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

<sup>16</sup> "He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard [it] they said, "Certainly not!"

<sup>593</sup> Strong. p268. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/268/mode/2up>

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "Have you never <sup>10</sup> "Have you not even read this Scripture: ... Luke 20:17 Then He looked at them and said, read in the Scriptures: "What then is this that is written: ...

'The stone which the builders [Psalm 118:22](#) The stone [which] the [Mark 12:10](#) ... 'The stone which the Luke 20:17 ... 'The stone which the rejected Has become the builders rejected Has become builders rejected Has become the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the chief cornerstone. [Psalm 118:22 NKJV](#) chief cornerstone. <sup>11</sup> This was the LORD's doing, And the chief cornerstone?' the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'? it is marvelous in our eyes'? "

<sup>43</sup> "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

<sup>44</sup> "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Luke 20:18](#) "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Luke 20:9-18 NKJV](#)

<sup>45</sup> Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. [Mark 12:12](#) ... for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. ...

<sup>46</sup> But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet. And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, ... So they left Him and went away. [Mark 12:1-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:33-46 NKJV](#)

Perhaps Jesus was thinking of the following passage when He told this parable.

[Isaiah 5:1](#) Now let me sing to my Well-beloved  
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:  
My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;  
So He expected [it] to bring forth [good] grapes,  
But it brought forth wild grapes. [Isaiah 5:1-2 NKJV](#)

While the vineyard, tower and wine press are common, the produce of the vineyard is different, and the surrounding stories are different. Both were parables of Israel, but Isaiah focused on the worthless harvest. In the parable Jesus told, the emphasis was on the evil caretakers, who were understood to be Jewish leadership up to and including the current. It was so obvious that even the condemned listeners made the connection. The sad thing is that even though they understood it, they were still willing to play their part, by wishing to arrest Jesus and ultimately kill Him.

The stone which the builders rejected is clearly about Jesus, but was it just a prophecy or was it also an actual occurrence? In the *Desire of Ages*, White tells the story of the rejected stone.

In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ's first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon

them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and bear the great weight which would rest upon it. Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. Others could not bear the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone. The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ. He says:

“Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.” Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that Christ is to bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” Isaiah 8:13-15; 28:16. [Desire of Ages, p597-598.](#)<sup>594</sup>

Unfortunately, I do not have a non-biblical historical reference for this story but Jesus spoke of it as something all His hearers would have been familiar with. Assuming the Psalm was written by David, he was not writing of the event described from the building of the Temple as historical. I think the Psalm has the sound of a Messianic prophecy but that doesn't mean the story didn't literally happen. Isaiah and Zechariah also had cornerstone prophecies of Jesus.

[Isaiah 28:16](#) Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,  
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;  
Whoever believes will not act hastily. [Isaiah 28:16 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 10:4](#) From him comes the cornerstone,  
From him the tent peg,  
From him the battle bow,  
From him every ruler together. [Zechariah 10:4 NKJV](#)

Clearly Jesus is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. If He didn't say and do the things the Bible says, if He wasn't who He said He was, then our whole faith is meaningless. Some who are not Christian but believe in the historical character

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<sup>594</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p597-598.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=597>



may say he was a charismatic leader, a good man, or even a prophet. But this is what noted Christian author C.S. Lewis had to say about that.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.<sup>595</sup>

What do you believe?

- If the vineyard represents Israel, what do the wall, the wine press and the tower represent?
- What is the difference between being broken to pieces and being scattered like dust in [Matthew 21:44](#)? Which is better?
- How could the caretakers think they would inherit the vineyard if they murdered the owner's son?

## Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar

[Matthew 22:15-22](#), [Mark 12:13-17](#), [Luke 20:20-26](#)<sup>596</sup>

[Matthew 22:15](#) Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in [His] talk. <sup>16</sup> And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians,

saying,

"Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. <sup>17</sup> "Tell us, therefore, what do You think?

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

<sup>18</sup> But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, [you] hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> And He said to them,

[Mark 12:13](#) Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in [His] words.

<sup>14</sup> When they had come, they said to Him,

"Teacher, we know that You are true, ... but teach the way of God in truth. ... and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, ...

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

<sup>15</sup> "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see [it]."

<sup>16</sup> So they brought [it]. And He said to them,

[Luke 20:20](#) So they watched [Him], and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. <sup>21</sup> Then they asked Him, saying,

"Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, ... but teach the way of God in truth: ... and You do not show personal favoritism, ...

<sup>22</sup> "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

<sup>23</sup> But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me?"

<sup>24</sup> "Show Me a denarius.

<sup>595</sup> Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity*, London: Collins, 1952, pp. 54–56. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis's\\_trilemma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis's_trilemma)

<sup>596</sup> Strong. p270. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/270/mode/2up>

"Whose image and inscription [is] this?"

<sup>21</sup> They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

<sup>22</sup> When they had heard [these words], they marveled, and left Him and went their way. [Matthew 22:15-22 NKJV](#)

"Whose image and inscription [is] this?"

They said to Him, "Caesar's." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

And they marveled at Him. [Mark 12:13-17 NKJV](#)

Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." <sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." <sup>26</sup> But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent. [Luke 22:20-26 NKJV](#)

Here Jesus gave to Christians a principle that whether or not we agree with the government whose protection and laws we are living under; we should pay the taxes they require. The modern definition of a poll tax is a fixed tax without regard to income or wealth. They didn't mention it, but the Jews were contrasting the Roman poll tax and their own Temple poll tax. I don't think they thought this one through very well, but they gave Jesus a yes/no question and were planning to imply things from His answer. If Jesus had said to pay the Roman tax, they would have claimed He was against paying the Temple tax, and if He had said to not pay the Roman tax, He would be in trouble with the Romans.

My chapter entitled [Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry](#) explains the purpose for and the amount of the temple tax. If you read into it, you can see that it fits the definition of a poll tax.

What do you believe?

- Does this principle also infer anything about participating in government in the way of voting or running for office?
- Does this principle mean that it is wrong to try to overthrow an oppressive government?
- Do you think the United States was being led by God when they rebelled against taxes without representation and eventually fought for independence from England?

## Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?

[Matthew 22:23-33](#), [Mark 12:18-27](#), [Luke 20:27-39](#)<sup>597</sup>

[Matthew 22:23](#) The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, <sup>24</sup> saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children,

his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>25</sup> "Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.

<sup>26</sup> "Likewise the second also,

and the third, even to the seventh.

<sup>27</sup> "Last of all the woman died also. <sup>28</sup> "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

[Matthew 22:29](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup> "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.

<sup>31</sup> "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

[Deuteronomy 25:5](#) "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be [married] to a stranger outside [the family];

her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. <sup>6</sup> "And it shall be [that] the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

[Deuteronomy 25:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:24](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? <sup>25</sup> "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

<sup>26</sup> "But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the [burning] bush [passage], how God spoke to him, saying,

[Mark 12:18](#) Then [some] Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:

<sup>19</sup> "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves [his] wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

<sup>20</sup> "Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring.

<sup>21</sup> "And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. <sup>22</sup> "So the seven had her and left no offspring.

Last of all the woman died also.

<sup>23</sup> "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

[Luke 20:27](#) Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to [Him] and asked Him, <sup>28</sup> saying:

"Teacher, Moses wrote to us [that] if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

<sup>29</sup> "Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children.

<sup>30</sup> "And the second took her as wife, and he died childless.

<sup>31</sup> "Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. <sup>32</sup> "Last of all the woman

died also. <sup>33</sup> "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

[Luke 20:34](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup> "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, 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 are raised, when he called the Lord ...

<sup>597</sup> Strong. p272. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/272/mode/2up>

<p>Matthew 22:32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." <sup>33</sup> And when the multitudes heard [this], they were astonished at His teaching. <a href="#">Matthew 22:23-33 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Exodus 3:6</a> 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. <a href="#">Exodus 3:6 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Mark 12:26 ... '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, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken." <a href="#">Mark 12:18-27 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Luke 20:37 ... '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 but of the living, for all live to Him." <sup>39</sup> Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." <a href="#">Luke 20:27-39 NKJV</a></p>
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I think it is worth pointing out first of all that Pharisees and Sadducees were very opposed to each other in ideology and beliefs. They were like opposing political parties, except that the politics and religion were very intertwined, so their disagreements with each other were religious in nature as well. As was pointed out in the first verse, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in angels either.

[Acts 23:8](#) For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection--and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. [Acts 23:8 NKJV](#)

At the time of Christ, the Sadducees were the party that was in religious and political power. However, as opposed to the Pharisees as they were, they were united with them in their desire to discredit and rid themselves of Jesus. He was seen as a threat to their way of life and the status quo, which happened to have them in power, such as it was under Rome.

This command of God to take a brother's widow as a wife may seem strange in some cultures today but maybe not so much in others. At the time and in the culture the command was given, women cared for their families but were not in a good position to earn the resources for that support. Polygamy also happened to be an accepted way of life. I think this arrangement may have taken different forms depending on the situation. The minimum requirement of the brother was to produce one male heir for the first born. I'm sure in some cases, after the obligation was fulfilled, no more marital relations occurred. In other cases, the older brother's widow may have become a full-fledged wife of the next brother. In either case the widow should have received the financial support of the brother or family. If we look at the role of the goel in the Old Testament, we can see that this particular command was in fact just one part of a much larger picture. The following paragraph and list were copied from the chapter on [Ruth](#).

The word goel is derived from the Hebrew [גֹּאֵל, gā'al](#)<sup>598</sup>, which is defined 'to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman.' In the KJV, this word occurred 104 times and was translated to 'redeem' 50 times, 'redeemer' 18 times, 'kinsman' 13 times, 'revenger' 7 times, 'avenger' 6 times. This translation distribution along with the reading of the laws recorded by Moses gives us the following roles of the goel.<sup>599 600</sup>

1. The kinsman should buy back their relative's land that was sold. [[Leviticus 25:25-34](#)]
2. The kinsman should redeem their relative from slavery or servitude. [[Leviticus 25:47-54](#)]
3. Avenge the murder of a relative. [[Numbers 35:12,19-27](#), [Deuteronomy 19:11,12](#)]
4. To appear in a lawsuit as a helper for a relative. [[Proverbs 23:11](#), [Jeremiah 50:34](#), [Psalm 119:154](#)]

<sup>598</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1350/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>599</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goel>

<sup>600</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Surprised by Love*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010, p43.

5. Produce an heir for a deceased brother. [[Deuteronomy 25:5,6](#)]

Now, moving on to Jesus' response, I think the Sadducees did us all a favor by asking Jesus this question. From His answer, we understand that there will be no marriage and by implication, no reproduction in heaven. The thing that always troubled me about this as a married person is, how would the relationship with my wife change in heaven? On the surface, it seems that the relationship would be less than it is here on earth without the intimate component, even though it would be better in so many ways without all the effects of sin. I think in a way, God gave us the marriage relationship to help us understand how much He loves us, and how close and intimate we can be with Him. I think maybe the component that will be missing is the sexual lust that with sin must be so closely guarded and is so difficult for many to keep within the bounds of marriage. If we can have the relationship intimacy with God and maybe others without having to worry about inappropriate feelings of lustful desire, maybe that is a good thing. I guess the end of reproduction makes sense to me, after all there will be no death, but when I think of my children and the love I have for them, it makes me sad that people would most likely not continue to experience that in heaven. Perhaps even more clearly than in the husband and wife relationship, we can see God's love and care for us in the perfect parent child relationship. However, I think we should not get too caught up with what will not be in heaven. I think that every good thing we experience on earth now, is a shadow of something better in heaven.

Jesus' last comment to the Sadducees, I think was a jab at their unbelief in the resurrection. The first point is that since the Sadducees only accepted the writings of Moses, and not the rest of the Old Testament scripture, Jesus supported His point from the writings of Moses. There is room for a little confusion if one took this statement and tried to formulate a belief on it alone. God told Moses at the burning bush, that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But then Jesus followed that up with, "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." But what did He mean by that because Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all dead? Some who claim the soul is immortal might say this is proof that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all alive in heaven. But the question and answer did not say whose wife would she be when she died (implying immediately going to heaven). It was, "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be?" Jesus didn't correct them from speaking of "the resurrection" as a future event. I believe it would be completely natural for Jesus to speak of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in that way if He knew they would live again in "the resurrection."

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What do you believe?

- In a monogamous culture, sexual relations with a woman who is not your wife would be considered adultery. How do you explain this command of God in light of the seventh commandment? Is this an example of a ceremonial law that took precedence over the 10 Commandments?
- Do you believe there is anything we experience on this earth that will not be replaced by something better in heaven?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said God was the God of the living, not the dead?

## What is the most important commandment

[Mark 12:28-34](#), [Matthew 22:34-40](#)<sup>601</sup>

[Mark 12:28](#) Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments [is]:

'Hear, O Israel,

the LORD our God, the LORD is one.

<sup>30</sup> 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This [is] the first commandment.

[Mark 12:31](#) "And the second, like [it, is] this:

'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

<sup>32</sup> So the scribe said to Him, "Well [said], Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. <sup>33</sup> "And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that no one dared question Him. [Mark 12:28-34 NKJV](#)

This same summary of the Law came up before in answer to a question. It was given by a lawyer after he asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus asked him what the Law said ([The Good Samaritan](#)). Neither Jesus nor the lawyer were saying anything new or revolutionary with the first part of the answer. In fact, what they both quoted was essentially the first part of the Shema, which is probably one of the most commonly recited prayers among Jews.<sup>602 603</sup> But even though the question was only asking for the most important commandment, Jesus was not willing to stop there. He proceeded to summarize the last six commandments by saying to love your neighbor as yourself. This summary must not have been revolutionary or unique, because this scribe affirmed the correctness of Jesus' answer, and the lawyer mentioned above, had also said the same thing.

This was a very good question, even if it was meant to trap Jesus in some way. Modern tradition, which dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century after Christ states that there are 613 commandments given in the Torah.<sup>604 605</sup> The Mishna and Talmud contain hundreds more laws or commands, many explaining or clarifying the Torah. At the time of Christ, these laws had been passed down through the centuries orally from Rabbi to student. It was thought that it was better to learn these

[Matthew 22:34](#) But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup> Then one of them,

a lawyer, asked [Him a question], testing Him, and saying,

<sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which [is] the great commandment in the law?"

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him,

[Deuteronomy 6:4](#) "Hear, O Israel: The

LORD our God, the LORD [is] one!

<sup>5</sup> "You shall love the LORD your God

with all your heart, with all your

soul, and with

all your strength. [Deuteronomy 6:4-](#)

[5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 22:37](#) ...

"You shall love the LORD your God with

all your heart, with all your soul, and

with all your mind.'

<sup>38</sup> "This is [the] first and great

commandment.

[Leviticus 19:18](#) ... but you shall love

your neighbor as yourself:

I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 19:18](#)

[NKJV](#)

<sup>39</sup> "And [the] second [is] like it: 'You shall love

your neighbor as yourself.'

<sup>40</sup> "On these two commandments hang all the

Law and the Prophets." [Matthew 22:34-40](#)

[NKJV](#)

<sup>601</sup> Strong. p274. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/274/mode/2up>

<sup>602</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/shemaref.htm>

<sup>603</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema\\_Yisrael](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael)

<sup>604</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613\\_commandments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613_commandments)

<sup>605</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/613.htm>

laws with explanation from a Rabbi rather than to only read them. Jewish tradition holds that this oral tradition originated from commands God spoke to Moses which he then taught the people but did not write in the Torah.<sup>606 607 608</sup>  
<sup>609</sup> The Pharisees at the time of Jesus, had been rebuked by Him for being more careful to keep the oral tradition than the Ten Commandments. The Sadducees on the other hand were said not to live according to the oral tradition.<sup>610</sup>

I think the reason Jesus was not willing to state only the foremost commandment is that the summary of the whole Law in two commandments cannot be separated. I believe you cannot truly love God if you do not love your neighbor. I also believe that someone who has not had the opportunity to hear about God, but truly loves their neighbor, is keeping the Law of God.

What do you believe?

- Do you think this was a trick question or an honest one?
- Do you think the oral tradition changed much over the centuries?
- Do you believe that someone who doesn't know about God but truly loves their neighbor can be saved?

## Whose son is the Christ?

[Matthew 22:41-46](#), [Mark 12:35-37](#), [Luke 20:40-44](#)<sup>611</sup>

[Matthew 22:41](#) While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,<sup>42</sup> 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:

[Mark 12:35](#) Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How [is it] that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?<sup>36</sup> "For David himself said by the Holy Spirit:

[Luke 20:41](#) And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? <sup>42</sup> "Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

[Psalm 110:1](#) A Psalm of David.

<sup>44</sup> 'The LORD said to my Lord,  
 "Sit at My right hand,  
 Till I make Your enemies  
 Your footstool." ' ?

The LORD said to my Lord,  
 "Sit at My right hand,  
 Till I make Your enemies  
 Your footstool." [Psalm 110:1](#)

'The LORD said to my Lord,  
 "Sit at My right hand,  
 Till I make Your enemies  
 Your footstool." ' ?

'The LORD said to my Lord,  
 "Sit at My right hand,  
<sup>43</sup> Till I make Your enemies Your  
 footstool." ' ?

[NKJV](#)

<sup>45</sup> "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" <sup>46</sup> And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

[Matthew 22:41-46 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:37](#) "Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He [then] his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly. [Mark 12:35-37 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:44](#) "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" —  
<sup>40</sup> But after that they dared not question Him anymore. [Luke 20:40-44 NKJV](#)

<sup>606</sup> [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/talmud\\_&\\_mishna.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/talmud_&_mishna.html)

<sup>607</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishnah>

<sup>608</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

<sup>609</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral\\_Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_Torah)

<sup>610</sup> [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/sadducees\\_pharisees\\_essenes.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/sadducees_pharisees_essenes.html)

<sup>611</sup> Strong. p275. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/274/mode/2up>

At first glance it may appear that Jesus was asking the Pharisees a question about Himself. Because they didn't believe He was the Christ, the question was theoretical to them. If you believe the Christ, the Messiah, is God, then the answer is quite easy. Of course, David would have no problem calling a descendant of his Lord if He was his God. Maybe Jesus was trying to get them to think about who their Messiah really was. The Jews seemed to have the idea that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, maybe from the following prophecy.

[Jeremiah 23:5](#) "Behold, [the] days are coming," says the LORD,  
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;  
A King shall reign and prosper,  
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.  
<sup>6</sup> In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will dwell safely;  
Now this [is] His name by which He will be called:  
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. [Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV](#)

To be fair, I don't think there were that many clear prophecies that spoke of the childhood and circumstances of His birth. There is the prophecy of the virgin birth in [Isaiah 7:14](#), which is easy to claim in retrospect, but in my opinion is not at all obvious as a predictive prophecy.

[Isaiah 7:14](#) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14 NKJV](#)

I discussed this in the chapter on the [Birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary](#). To recap what was discussed there, the oft quoted verse was actually a sign given to King Ahaz. I didn't see how the prediction of the birth of a child then as a sign, would naturally be seen as a prophecy of the Messiah. In retrospect, however, since the entire Old Testament testifies of Christ, there are many things written which may not have seemed to be prophecies, that were seen to occur in His life. These prophecies were proof to some at the time and to many others after, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and Savior that was foretold.

At the time, there was a common belief that no one would know where the Messiah came from.

[John 7:27](#) "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." [John 7:27 NKJV](#)

I think that based on the prophecies in Daniel, the Jews thought it was the time for the Messiah to appear. And then in addition to that, they had the visit of the wise men, and the announcement to the shepherds. They also had the preaching of John the Baptist, and the many miracles performed by Jesus. The problem was that Jesus didn't fit the mold that they had for the Messiah.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think the Pharisees knew the answer but were unwilling to say it?
- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach with this question?
- Do you think it is confusing for someone born of a human being to also be God? Would He be human or God?



## More woes on the scribes and Pharisees

[Matthew 23:1-39](#), [Mark 12:38-40](#), [Luke 20:45-47](#), [Luke 11:43, 47-51](#), [Luke 13:34-35](#)<sup>612</sup>

[Matthew 23:1](#) Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup> "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, [that] observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. <sup>4</sup> "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay [them] on men's shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers. <sup>5</sup> "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. <sup>6</sup> "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' <sup>8</sup> "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. <sup>9</sup> "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

[Mark 12:38](#) Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, ...

[Luke 20:45](#) Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, <sup>46</sup> "Beware of the scribes,

[Mark 12:38](#) ... who desire to go around in long robes, [love] greetings in the marketplaces, <sup>39</sup> "the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [Mark 12:38-39](#)

[Luke 11:43](#) "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. [Luke 11:43 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:46](#) ... who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [Luke 20:45-46 NKJV](#)

[NKJV](#)

[11:43 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:45-46 NKJV](#)

<sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in [yourselves], nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. <sup>14</sup> "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.

[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](#)

<sup>15</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

[NKJV](#)

<sup>16</sup> "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged [to perform it].' <sup>17</sup> "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? <sup>18</sup> "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged [to perform it].' <sup>19</sup> "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? <sup>20</sup> "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. <sup>21</sup> "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

<sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. <sup>24</sup> "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

<sup>612</sup> Strong. p276. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/276/mode/2up>

<sup>25</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

<sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead [men's] bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> "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.'

[Luke 11:47](#) "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

<sup>31</sup> "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

<sup>48</sup> "In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs.

<sup>32</sup> "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' [guilt]. <sup>33</sup> "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

<sup>34</sup> "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, <sup>35</sup> "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth,

[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,' <sup>50</sup> "that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation,

from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

<sup>51</sup> "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple.

<sup>36</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

[Luke 11:47-51 NKJV](#)

<sup>37</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under [her] wings, but you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> "See! Your house is left to you desolate; <sup>39</sup> "for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say,

[Luke 13:34](#) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen [gathers] her brood under [her] wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until [the time] comes when you say,

'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " [Matthew 23:1-39 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 118:26](#) Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! ... [Psalm 118:26 NKJV](#)

'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " [Luke 13:34-35 NKJV](#)

I placed an earlier session of [woes on the scribes and Pharisees](#) right after the first cleansing of the temple, earlier in the ministry of Jesus. Essentially the same things were said at that time. Jesus was primarily condemning the scribes and Pharisees for being hypocrites.

Jesus started by condemning their practice of outwardly showing holiness and religiousness by the clothes they wore. Then He touched on their desire or demands to be honored in public. Then He moved into the titles they demanded

people address them by. Jesus said that no human being should be called Rabbi, because only One is your teacher. I found the following descriptions of a Rabbi from those times.

The rabbis of talmudic times were the sole authority on the Oral Torah. (This was before Oral Torah was written, and no one had the opportunity to study the law for themselves). The rabbi was also revered as being a figure closer to God than anyone else in the community.<sup>613</sup>

The function of the rabbi of the Talmud was to teach the members of the community the Scriptures and the oral and traditional laws.<sup>614</sup>

Jesus had accused the Jews of treating the Oral Torah as more important than the Ten Commandments. The Rabbi was in the position to teach and interpret laws that were not even written down. I interpret this to mean that what the Rabbi said, carried as much weight as the Torah, but there was really no way to verify it by reading it yourself. I think Jesus was saying that no person should take another person's words as carrying the same weight as scripture. No one should be teaching things as religious truth that cannot be found in the Bible.

Jesus also said that no person should be called father in the religious sense, because we all have the same Father, who is God. He also said that people should not be called leaders, because everyone's leader should be Christ. So, does that mean that a church should have no human beings as leaders or teachers? Is it going against Jesus' command to have a president over a church organization? I think the explanation for these titles is the same as Rabbi. Regardless of title, I think, no person should be placed in a position where they are the sole source of spiritual information. In fact, we call organizations that revere an individual in this manner a sect. So, what is the role of a Sabbath school teacher, or a pastor or preacher? In the New Testament, Paul was called as a teacher.

[1 Timothy 2:7](#) for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ [and] not lying-- a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. [1 Timothy 2:7 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 1:11](#) to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. [2 Timothy 1:11 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:14](#) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? [Romans 10:14 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:11](#) And He Himself gave some [to be] apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,<sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV](#)

I think the role of a teacher is similar to that of a preacher, which according to Paul is to tell people about Jesus. According to Ephesians, it is a work of service, not lordship, and it is for the purpose of building up the body of believers in Christ. They should present teachings from the Bible and encourage their hearers to go study for themselves to verify what they have heard. So, is it Biblical to have a church organizational hierarchy, including a president? [Acts 15](#) paints a

<sup>613</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Rabbis.html>

<sup>614</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12494-rabbi#anchor4>

picture of a council of Apostles and elders in Jerusalem that was deciding which of the laws of Moses should be imposed on the new Gentile converts. It is interesting that nothing is said about the Ten Commandments, but they said:

[Acts 15:28](#) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: <sup>29</sup> that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. [Acts 15:28-29 NKJV](#)

I think this shows that having a church organization and leadership is supported in the Bible, but they were not teaching or requiring anything that was not in their Holy Scriptures. In fact, it seems that led by the Holy Spirit, they were making a distinction between the essential Law of God and Jewish cultural laws.

I think that some of the Pharisees must have been in positions of national authority by being on the Sanhedrin. But I think many others were considered in positions of authority by nature of the fact that they were called Rabbi's and teachers of the law. Jesus was condemning them for teaching and trying to enforce the law on the people but breaking it themselves. In some cases, they were probably guilty of knowingly breaking some of their own laws in secret, and in other cases breaking God's law to keep their own tradition. According to Jesus, they were all about putting on a show of religiousness in order to be revered by the people.

The mention of the murder of Zechariah the son of Berechiah in [Matthew 23:35](#) is interesting. I had always thought that it was referring to the murder of the Old Testament prophet by king Joash.

[2 Chronicles 24:20](#) Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.' " <sup>21</sup> So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on [it], and repay!" [2 Chronicles 24:20-22 NKJV](#)

But it does not seem to be a match based on the name of the father of this Zechariah, and the fact that he was killed in the courtyard of the Temple. Matthew Henry argues that many times people are known by more than one name, hence the difference in the father's name.<sup>615</sup> Young brought to my attention for the first time ever, and Henry also mentions it as a possibility, that perhaps this statement of Jesus was a prophecy.<sup>616</sup> Josephus wrote of a Zacharias the son of Baruch that was killed by the Zealots, in the middle of the Temple. This occurred shortly before the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. [[Josephus. Wars, 4:5:4](#) <sup>617</sup>]

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What do you believe?

- Does having fundamental beliefs mean a Church is telling its members what they must believe?
- Do you think Churches that call their priests father, or their preachers reverend, are disobeying the command of Jesus?

<sup>615</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_023.cfm?a=952035](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_023.cfm?a=952035)

<sup>616</sup> Young, L H. *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*. New Haven, 1836, p374.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA374>

<sup>617</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Wars of the Jews*. p407. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA314>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link42HCH0005>

- Why does it seem that Christians who eat meat ignore half of the reduced set of laws given to Gentiles, by not worrying about the blood or whether the animal was strangled to death?

## The poor widow's offering

[Mark 12:41-44](#), [Luke 21:1-4](#)<sup>618</sup>

[Mark 12:41](#) Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many [who were] rich put in much. <sup>42</sup> Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. <sup>43</sup> So He called His disciples to [Himself] and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; <sup>44</sup> "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood." [Mark 12:41-44 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:1](#) And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, <sup>2</sup> and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. <sup>3</sup> So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; <sup>4</sup> "for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." [Luke 21:1-4 NKJV](#)

I think the main principle at play here is that the rich were giving out of their surplus, meaning they didn't have to sacrifice anything in order to give. The poor widow on the other hand, gave all she had. She was willing to give up a meal or more if necessary, in order to be able to give her offering to God. In God's sight, the size of your gift depends more on how much you had to sacrifice to be able to give it.

I guess to tell the truth, I would have to say that I have always been in the position of giving out of my surplus. I suppose it doesn't take too much honesty to admit that it would be very difficult to give up everything I owned. After all, if I did, where would I live, what would I eat and how would I pay for my children's education? What would I have done if I were the rich young ruler that Jesus told to sell all he had, give it to the poor and follow Him?

What do you believe?

- How much does God expect you to give?
- Who do you think benefits more from extreme giving, the giver or the receiver?
- Do you think it would be easier to give up everything you owned if you had two million dollars, or if you only had two dollars?

## Jesus foretells His death again

[John 12:20-50](#)<sup>619</sup>

[John 12:20](#) Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

<sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

<sup>618</sup> Strong. p280. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/280/mode/2up>

<sup>619</sup> Strong. p281. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/280/mode/2up>

<sup>23</sup> But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. <sup>25</sup> "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him [My] Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup> "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, [saying], "I have both glorified [it] and will glorify [it] again."

<sup>29</sup> Therefore the people who stood by and heard [it] said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. <sup>31</sup> "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all [peoples] to Myself." <sup>33</sup> This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

<sup>34</sup> The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how [can] You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

<sup>37</sup> But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, <sup>38</sup> that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

"Lord, who has believed our report?

[Isaiah 53:1](#) Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? [Isaiah](#)

<sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

[53:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>40</sup> "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with [their] eyes, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." <sup>41</sup> These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

[Isaiah 6:10](#) "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." [Isaiah 6:10 NKJV](#)

<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [Him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. <sup>45</sup> "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. <sup>46</sup> "I have come [as] a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. <sup>47</sup> "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. <sup>48</sup> "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. <sup>49</sup> "For I have not spoken on My own [authority]; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should

speak.<sup>50</sup> "And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." [John 12:20-50 NKJV](#)

During this meeting with the Greeks, God's voice was heard affirming Jesus for the third time during His earthly ministry. The first was at His baptism, and the second was at His transfiguration. At the beginning of His life, wise men from the East came and worshipped Him, and now in the last week of His life on earth, Greeks from the west came to Him. Ellen White had the following to say:

These men came from the West to find the Saviour at the close of His life, as the wise men had come from the East at the beginning. At the time of Christ's birth the Jewish people were so engrossed with their own ambitious plans that they knew not of His advent. The magi from a heathen land came to the manger with their gifts, to worship the Saviour. So these Greeks, representing the nations, tribes, and peoples of the world, came to see Jesus. So the people of all lands and all ages would be drawn by the Saviour's cross. So shall many "come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 8:11. [Desire of Ages, p621](#)<sup>620</sup>

Jesus not only foretold His death, but He gave them a hint as to How He would die.

[John 12:32](#) "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all [peoples] to Myself." [John 12:32 NKJV](#)

This statement was a reference to the serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness.

[Numbers 12:8](#) 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 12:8-9 NKJV](#)

In actuality, I think the serpent on a standard was intended to be a foreshadowing of Jesus being crucified on the cross.

Finally, Jesus reiterated His oneness with the Father. But what did He mean with the following words?

[John 12:47](#) "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."<sup>48</sup> "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. [John 12:47-48 NKJV](#)

Why did Jesus say He doesn't judge him who doesn't keep His words? I thought God was going to judge everyone. But then He clarifies a little in the next verse when He says, those who reject Him will be judged by His words at the last day. Matthew Henry suggests that maybe Jesus meant I'm not judging now, or I alone will not judge.<sup>621</sup> The "judge him at the last day," in the next verse kind of supports the not now interpretation. The first coming of Jesus was not for the purpose of judging, but to provide a way for salvation to be offered. Then at the last day, people would be judged based on whether they accepted the salvation He offered.

<sup>620</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p621-622.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=621>

<sup>621</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_012.cfm?a=1009047](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_012.cfm?a=1009047)

What do you believe?

- Do you think the serpent Moses lifted up was a symbol of Christ? If so, why a serpent?
- In [verse 42](#), who do you think were the rulers who were believing if they were not Pharisees?
- [[John 12:48](#)] How do you think Jesus' words from His first coming might judge at the last day?

## Signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the World

[Matthew 24:1-51](#), [Matthew 10:17-20,22,34-36](#), [Mark 13:1-37](#), [Luke 21:5-36](#) (except 18), [Luke 12:4-5,11-12,32,39-48,51-53](#), [Luke 17:22-24,26-30,31-32,34-37](#)<sup>622</sup>

[Matthew 24:1](#) Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not [one] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

[Matthew 24:3](#) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what [will be] the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

[Matthew 24:4](#) And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

[Matthew 24:6](#) "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all [these things] must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

[Mark 13:1](#) Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings [are here]!"

<sup>2</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not [one] stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

[Mark 13:3](#) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things be? And what [will be] the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

[Mark 13:5](#) And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup> "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am [He],' and will deceive many.

[Mark 13:7](#) "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for [such things] must happen, but the end [is] not yet.

[Luke 21:5](#) Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations,

He said, <sup>6</sup> "These things which you see--the days will come in which not [one] stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

[Luke 21:7](#) So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign [will there be] when these things are about to take place?"

[Luke 21:8](#) And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am [He],' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.

[Luke 21:9](#) "But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end [will] not [come] immediately."

<sup>622</sup> Strong. p286. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/286/mode/2up>



Matthew 24:7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> "All these [are] the beginning of sorrows.  
[Matthew 24:1-8 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These [are] the beginnings of sorrows.

Luke 21:10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

[Matthew 10:17](#) "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. <sup>18</sup> "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

Mark 13:9 "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.

[Luke 12:11](#) "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities,

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. <sup>13</sup> "But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

<sup>19</sup> "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;

<sup>10</sup> "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,

do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say.

<sup>14</sup> "Therefore settle [it] in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; <sup>15</sup> "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. [Luke 21:5-15 NKJV](#)

<sup>20</sup> "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. [Matthew 10:17-20 NKJV](#)

for it is not you who speak, but speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup> "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." [Luke 12:11-12 NKJV](#)

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

[Luke 12:51](#) "Do [you] suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.

<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';

[Micah 7:6](#) For son dishonors father, Daughter rises against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

<sup>53</sup> "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." [Luke 12:51-53 NKJV](#)

<sup>36</sup> "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.' [Matthew 10:34-36 NKJV](#)

A man's enemies [are] the men of his own household. [Micah 7:6 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](#)

[Matthew 10:21](#) "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father [his] child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. <sup>22</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. ... [Matthew 10:21-22 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:12 "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. ...

[Luke 21:16](#) "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put [some] of you to death. <sup>17</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. [Luke 21:16-17 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

[Luke 12:4](#) "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill 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, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! [Luke 12:4-5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:13](#) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

[Matthew 10:22](#) ... But he who endures to the end will be saved. [Matthew 10:22 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:13](#) ... But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

[Luke 21:19](#) "By your patience possess your souls. [Luke 21:19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:32](#) "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [Luke 12:32 NKJV](#)

<sup>14</sup> "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.

[Mark 13:10](#) "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

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),

[Daniel 9:27](#) ...  
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, ...  
[Daniel 9:27 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),

[Luke 21:20](#) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

Matthew 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

<sup>21</sup> "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.

Matthew 24:17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Mark 13:15 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. <sup>16</sup> "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

[Luke 17:31](#) "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods [are] in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. <sup>32</sup> "Remember Lot's wife. [Luke 17:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:22](#) "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Matthew 24:19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> "For then there will be great tribulation,

Mark 13:17 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>18</sup> "And pray that your flight may not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> "For [in] those days there will be tribulation,

Luke 21:23 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

Luke 21:24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. [Luke 21:22-24 NKJV](#)

Matthew 24:22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Mark 13:20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

[Luke 17:22](#) Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see [it].

Matthew 24:23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here [is] the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe [it].

Mark 13:21 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here [is] the Christ!' or, 'Look, [He is] there!' do not believe it.

Luke 17:23 "And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' ...

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

[Matthew 24:11](#) "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Mark 13:22 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

<sup>12</sup> "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. [Matthew 24:11-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>25</sup> "See, I have told you beforehand.

<sup>23</sup> "But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

Matthew 24:26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; [or] 'Look, [He is] in the inner rooms!' do not believe [it].<sup>27</sup> "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

<sup>28</sup> "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

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 24:30 "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.<sup>31</sup> "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.

Luke 21:28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

[Luke 17:23](#) ... Do not go after [them] or follow [them].

<sup>24</sup> "For as the lightning that flashes out of one [part] under heaven shines to the other [part] under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.—

<sup>37</sup> And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them,

"Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." [Luke 17:23,24,37 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:24 "But in those days,

after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; and in the stars; ...

<sup>25</sup> "the stars of heaven will fall,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.<sup>26</sup> ... for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Luke 21:25 ... and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup> "men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, ...

[Daniel 7:13](#) ... And behold, [One] like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! ...  
[Daniel 7:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 27:13](#) ... The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem. [Isaiah 27:13 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:26 "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

<sup>27</sup> "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.

Luke 21:27 "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Matthew 24:32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer [is] near. <sup>33</sup> "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>34</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. <sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

<sup>37</sup> "But as the days of Noah [were], so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

<sup>40</sup> "Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. [Matthew 24:13-41 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. <sup>35</sup> "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." [Luke 21:25-36 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>30</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>31</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. <sup>32</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

[Luke 17:26](#) "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

<sup>27</sup> "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

<sup>28</sup> "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. <sup>30</sup> "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.—<sup>34</sup> "I tell you, in that night there will be two [men] in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.—

<sup>36</sup> "Two [men] will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.—<sup>35</sup> "Two [women] will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. [Luke 17:26-30,34-36 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> "When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. <sup>31</sup> "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. <sup>33</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Mark 13:33 "Take heed,

watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

[Matthew 24:43](#) "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 24:43 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"—<sup>34</sup> "[It is] like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

[Matthew 24:45](#) "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? <sup>46</sup> "Blessed [is] that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup> "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup> "and begins to beat [his] fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup> "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him] and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup> "and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [Matthew 24:45-51 NKJV](#)

Luke 12:47 "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare [himself] or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes]. <sup>48</sup> "But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. [Luke 12:39-48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:42](#) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. [Matthew 24:42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:39](#) "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>40</sup> "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." <sup>41</sup> Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable [only] to us, or to all [people]?" <sup>42</sup> And the Lord said, ...

Luke 12:42 ... And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom [his] master will make ruler over his household, to give [them their] portion of food in due season? <sup>43</sup> "Blessed [is] that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup> "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. <sup>45</sup> "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, <sup>46</sup> "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him], and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the unbelievers.

Mark 13:35 "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—<sup>36</sup> "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. [Mark 13:1-37 NKJV](#)

Jesus was really free with His predictions here, but He intermingled the signs for the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming. It's a little easier for us to sort it out now since we can see the signs that were fulfilled leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. Let's list all the things Jesus predicted and see what we can come up with in terms of fulfillment:

**[Assuredly, I say to you, not \[one\] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.](#)**

This one is clearly applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus wrote:

Caesar gave orders that they should demolish the entire city and temple

But for all the rest of the wall, it was so completely leveled with the ground, by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was nothing left to make those who came thither believe it had ever been inhabited.

[Josephus. Wars, 7:1:1](#) <sup>623</sup>

A portion of a wall was left standing to provide shelter for the garrison, which is called the weeping wall today. Many have explained that this is not one of the temple walls but a retaining wall. <sup>624</sup>

Dr. Earnest L. Martin, in his book, "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot," states:

Even the most liberal of scholars admit that these statements were recorded in these Synoptic Gospels within a generation or two after the Jewish/Roman War. Had the statements not been true, there were hosts of hostile people to the teachings of Christianity up to the middle of the second century and beyond who would have gladly stated that these prophetic utterances made by Jesus were an outright lie (if they were indeed a lie). But I have recorded in my book numerous eyewitnesses over the next 300 years that attest to the accuracy of what the Gospel writers stated about the prophecies of Jesus given above. Jerusalem and the Temple (with their walls) were leveled to the ground — to the extent that even their very foundation stones were uprooted and overturned. No stone remained on top another, just as Jesus said would happen. <sup>625</sup>

The following story has been told by many, without historical reference:

There were great quantities of gold and silver which had been placed in the Temple for safekeeping. This melted and ran down between the rocks and into the cracks of the stones that formed the Temple and the wall around it. When the Roman soldiers finally took the city, in their greed to obtain this gold and silver they took long bars and pried apart these massive stones. Thus, quite literally, not one stone was left standing upon another.

User [Schuh](#) on stackexchange.com shares his analysis on the origin of this story. He says the earliest example of the story he could find was from a 1970 Ray Stedman sermon, later published in a book, but quoted without historical reference. <sup>626</sup> It is possible that many since have quoted Stedman without giving him credit.

What do you believe?

- Is there any doubt in your mind that this prophecy was fulfilled by the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD?
- Can you find a historical source for the story of the gold melting into the cracks?
- Why do you think the Romans destroyed the Temple so completely?

<sup>623</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Wars of the Jews*. p407. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA407>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link72HCH0001>

<sup>624</sup> <http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/34711/if-every-stone-of-the-temple-was-thrown-down-how-is-the-wailing-wall-still-stand>

<sup>625</sup> Martin, Earnest L.. *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot* (Expanded Internet edition). <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>

<sup>626</sup> [Schuh. http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/35766/what-is-the-source-of-the-story-about-the-melted-gold-in-the-destroyed-temple-in](http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/35766/what-is-the-source-of-the-story-about-the-melted-gold-in-the-destroyed-temple-in)

**For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**

This one seems more applicable to the second coming. The destruction of Jerusalem was within the lifetime of some who had seen Jesus, and hence I think it would have been difficult for imposters. Wikipedia has an extensive list of people who have claimed to be Jesus returned or reincarnated. Whether it is because we just know more about recent history or not, the list is heavily weighted to the claims in the last fifty years.<sup>627</sup> But I do not believe most of these past claims have been the great deception predicted. After all most of these people were probably not performing great signs and wonders. So when the great deception comes, the one that if possible could deceive the very elect, how is one supposed to know whether a person who claims to be Christ is or is not? We can know because of what Jesus and the Bible says about the next time He will return, as well as what it says about imposters.

[Matthew 24:23](#) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here [is] the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe [it].<sup>24</sup> "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.<sup>25</sup> "See, I have told you beforehand.<sup>26</sup> "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; [or] 'Look, [He is] in the inner rooms!' do not believe [it].<sup>27</sup> "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. [Matthew 24:23-27 NKJV](#)

[2 Thessalonians 2:1](#) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,<sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,<sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. [2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:14](#) And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.<sup>15</sup> Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. [2 Corinthians 11:14-15 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](#)

I know, some may look at the list on Wikipedia and wonder how people could be deceived by some of these false Christs. But many have not read these warnings in the Bible. It used to scare me as a child because I used to think the deception would be so great it could deceive the very elect. But that's not what Jesus said, He said they would "show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." [\[Matthew 24:24\]](#) What that says to me is that the very elect will not be deceived, but the deception will be good enough that it would almost get them. So, what does that mean for those who don't study the warnings in God's Word?

I'm sure there are many other verses from the Bible that could be added to the ones quoted above, but this is a good place to start.

1. If someone tells you about Jesus being somewhere on earth and you haven't seen Him arrive yourself, don't believe it. This might just be the best and most important sign.
2. If you see someone who appears like a supernatural being of light
  - o who performs miracles, check #1

<sup>627</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_messiah\\_claimants#Christian\\_messiah\\_claimants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_messiah_claimants#Christian_messiah_claimants)



- who says they are God, check #1
- who teaches things contrary to what the Bible says, don't follow

What do you believe?

- Have you personally heard of someone claiming to Christ?
- Do you think it would be hard or easy for you to identify a false prophet?
- What is your ultimate guide in identifying false Christs and false prophets?

### **The end is not yet, all these [are] the beginning of sorrows**

There were three things that Jesus mentioned where He specifically said it was not an immediate sign of the end. So, what did He mean by that and why did He say it? Some translations say birth pangs, in place of sorrows, which would definitely lead to birth, but any woman who has experienced false labor, or a very long painful delivery knows how long that time can seem. These are the three statements Jesus added that qualifier to:

- You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place
- For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom
- In various places there will be famines and earthquakes

I was just scanning a list of wars that the United States has been involved in and it is extensive.<sup>628</sup> Also on Wikipedia, the list of wars globally was so large that they were broken down into categories and time ranges.<sup>629</sup> I think I like the point made by the answerer to a question on this topic. In my own words, there have always been wars and perhaps Jesus was trying to say not to interpret wars and rumor of wars as a sign of His coming. The same author also made the same point about famines and earthquakes.<sup>630</sup> Does that mean we should see all the wars and natural disasters which some would argue are happening with increased frequency and say that Jesus is not coming back soon? Absolutely not, I just believe that we should not try to attach any timeframe or nearness to His coming based on these things.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe there is an increased frequency of wars now?
- Do you believe there is an increased frequency of natural disasters?
- How do you interpret Jesus' statement "That is not yet the end, but all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs?"

**You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;**

I believe this was definitely fulfilled for the early Christians when the same people who persecuted and killed Jesus, continued to do the same to His followers. After the destruction of Jerusalem and when the Jews lost any governing ability, the Christians continued to be persecuted by Rome to more or less of a degree depending on the Emperors or

<sup>628</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars\\_involving\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_the_United_States)

<sup>629</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline\\_of\\_war#Wars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_war#Wars)

<sup>630</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/wars-and-rumors-of-war.html>

governors. To a great degree I think Rome did not distinguish between Jews and Christians and when they persecuted the Jews because of their terrorism, the Christians suffered as well. I'm sure many Christians were persecuted and killed without due process, but some, possibly the more influential had to stand on trial in Roman courts. Jesus promised them that the Holy Spirit would give them the right words to say, but I don't believe they were necessarily the words that would get them released. I think this served as an opportunity to witness to those who heard the testimony of the Christians on trial. I also believe that in the last days, true followers of Jesus, regardless of denomination or religious affiliation, will be persecuted. I think the promise of the Holy Spirit will be fulfilled then as well. I think it will be the last opportunity for some unbelievers to make their choice. When they see people who are willing to suffer and die for their beliefs, and the Holy Spirit is speaking to them through these very people, they will not be able to say when they are judged that they never knew.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think that all people everywhere will have this experience, or do you think some countries will remain religiously free?
- Do you believe you must have memorized or at least read the words from the Bible before the Holy Spirit can prompt you to speak them?

**"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'; 'and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.'**

This statement by Jesus would have been painfully true for Jewish families who were split when some accepted Christianity and others did not. It has continued to be so for any families split by opposing religions. I don't know if Jesus meant that this would be worse in the last days, or if He was just warning all followers, present and future that they might encounter this. I think this experience is much more true for families that have strong but different religious beliefs. Families that don't have strong religious view will be less impacted by one or a portion of the family accepting Christ.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus literally came to set family members against each other or do you think He just knew that would happen in some cases?
- Do you think this type of betrayal would only happen to families with strong religious views?
- We could probably all envision this behavior in some very dysfunctional families, but what would have to happen for a normal family to wish harm or even death on another family member?

**Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.**

This statement by Jesus is very much related to the previous two points. Christians will be hated by many (all nations) because of their belief in Him. But the point here is that some who are brought to trial and are given an ultimatum to reject Christ and betray their fellow believers, will cave in to the pressure. Some will regretfully betray friends and loved ones, but for others the former love and comradery will be replaced by hatred.

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What do you believe?

- If you live in a country with religious freedom, do you believe a time could come when people would be killed for their religious beliefs?
- Or do you believe this will only happen in countries that currently don't have religious freedom?
- Why or how do you think God's true followers will be hated by all nations?

**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.**

I used to wonder with new people being born every day, how could the Gospel of Jesus be preached to every single person. But that will always be the case and I don't think that is what Jesus was talking about. I believe God in His infinite wisdom will judge the babies and infants justly. The bigger question is whether God is dependent on human beings to accomplish something before He can come. Is there something special about the time Jesus returns that everyone should have heard about Him, because I don't think there would have been any other time in history when that was the case?

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What do you believe?

- Does being preached in the whole word mean that every single person alive must have been confronted with a choice to believe it or not?
- If so, how do you envision this happening especially when there are babies being born all the time around the world? Do you think the whole world could be sterilized?
- Why do you think it is important for every living person to hear the Gospel when it has probably never happened in history before?

**Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.**

This phrase abomination of desolation is used twice in Daniel, but the pair of words occurs a third time, but not in the same phrase. The word abomination is translated from the word [שִׁקּוּץ, šiqqûs](#)<sup>631</sup> which is translated to some form of the word abomination 20 times in the KJV. It is also translated to some form of the word detestable 6 times, most of which are followed by the word idol or thing. The word is primarily used to describe idols and possibly idolatry. The Hebrew word from which desolation is translated is [שָׁמֵם, šāmēm](#)<sup>632</sup> which is mostly translated to some form of the word desolate, and secondly less than half as many times as astonished. The primary definition for the biblical usage of the word is "to be desolate, be appalled, stun, stupefy."<sup>633</sup> The first and the most concentrated use of the word in a single chapter is in Leviticus 26, where God describes through Moses, what will happen if the Israelites do not obey His laws.

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<sup>631</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8251/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>632</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8074/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>633</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8074/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

[Leviticus 26:1](#) 'You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a [sacred] pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I [am] the LORD your God. <sup>2</sup> You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 26:1-2 NKJV](#)

So, what does the abomination of desolation mean? While it seemed that abomination had a lot to do with idolatry, remember there were three other points made in Leviticus, keeping the sabbaths, reverencing the sanctuary and keeping His commands in general. The consequence of disobedience was that they would be carried away from the land God had given them and the land would be left desolate. Is it fair to start with the desolation of the land and then consider what led to it as an abomination? There's no question that idolatry was considered an abomination. I don't think it is a stretch to consider breaking the other commands to be an abomination as well. After studying about the seventh year sabbath laws (see [Appendix F](#)), it seemed to me that the breaking of these laws was as much a factor in the abomination that led to desolation. From a human standpoint, these sabbath laws were all about taking care of the poor and the needy.

But understanding more about the abominations that led to desolation still doesn't help me to understand how this was a sign to flee Jerusalem. A pretty good description of the destruction of the second temple was written by Lambert Dolphin with many historical references.<sup>634</sup> From the result of my study, the abomination didn't seem like a single incident. G. Goldberg on a page from the website [josephus.org](http://josephus.org) assembled a number of quotations from Josephus followed by comments of his own meant to show the pollution of the Temple by the zealots and Idumeans, leading up to its destruction.<sup>635</sup>

I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall, and the ruin of her affairs, whereon they saw their high priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city. [Josephus. Wars. 4:5:2](#)<sup>636</sup>

Certain of those robbers went up to the city, as if they were going to worship God, while they had daggers under their garments, and by thus mingling themselves among the multitude they slew Jonathan ... and having weapons concealed in like manner as before, and mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew certain of their own enemies, and were subservient to other men for money; and slew others, not only in remote parts of the city, but in the temple itself also; for they had the boldness to murder men there, without thinking of the impiety of which they were guilty. And this seems to me to have been the reason why God, out of his hatred of these men's wickedness, rejected our city; and as for the temple, he no longer esteemed it sufficiently pure for him to inhabit therein, but brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it; and brought upon us, our wives, and children, slavery, as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities. [Josephus. Antiquities. 20:8:5](#)<sup>637</sup>

The zealots also joined in the shouts raised by the Idumeans; and the storm itself rendered the cry more terrible; nor did the Idumeans spare any body; for as they are naturally a most barbarous and bloody nation, and had been distressed by the tempest, they made use of their weapons against those that had shut the gates against them, and acted in the same manner as to those that supplicated for their lives, and to those that fought them, insomuch that they ran through those with their swords who desired them to remember the relation there was

<sup>634</sup> <http://www.templemount.org/destruct2.html>

<sup>635</sup> <http://www.josephus.org/causeofDestruct.htm>

<sup>636</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Wars of the Jews*. Book 4:5:2. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA313>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link42HCH0005>

<sup>637</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. Book 20:8:1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA116>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202HCH0008>

between them, and begged of them to have regard to their common temple. Now there was at present neither any place for flight, nor any hope of preservation; but as they were driven one upon another in heaps, so were they slain. Thus the greater part were driven together by force, as there was now no place of retirement, and the murderers were upon them; and, having no other way, threw themselves down headlong into the city; whereby, in my opinion, they underwent a more miserable destruction than that which they avoided, because that was a voluntary one. And now the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood; and that day, as it came on, they saw eight thousand five hundred dead bodies there. [Josephus. Wars. 4:5:1](#)<sup>638</sup>

These quotes and more from the same chapter in Wars of the Jews show the abominations that took place in the Temple just prior to its destruction. But perhaps the best clue is what Luke wrote:

[Luke 21:20](#) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. <sup>21</sup> "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. [Luke 21:20-21 NKJV](#)

I got the impression from reading church historians that many Christians had already left Jerusalem and relocated to Pella in Perea, maybe when they saw the abominations taking place in the Temple by the Zealots and the Idumeans. The following are a couple quotes from early church historians, assembled by the authors of the web page <http://www.preteristarchive.com/StudyArchive/p/pella-flight.html><sup>639</sup>

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. [Eusebius. Church History. 3:5:3](#)<sup>640</sup>

For that was its place of origin, since all the disciples had settled in Pella after their remove from Jerusalem — Christ having told them to abandon Jerusalem and withdraw from it because of the siege it was about to undergo. [The Panarion of Eiphanius of Salamis](#)<sup>641</sup>

I think the siege of Jerusalem followed by the temporary withdrawal by Cestius was the final sign that the Christians were to flee without delay.

It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world. [Josephus. Wars, 2:19:7](#)<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews. Book 4:5:1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAAcAAJ&pg=RA1-PA313>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link42HCH0005>

<sup>639</sup> <http://www.preteristarchive.com/StudyArchive/p/pella-flight.html>

<sup>640</sup> Eusebius. Church History. Book 3:5:3. [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339\\_Eusebius\\_Caesariensis\\_Church\\_History\\_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339_Eusebius_Caesariensis_Church_History_EN.pdf) alternate: [http://btlb.org/0265-0339\\_Eusebius\\_Caesariensis\\_Church\\_History\\_EN.pdf](http://btlb.org/0265-0339_Eusebius_Caesariensis_Church_History_EN.pdf)

<sup>641</sup> Eiphanius. *The Panarion of Eiphanius of Salamis*.

[https://archive.org/stream/ThePanarionOfEiphaniusOfSalamis\\_201603/the%20panarion%20of%20eiphanius%20of%20salamis\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/ThePanarionOfEiphaniusOfSalamis_201603/the%20panarion%20of%20eiphanius%20of%20salamis_djvu.txt)

<sup>642</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews. Book 2:19:7. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAAcAAJ&pg=RA1-PA250>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link22HCH0019>

What do you believe?

- Do you believe the abominations referred to are perpetrated by God's chosen people or by outsiders?
- Do you believe this prophecy has multiple fulfillments?
- Do you think the fulfillment of this prophecy has to involve the destruction of the Jewish Temple?

**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.**

A related text but with slightly different wording regarding the moon is found in the book of Joel.

[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](#)

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.”

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>643</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

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<sup>643</sup> <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/new-england-dark-day-1780/>

regarding the moon, possibly depending on the observation point. Some said the moon appeared red<sup>644</sup> and some could see no moon at all.<sup>645</sup> I'm sure there are many more historical eye-witness accounts of that day, but Wikipedia has compiled a few online sources.<sup>646</sup>

Seventh-Day Adventists teach that the tribulation of those days was the 1260 year period of Daniel and Revelation that 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>647</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 perfectly serene and cloudless, an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens." [White. Great Controversy. p333](#)<sup>648</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>649</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

<sup>644</sup> <https://storiesfromipswich.org/2014/07/25/the-dark-day-1780/>

<sup>645</sup> [https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech\\_0519](https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech_0519)

<sup>646</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_England's\\_Dark\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England's_Dark_Day)

<sup>647</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>

<sup>648</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>649</sup> <https://leonid.arc.nasa.gov/history.html>

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>650 651</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.

What do you believe?

- Do you think these signs could be fulfilled by regional events such as the New England dark day in 1780?
- Do you think these signs could be fulfilled again on a grander or more global scale?
- Do you think there will be another tribulation just before Jesus comes that these signs could follow?

**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.**

I believe this to be the only sign of the immediate return of Christ. All other signs I have discussed point to other things or to the nearness of His return. I arrive at this conclusion because Jesus Himself told us that no man can know that day or hour of His return.

[Mark 13:32](#) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. [Mark 13:32 NKJV](#)

Some would argue after reading the few preceding verses that this statement by Jesus is in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem that was to occur before that generation passed. Here are some more statements by Jesus which say something similar.

[Matthew 25:13](#) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. [Matthew 25:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:36](#) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. [Matthew 24:36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:42](#) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. [Matthew 24:42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:50](#) "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him] and at an hour that he is not aware of, [Matthew 24:50 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:33](#) "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. <sup>34</sup> "[It is] like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. <sup>35</sup> "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—<sup>36</sup> "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" [Mark 13:33-37 NKJV](#)

<sup>650</sup> <http://meteorshowersonline.com/leonids.html>

<sup>651</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonids>



[Luke 12:46](#) "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him], and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the unbelievers. [Luke 12:46 NKJV](#)

I believe the message of these verses is that we cannot predict a date for the return of Christ. But when He does come, everyone will see Him coming.

What do you believe?

- Is it helpful for you to look for and identify sign of Jesus' soon return?
- Why do you think so many have tried to set dates for the return of Christ?
- Do you think William Miller was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he set a date for the return of Jesus in 1844?

**Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.**

I believe these statements by Jesus are the primary supporting verses for the teachings of the secret rapture. I think the most popular beliefs about the secret rapture today are those made popular by the books, movies and preaching of people like Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Jimmy Swaggart, Chuck Smith and others. They belong to a teaching called Pre-tribulational Premillennialism, describing the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ separated by the great tribulation, all followed by the millennium.<sup>652</sup> This teaching is generally associated with the futurist view of prophecy which places the last week or seven years of Daniel's 70 week prophecy between the rapture and the second coming.<sup>653</sup> It appears that the futurist view of prophecy was developed by the Roman Catholic Church to deflect reformation era teachings that the Papacy was the antichrist.<sup>654 655</sup> While it seems that Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) taught that there was a rapture 45 days before the end of the great tribulation, I don't think that was a major point of this teachings.<sup>656</sup> I say this because while the Roman Catholic Church still holds the futurist view of prophecy, they do not seem to agree with the pre-tribulational teachings of the secret rapture.<sup>657 658</sup>

The simple fact of the matter is that there are many Bible verses supporting a very public return of Christ at the end of the world to take those who will be saved, including the resurrected righteous, to heaven. The question that remains then is whether there is a time prior to His very public return that some are secretly taken to heaven? First let's look at some of the Bible verses describing the coming of Christ to take those who will be saved.

[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. <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 4:16-17 NKJV](#)

<sup>652</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Pre-tribulational\\_Premillennialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Pre-tribulational_Premillennialism)

<sup>653</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Tribulation#Futurism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Tribulation#Futurism)

<sup>654</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurism\\_\(Christianity\)#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurism_(Christianity)#History)

<sup>655</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco\\_Ribera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Ribera)

<sup>656</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Doctrinal\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Doctrinal_history)

<sup>657</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-rapture>

<sup>658</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/rapture-claptrap>

[1 Corinthians 15:51](#) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> 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 15:51-52 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](#)

In all of these cases, a trumpet or great trumpet is mentioned, and Thessalonians also includes a shout. There are many other verses about the second coming and the resurrection, but I chose these specifically because it talks about the elect, those who will be saved and taken to heaven. This is the class of people who would presumably be raptured, but this sounds anything but quiet and secret. Let's take another look at the seemingly secret rapture, including the greater context.

[Matthew 24:32](#) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer [is] near. <sup>33</sup> "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>34</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

<sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. <sup>37</sup> "But as the days of Noah [were], so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>40</sup> "Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. [Matthew 24:32-41 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:22](#) Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see [it]. <sup>23</sup> "And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after [them] or follow [them]. <sup>24</sup> "For as the lightning that flashes out of one [part] under heaven shines to the other [part] under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. <sup>25</sup> "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: <sup>27</sup> "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. <sup>30</sup> "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

<sup>31</sup> "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods [are] in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. <sup>32</sup> "Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. <sup>34</sup> "I tell you, in that night there will be two [men] in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>35</sup> "Two [women] will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. <sup>36</sup> "Two [men] will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

<sup>37</sup> And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." [Luke 17:22-37 NKJV](#)

A few questions or points about these two passages. Is this one taken and the other left about the destruction of Jerusalem, or the second coming? In Matthew those statements are preceded by Jesus saying, "Assuredly, I say to you,

this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” In Luke He said, “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods [are] in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.” Both of those statements seem to have more to do with the destruction of Jerusalem. Another point that I would make is that the taking seems to be likened to the days of Noah, where those who went in the ark were saved and those left outside were lost. There was nothing secret about the salvation in this case because Noah had been preaching for years, trying to get people to join them in the ark. Secondly, for those left out of the ark, there was no second chance as is the case with the popular rapture theology. [Luke 17:34](#) says “on that night”, so does that mean the secret rapture will occur at night? But then it also mentions people working or being in the field, so does that imply day?

In conclusion, I strongly oppose the idea of inserting an indeterminate gap between the first 69 weeks and the 70<sup>th</sup> weeks of Daniels 70-week prophecy. I think this was first proposed by the Roman Catholic Church to deflect or deny identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist. I don't see any cohesive evidence for the saved being taken secretly, with another group of people taken later at the second coming which is undeniable. Finally, I think it is easier to interpret the one taken and other left in the context of the second coming, than it is to try to explain a secret rapture in the context of the very public and loud second coming to take the saved to heaven.

What do you believe?

- Do you think some will be taken prior to the second coming of Jesus?
- Why do you think there are so many different beliefs in what the prophecies mean for the end times?
- Do you think God intended for it to be hard to understand these end time prophecies?

## The ten virgins

[Matthew 25:1-12](#), [Luke 12:36-38](#)<sup>659</sup>

[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.' [Matthew 25:1-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:35](#) "Let your waist be girded and [your] lamps burning; <sup>36</sup> "and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. <sup>37</sup> "Blessed [are] those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down [to eat], and will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup> "And if he

<sup>659</sup> Strong. p302. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/302/mode/2up>

should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find [them] so, blessed are those servants.

[Luke 12:35-38 NKJV](#)

Before talking about the ten virgins, I wanted to make a few brief comments about the verses from Luke. The purpose of being ready is different but the warning to be ready is the same. Keep your lamps lit and stay awake and alert. [Verse 37](#) seemed kind of strange because it seems that he, singular, the master, will serve them, the slaves when he returns. Was Jesus really suggesting that the master would have his slaves recline at the table and serve them? Of course, Jesus Himself said that He came to serve and to give His life.

[Matthew 20:28](#) "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Matthew 20:28 NKJV](#)

On another occasion Jesus mentioned the saved, reclining at a table in heaven.

[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. [Matthew 8:11 NKJV](#)

Moving on to the main story of the ten virgins, I wondered as I read it again whether bridesmaids, as we call them, had to be virgins back then? Then I wondered, why were these ten virgins not with the bride? Then that made me wonder why the bride was not mentioned at all in this parable? Maybe these ten virgins were not bridal attendants or what we consider bridesmaids. It seems pretty clear that the ten virgins represent people who are anticipating the second coming of Jesus. These are Bible believing, church going Christians, not just the general public. In fact, in the Bible prophecy, a woman represents a religious body or organization. And a virgin or pure woman is usually a symbol of a good church. In the Bible oil can represent the Holy Spirit. Is it possible that the virgins who ran out of oil represent some of the protestant churches, founded by reformers who were definitely motivated by the Holy Spirit? After all, in the story, they are virgins, anticipating the bridegroom and they had oil at first. I would say that perhaps then, the midnight shout was a specific event such as what occurred in the years leading up to 1844. At that time, many Protestant Christian churches rejected the message and even went so far as to remove from membership those who accepted it.<sup>660</sup> Then the flip side would imply that those people, because it wasn't really church organizations, who accepted the message were the ones that had extra oil. Ellen White had this comment to make about the midnight shout, which the NKJV phrased the midnight cry.

I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, "Look again, and look a little higher." At this, I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling to the city which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the "midnight cry." [See [Matthew 25:6.](#)] This light shone all along the path, and gave light for their feet, so that they might not stumble. [CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND TEACHINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE, p57](#)<sup>661</sup>

Clearly the bridegroom is God or Jesus. Many of the following verses portraying God as husband to Israel or His people were gleaned from the website [<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Marriage,-Between-God-And-His-People>].<sup>662</sup>

<sup>660</sup> <http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/51/resources/pioneer-stories/william-miller-second-advent-preacher>

<sup>661</sup> White, Ellen G. *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*. p57.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=CET&lang=en&pagenumber=57>

<sup>662</sup> <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Marriage,-Between-God-And-His-People>

[John 3:27](#) John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' <sup>29</sup> "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> "He must increase, but I [must] decrease. [John 3:27-30 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](#)

[Mark 2:19](#) And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. [Mark 2:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:34](#) And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days." [Luke 5:34-35 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 54:4](#) "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;  
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;  
For you will forget the shame of your youth,  
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.  
<sup>5</sup> For your Maker [is] your husband,  
The LORD of hosts [is] His name;  
And your Redeemer [is] the Holy One of Israel;  
He is called the God of the whole earth.  
<sup>6</sup> For the LORD has called you Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,  
Like a youthful wife when you were refused," Says your God. [Isaiah 54:4-6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 62:4](#) You shall no longer be termed Forsaken,  
Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate;  
But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah;  
For the LORD delights in you,  
And your land shall be married.  
<sup>5</sup> For [as] a young man marries a virgin,  
[So] shall your sons marry you;  
And [as] the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
[So] shall your God rejoice over you. [Isaiah 62:4-5 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 31:31](#) "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—<sup>32</sup> "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. [Jeremiah 31:31-32 NKJV](#)

[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.

<sup>9</sup> "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 16:8-14 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 1:2](#) When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea:

"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry  
And children of harlotry,  
For the land has committed great harlotry  
[By departing] from the LORD." [Hosea 1:2 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 2:14](#) "Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
Will bring her into the wilderness,  
And speak comfort to her.

<sup>15</sup> I will give her her vineyards from there,  
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;  
She shall sing there,  
As in the days of her youth,  
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> "And it shall be, in that day,"

Says the LORD,  
"[That] you will call Me 'My Husband,'  
And no longer call Me 'My Master,'

<sup>17</sup> For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,  
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> "I will betroth you to Me forever;  
Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice,  
In lovingkindness and mercy;

<sup>20</sup> I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
And you shall know the LORD. [Hosea 2:14-20 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 5:25](#) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> 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 5:25-27 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:2](#) For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ. [2 Corinthians 11:2 NKJV](#)

What I glean from these verses is that God considered Himself the husband of Israel, but they were not faithful, and acted as an adulterous wife. In the New Testament, Jesus was considered a bridegroom by His own words and by John the Baptist. My next analogy from the parable is that the arrival of the bridegroom for the wedding is the second coming. But how could the second coming be the wedding if God was already the husband of Israel and the Christian Church? Well in ancient Jewish culture, there were two stages to the marriage, the betrothal and the wedding. A betrothed couple were exclusively committed to each other and a divorce would be needed to break off the engagement, but the marriage was not consummated sexually until the wedding. So, in that sense, God could be considered betrothed to His true followers until the second coming when He comes to take them home.

[Matthew 22:2](#) "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, [Matthew 22:2 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

The wedding feast is the celebration in heaven of those who are saved.

Where there is a bridegroom, there must also be a bride, who just happened to not be mentioned in the story. So, in Bible symbolism, where Jesus is the groom, who is the bride and does it apply in this parable? The verses we presented about the bridegroom by inference tell us about who the bride is. Let's examine just a couple more verses that talk about the bride of Christ.

[Ephesians 5:23](#) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [Ephesians 5:23 NKJV](#)

[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. [Revelation 21:1-2 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

It seems the bride or betrothed of Christ is Israel, New Jerusalem and possibly by inference the Christian Church. The first and last could be generalized to imply that the betrothed of Christ are His true followers throughout the history of earth. Sometimes God had a nation or an organization that represented His true people, and sometimes He didn't. Nations and Churches that may have started out as His betrothed became unfaithful, but there have always been people down through the ages, sometimes in hiding from persecution, that were His true followers. In ancient times, there were people like Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses and prophets who were persecuted by apostate Israel. In more recent history, there were those who kept alive the truths from the Bible, and as a result were persecuted by the apostate church. If the bride represents true followers of God, then perhaps the unmentioned bride in the parable

would be those who didn't fall asleep. But then we have Revelation saying the holy city, the New Jerusalem is the bride, or is it just adorned as a bride? [Verses 9-10](#) seem pretty clear that the bride of Christ is the holy city. Can the bride of Christ be both His people and the New Jerusalem? Why not, aren't the harlot and Babylon synonymous in Revelation?

[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 last puzzling thing about this parable is the fact that those who ran out of oil went and purchased more but were still denied entrance to the feast. The answer given for their rejection is the same as that given in another teaching of Jesus.

[Matthew 7:21](#) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV](#)

I think the answers, "I do not know you," and "I never knew you," underscore the importance of a relationship. It's not just about knowledge or good works although both should follow from a true relationship. Maybe the oil in this parable represents the actions and perhaps the foolish acquired oil that were actions not born out of a true relationship with Jesus.

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What do you believe?

- It is said multiple times in the New Testament that the Church is the body of Christ. Can it be both the body and the bride of Christ?
- What do you think the oil in the parable represents?
- What do you think it means that after the door was already shut, the foolish knocked and asked for admittance and were turned away?



## Separating the sheep and the goats at the judgment

[Matthew 25:13](#), [Matthew 25:31-46](#)<sup>663</sup>

[Matthew 25:13](#) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

[Matthew 25:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 25:31](#) "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides [his] sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> 'I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed [You], or thirsty and give [You] drink? <sup>38</sup> 'When did we see You a stranger and take [You] in, or naked and clothe [You]? <sup>39</sup> 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did [it] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did [it] to Me.'

<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

<sup>44</sup> "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." [Matthew 25:31-46 NKJV](#)

This teaching of Jesus is very consistent with His words throughout the entire Bible. See [Appendix E – Hands, feet, eyes and ears of God](#). The following table was presented along with the verses in the Appendix. The word count only included instances that had to do with the care of this class of people. Verses that just stated that someone was a widow for example were not counted. I think it's pretty clear that compassion is VERY important to God.

Word	Count
Poor	44
Orphan or fatherless	23
Alien, stranger, sojourner	21
Widow	20
Oppress or mistreat	17
Justice or Judgment	16
Destitute or needy	12
Afflicted or humble	3

<sup>663</sup> Strong. p303. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/302/mode/2up>

The question is whether this criteria alone is sufficient for one to be saved? Throughout the New Testament, the criteria given for salvation was often different. Let's look at a few.

[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](#)

[Mark 16:16](#) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. [Mark](#)

[16:16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:29](#) "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. [Matthew 19:29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:18](#) Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. <sup>20</sup> "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " <sup>21</sup> And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." <sup>22</sup> So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [Luke 18:18-22 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 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](#)

[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](#)

[John 6:54](#) "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [John](#)

[10:9](#) "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. [John](#)

[17:3](#) "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. [John 17:3 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:21](#) And it shall come to pass  
[That] whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.' [Acts 2:21 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, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup> "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:10-12 NKJV](#)

[Acts 15:11](#) "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." [Acts 15:11 NKJV](#)

[Acts 16:30](#) And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." [Acts 16:30-31 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, you will be saved. [Romans 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:13](#) For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." [Romans 10:13 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, [Ephesians 2:8 NKJV](#)

[1 John 5:13](#) These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God. [1 John 5:13 NKJV](#)

Most of these verses emphasize belief and faith in Jesus and acceptance of the free gift of Salvation. There is also perseverance through trial and persecution and a willingness to forsake friends and family if necessary to follow Him. Then there is the sell all you own, give it to the poor and follow Me. There was also the story of the Good Samaritan, not included above, which was an answer to the same question. And the answer after keeping the commandments was to love your neighbor as the Good Samaritan loved the man in need.

Is it possible for one who never heard of Jesus but was truly caring for the poor and needy to be saved? I think most would agree on the answer yes. But is it possible for one who rejected the Christian religion, but was truly caring for the poor and needy to be saved? I don't think it is an easy yes or no answer for human observers. I think that ultimately the people who will be saved for eternity will be those who God knows, in His infinite wisdom, will be both happy and safe to be given eternal life. Clearly, whether one has heard of Jesus or not, it is still His sacrifice that makes it possible for them to be saved. Regardless of how many good works we have done, they do not earn us the right to forgiveness and salvation. But the good works in the form of compassion are possibly an indicator of the type of person who would be safe for God to take to heaven.

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What do you believe?

- If good works do not earn us salvation, why do you think works of compassion are associated with salvation?
- Speaking of someone being safe to take to heaven, how can we have free will and never choose to sin again?
- Do you think it would be possible for someone to be highly compassionate toward the poor and needy but not be happy in heaven?

## Judas agrees to betray Jesus

[Matthew 26:1-5](#), [14-16](#), [Mark 14:1-2,10-11](#), [Luke 22:1-6](#), [John 13:2](#)<sup>664</sup>

<a href="#">Matthew 26:1</a> Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, [that] He said to His disciples,		
<sup>2</sup> "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."	<a href="#">Mark 14:1</a> After two days it was the Passover and [the Feast] of Unleavened Bread.	<a href="#">Luke 22:1</a> Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.
<sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,	And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put [Him]	<sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes
<sup>4</sup> and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill [Him]. <sup>5</sup> But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."	to death. <sup>2</sup> But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people." <a href="#">Mark 14:1-2</a>	sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.
<a href="#">Matthew 26:1-5 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">NKJV</a>	
<a href="#">Matthew 26:14</a> Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?"	<a href="#">John 13:2</a> ... the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], to betray Him, <a href="#">John 13:2</a>	<a href="#">Luke 22:3</a> Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. <sup>4</sup> So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.
And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.	<sup>11</sup> And when they heard [it], they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him. <a href="#">Mark 14:10-11 NKJV</a>	<sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup> So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude. <a href="#">Luke 22:1-5 NKJV</a>
<a href="#">Matthew 26:14-16 NKJV</a>		

Ellen White paints a picture where Judas may not have arrived at this decision with the intent to actually harm Jesus.

Judas reasoned that if Jesus was to be crucified, the event must come to pass. His own act in betraying the Saviour would not change the result. If Jesus was not to die, it would only force Him to deliver Himself. At all events, Judas would gain something by his treachery. He counted that he had made a sharp bargain in betraying his Lord.

Judas did not, however, believe that Christ would permit Himself to be arrested. In betraying Him, it was his purpose to teach Him a lesson. He intended to play a part that would make the Saviour careful thenceforth to treat him with due respect. But Judas knew not that he was giving Christ up to death. How often, as the Saviour taught in parables, the scribes and Pharisees had been carried away with His striking illustrations! How often they had pronounced judgment against themselves! Often when the truth was brought home to their hearts, they had been filled with rage, and had taken up stones to cast at Him; but again and again He had made His escape. Since He had escaped so many snares, thought Judas, He certainly would not now allow Himself to be taken.

<sup>664</sup> Strong. p305. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/304/mode/2up>

Judas decided to put the matter to the test. If Jesus really was the Messiah, the people, for whom He had done so much, would rally about Him, and would proclaim Him king. This would forever settle many minds that were now in uncertainty. Judas would have the credit of having placed the king on David's throne. And this act would secure to him the first position, next to Christ, in the new kingdom. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. pp720-721](#)<sup>665</sup>

Judas was not alone among the disciples in wanting Jesus to be crowned king. Nor was he alone in coveting the highest position power under Christ in the kingdom which all the disciples were still expecting. I seemed to recall that there was a prophecy that Jesus would be betrayed in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. So, I searched the Bible for the words thirty silver. What I found was that thirty shekels of silver was the compensation price for a slave that was killed by an ox. In other words that was the standard price of a slave back then.

[Exodus 21:32](#) "If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. [Exodus 21:32 NKJV](#)

The next relevant hit for thirty pieces of silver was from Zechariah.

[Zechariah 11:12](#) Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give [me] my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty [pieces] of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. [Zechariah 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

These verses with the thirty pieces of silver and the mention of the potter will come up later when Judas throws the money back at the priests. But let's look at what Zechariah is writing about here. If you read the whole chapter, it sounds like a story or maybe a parable. It's actually not that long, so let's read it now.

[Zechariah 11:1](#) Open your doors, O Lebanon,  
That fire may devour your cedars.  
<sup>2</sup> Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,  
Because the mighty [trees] are ruined.  
Wail, O oaks of Bashan,  
For the thick forest has come down.  
<sup>3</sup> [There is] the sound of wailing shepherds!  
For their glory is in ruins.  
[There is] the sound of roaring lions!  
For the pride of the Jordan is in ruins.

<sup>4</sup> Thus says the LORD my God, "Feed the flock for slaughter, <sup>5</sup> "whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt; those who sell them say, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich'; and their shepherds do not pity them. <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."

<sup>7</sup> So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the flock. <sup>8</sup> I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. <sup>9</sup> Then I said, "I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." <sup>10</sup> And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it

<sup>665</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p720.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=720>

in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. <sup>11</sup> So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it [was] the word of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give [me] my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver.

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty [pieces] of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. <sup>14</sup> Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. <sup>16</sup> "For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land [who] will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

<sup>17</sup> "Woe to the worthless shepherd,  
Who leaves the flock!  
A sword [shall be] against his arm  
And against his right eye;  
His arm shall completely wither,  
And his right eye shall be totally blinded." [Zechariah 11:1-17 NKJV](#)

In [Ezra 3:7](#), we read that the cedars of Lebanon were brought for the construction of the Jewish Temple.

[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](#)

I think most are in agreement that the first couple verses in [Zechariah 11](#) prophesy the destruction of the temple by Rome. From [verse 3](#) through the end of the chapter, the symbolism of a shepherd and the flock are used. The flock generally refers to the Jews, mostly around the time of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem. Shepherds represent their leaders, rulers or kings. Hence, [verse 5](#) could be in reference to the wicked and heartless rulers, both their own and foreigners. We know that God was often unhappy with the Jews because their leaders, or the wealthy, took advantage of the poor and needy for their own gain. This oppression happened under some kings, as well as from the wealthy at times when there were no kings. At the time of Christ, the ruling class consisting of Sadducees and Pharisees, including many priests, looked down on the common people and took advantage of them for personal gain. This is the reason Jesus chased the merchants out of the Temple, not one but twice. Here are just a couple of many rebukes given against this upper class.

[Nehemiah 5:7](#) Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. [Nehemiah 5:7 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

[Verse 6](#) is like a reference to the king of Rome, whom the Jews chose over Christ, and who mistreated them and eventually destroyed their temple and city.

[John 19:15](#) But they cried out, "Away with [Him], away with [Him]! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" [John 19:15 NKJV](#)

In the next paragraph, there is mention of two staffs named favor and union. Probably most would agree that the removal of the staff named "beauty" represents the removal of God's special favor on Israel when they rejected Jesus, who was the reason they existed as the chosen in the first place. Not that disunity had never existed before, but you can read in the writings of Josephus how there was a lot of disunity especially between the zealots and anyone they perceived as collaborators with Rome (see discussion on the [abomination of desolation](#)). There was also a lot of disunity among the Jews especially among families where some accepted Jesus and some did not. Then in [verse 9](#), Zechariah said "Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." Josephus had a chilling description of how during the siege of Jerusalem, a mother killed her own child, then roasted and ate it.<sup>666</sup>

The primary verses of interest, [12-13](#), prophesy the amount of the payment to Judas for the betrayal of Jesus. And then throwing the money to the potter in the house of the Lord is a pretty good description of Judas later throwing the money into the Temple.

[Matthew 27:5](#) Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

[Matthew 27:5 NKJV](#)

It seems that [Zechariah 11](#) at least up to this point is mostly a prophecy of the Jews' rejection and crucifixion of Jesus and the results which followed, ending with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. The bad shepherd toward the end of the chapter could possibly be a reference to the church of the middle ages, that persecuted and killed so many.

As is the case with many prophecies, I think the prophecies of the betrayal and the price are not really predictive, but maybe retrospective, meaning that parallels can be drawn between what was written and what actually happened. In conclusion, I will end with some hard questions about Judas.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think Judas had the freedom to choose another path other than to betray Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus chose or allowed Judas to be one of the twelve disciples?
- Do you think Jesus was hoping to save Judas from going through with the betrayal that was predicted?

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<sup>666</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews. Book 6:3:4. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA313>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link62HCH0003>

## Jesus washes the disciples' feet

[Luke 22:7-17,24](#), [Matthew 26:17-20](#), [Mark 14:12-17](#), [John 13:1-15](#)<sup>667</sup>

[Luke 22:7](#) Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.

<sup>8</sup> And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." <sup>9</sup> So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?"

<sup>10</sup> And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters.

<sup>11</sup> "Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' <sup>12</sup> "Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready."

<sup>13</sup> So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>14</sup> When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. [Luke 22:7-14 NKJV](#)

[John 13:1](#) Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. [John 13:1 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:15](#) Then He said to them, "With [fervent] desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide [it] among yourselves;— <sup>24</sup> Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. [Luke 22:15-17,24 NKJV](#)

[John 13:2](#) And supper being ended, ... <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. <sup>5</sup> After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe

[Matthew 12:17](#) Now on the first [day of the Feast] of Unleavened Bread

the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

<sup>18</sup> And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man,

and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples." ' "

<sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

[Matthew 26:20](#) When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. [Matthew 26:17-20 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:12](#) Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover [lamb],

His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup> And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.

<sup>14</sup> "Wherever he goes in,

say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' <sup>15</sup> "Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished [and] prepared; there make ready for us." <sup>16</sup> So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

[Mark 14:17](#) In the evening He came with the twelve. [Mark 14:12-17 NKJV](#)



[them] with the towel with which He was girded. <sup>6</sup> Then He came to Simon Peter. And [Peter] said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

<sup>8</sup> Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

<sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also [my] hands and [my] head!"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash [his] feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." <sup>11</sup> For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

<sup>12</sup> 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. [John 13:2-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:25](#) And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' <sup>26</sup> "But not so [among] you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. <sup>27</sup> "For who [is] greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? [Is] it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

<sup>28</sup> "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. <sup>29</sup> "And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed [one] upon Me, <sup>30</sup> "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [Luke 22:25-30 NKJV](#)

I started to puzzle about whether this meal was the Passover meal (14<sup>th</sup> day of the month) or the first day of the feast of unleavened bread (15<sup>th</sup> day of the month)? But decided to defer this discussion to when we read about the meal. For now, I would like to focus on the foot washing which was very much a part of the culture of the time. The main mode of transportation was walking, and it is generally thought that most people wore sandals. Hence feet got dirty, but that alone was not a reason for washing feet. I think it was more for the purpose of showing hospitality toward a guest. It was performed by a servant or slave and always by someone of a lower social status. Did Jesus literally mean that we should wash each other's feet? Or do you think He meant that the church pastor or leaders should wash the feet of church members. Or did He mean that those of higher social status or maybe the more wealthy should wash the feet of the poor?

I think the immediate reason Jesus performed this act of a servant was to try to get through to His disciples. They had been with Him for more than three years, and He must have wondered if they were learning anything from Him. They obviously had no idea what kind of kingdom He came to establish, and they were all bickering about which one of them was the greatest. He had confronted them about this before.

[Mark 9:33](#) Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" <sup>34</sup> But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who [would be the] greatest. <sup>35</sup> And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." [Mark 9:33-35 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:42](#) But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. <sup>44</sup> "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Mark 10:42-45 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:11](#) "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." [Luke 14:11 NKJV](#)

I like the way that Ellen White described it in the *Desire of Ages*.

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\*. pp644-645](#)<sup>668</sup>

So after all of His attempts to get His disciples to understand that His kingdom is not of this world and the greatest should be least, why did Jesus then tell them in [verse 30](#) that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Was He assuring them that eventually He would rule over all nations, and they along-side Him, or was He giving them false hope?

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus intended this act of foot washing to be part of the communion service, or do you think He meant that we should serve each other in general?
- Do you think washing the feet of a homeless person that are actually dirty would have more of an impact on you than washing clean feet in church?
- If you were one of the disciples, how do you think you would have resolved the apparent contradiction between Jesus' prediction of His death, and His kingdom and twelve thrones?

## Jesus predicts He will be betrayed and denied

[John 13:17-19,21-38](#), [Matthew 26:21-25,31-35](#), [Mark 14:18-21,27-31](#), [Luke 22:21-23,31-38](#)<sup>669</sup>

[John 13:17](#) "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. <sup>18</sup> "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, [Psalm 41:9](#) Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against my bread, Has lifted up [his] heel against me. [Psalm 41:9 NKJV](#) Me.' <sup>19</sup> "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am [He]. [John 13:17-19 NKJV](#)

[John 13:21](#) When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit,

<sup>668</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p644-645.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=644>

<sup>669</sup> Strong. p311. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/310/mode/2up>

and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

[Matthew 26:21](#) Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

[Matthew 26:21 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:18](#) Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."

[Mark 14:18 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:21](#) "But behold, the hand of My betrayer [is] with Me ..."

[Luke 22:21 NKJV](#)

<sup>22</sup> Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. [John 13:21-22 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:22](#) And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" <sup>23</sup> He answered and said, "He who dipped [his] hand with Me in the dish will betray Me."

[Matthew 26:22-24 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:19](#) And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "[Is] it I?" And another [said], "[Is] it I?" <sup>20</sup> He answered and said to them, "[It is] one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish."

[Mark 14:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:23](#) Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.—

<sup>21</sup> ... [is] with Me on the table.

<sup>22</sup> "And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" [Luke 22:21-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

[Matthew 26:22-24 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

[Mark 14:19-21 NKJV](#)

[John 13:23](#) Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

<sup>25</sup> Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped [it]." And having dipped the bread, He gave [it] to Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon. [John 13:23-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:25](#) Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." [Matthew 26:25 NKJV](#)

[John 13:27](#) Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

<sup>28</sup> But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. <sup>29</sup> For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy [those things] we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

<sup>30</sup> Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

<sup>31</sup> So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. <sup>32</sup> "If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. <sup>33</sup> "Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. <sup>34</sup> "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

<sup>36</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

<sup>37</sup> Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."

<sup>38</sup> Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times. [John 13:27-38 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:31](#) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

[Mark 14:27](#) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; ... 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.'

[Zechariah 13:7 NKJV](#)

<sup>32</sup> "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>33</sup> Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." [Matthew 26:31-33 NKJV](#)

<sup>28</sup> "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>29</sup> Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I [will] not [be]." [Mark 14:27-29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:31](#) And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift [you] as wheat.

<sup>32</sup> "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to [Me], strengthen your brethren." <sup>33</sup> But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

<sup>34</sup> Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

[Matthew 26:34](#) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." <sup>35</sup> Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. [Matthew 26:31-35 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:30](#) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, [even] this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." <sup>31</sup> But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise. [Mark 14:30-31 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing."

<sup>36</sup> Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take [it], and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. <sup>37</sup> "For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

[Isaiah 53:12](#) ...

And He was numbered with the transgressors, ... [Isaiah 53:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>38</sup> So they said, "Lord, look, here [are] two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." [Luke 22:31-38 NKJV](#)

I find it interesting with these prophecies of Jesus, especially many from the Psalms, that if you read the context, you wouldn't think you were reading a prophecy of Jesus. In fact, clearly the entire chapter in [Psalm 41](#) is not about Jesus. I say this because of verse 2.

[Psalm 41:2](#) The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive,  
[And] he will be blessed on the earth;  
You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. [Psalm 41:2 NKJV](#)

So, what I notice with many of the prophecies is that they really do not serve the purpose of being predictive. I think these little acts or occurrences in the life of Christ that are said to be fulfillment of scripture, show the unity of the entire

Bible. I think in a way it shows that the entire Old Testament should point us to Jesus. It shows that words written in the Old Testament were inspired by one who knew future details of the life Christ on earth.

From Matthew, Mark and Luke you would assume that all the disciples then understood that Judas was the betrayer. But according to John, the other disciples thought that Judas had been sent on an errand by Jesus. It makes sense that John would have a different take on the events of that evening considering that he was on the other side of Jesus from Judas. He directly asked who it was and he must also have overheard Jesus' conversation with Judas. Whatever he knew or didn't know, he apparently didn't share it with the others at the time. I think it is important to understand that all four of the Gospel accounts were written much after the fact, when everyone knew who the betrayer was.

[John 13:31,32](#) recorded statements of Jesus that I think must have been very confusing or misleading to the disciples at the time, but that they would understand later on. He was talking about betrayal and death but also about being glorified. What were the disciples to make of this? Jesus understood that His purpose on earth was to fulfill the plan that was laid out for Him and that by doing so, He would be glorified in the sight of God. To Jesus, the cross was His crown.

Finally, we come to Peter, self-confident and always with something to say. He assures Jesus that he is willing to die, probably envisioning fighting, for His sake. All the disciples said the same thing, but it seems that Peter was most insistent. But Jesus, seeing the future, tells Peter in no uncertain terms that he will deny Him even before the rooster crows the second time in the coming morning. Knowing Jesus is God and knows all things, Peter still refused to accept what he was being told.

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What do you believe?

- If John clearly understood that Judas was the betrayer, why didn't he tell the others so they could try to stop him?
- If you were told that you were going to do something bad, do you think you could change your future and not do it? If you did it in the end, does that mean you don't have free will?
- I believe God has seen the future and knows what will happen, but do you think Jesus as a human always saw the future that clearly, or do you think He only saw what the Holy Spirit revealed to Him?

## The last supper, the first Communion

[Matthew 26:26-29](#), [Mark 14:22-25](#), [Luke 22:18-20](#), [1 Corinthians 11:23-25](#)<sup>670</sup>

<a href="#">Matthew 26:26</a> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."	<a href="#">Mark 14:22</a> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."	<a href="#">Luke 22:19</a> And He took bread, gave thanks and broke [it], and gave [it] to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 11:23</a> ... took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke [it] and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
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<sup>670</sup> Strong. p316. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/316/mode/2up>

<p>Matthew 26:27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them,</p> <p>saying,</p> <p>"Drink from it, all of you.</p> <p><sup>28</sup> "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.</p> <p><sup>29</sup> "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." <a href="#">Matthew 26:26-29 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Mark 14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave [it] to them, and they all drank from it.</p> <p><sup>24</sup> And He said to them,</p> <p>"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." <a href="#">Mark 14:22-25 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Luke 22:20 Likewise He also [took] the cup after supper,</p> <p>saying,</p> <p>"This cup [is] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.—</p> <p><sup>18</sup> "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <a href="#">Luke 22:18-20 NKJV</a></p>	<p>1 Corinthians 11:25 In the same manner [He] also [took] the cup after supper,</p> <p>saying,</p> <p>"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of Me." <a href="#">1 Corinthians 11:23-25 NKJV</a></p>
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The first question I had was whether this meal was the official Passover meal or not? The question is really part of several questions I had surrounding the timing and sequence of the twenty-four hours leading up to the death of Jesus on the cross. Was Jesus crucified at the time of the official Passover sacrifice, twilight on the fourteenth day of the month? If He was, then then this would have been the thirteenth day of the month because He was crucified the next day. Earlier [Mathew 12:17](#), [Mark 14:12](#) and [Luke 22:7](#) all said that it was the first day of unleavened bread which technically should have been the fifteenth day of the month, but Mark and Luke both say this was the day the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed, which must be the fourteenth day of the month. Let's start by looking at the sequence of events of the original Passover.

[Exodus 12:1](#) Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> "This month [shall be] your beginning of months; it [shall be] the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of [his] father, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup> 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take [it] according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup> 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take [it] from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup> 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. <sup>7</sup> 'And they shall take [some] of the blood and put [it] on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. <sup>8</sup> 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread [and] with bitter [herbs] they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup> 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire--its head with its legs and its entrails. <sup>10</sup> 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. [Exodus 12:1-10 NKJV](#)

Now let's read one of the places where it describes the annual observance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[Leviticus 23:4](#) 'These [are] the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. <sup>5</sup> 'On the fourteenth [day] of the first month at twilight [is] the LORD's Passover. <sup>6</sup> 'And on the fifteenth day of the same month [is] the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. <sup>7</sup> 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. <sup>8</sup> 'But you shall

offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day [shall be] a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work [on it].' " [Leviticus 23:4-8 NKJV](#)

So, the lamb is to be selected on the tenth day of the month. It is to be sacrificed at twilight on the fourteenth day of the month, roasted, and eaten with none saved to the next day. On the surface, it seems pretty straight forward but one question immediately comes to mind. Is twilight the end of the day or the beginning of the day? It's a little like the question, which day does midnight belong to? The Hebrew word translated to twilight is [ערב, 'ereb](#),<sup>671</sup> which is used many times in the Old Testament, approximately one half of which can be found in the writings of Moses. By far the word is translated to even or evening the majority of the time. Notably in the creation account, God said "there was evening and there was morning," in describing the day. The Hebrew lexicon says, "between the two evenings," and goes on to say that there were two opinions on this.<sup>672</sup>

- 1) Between sunset and deep twilight (Karaites and Samaritans)
- 2) Between late afternoon at the end of day and sunset (Pharisees)

The first would make twilight at the start of the day and the second at the end of the day. Many other uses in the writings of Moses use it to mark the end of a period of "uncleanness," I believe this use to be the instant of time that marks the end of a day or the start of the next.

Let's look at the significance of the Passover day itself. It was to commemorate the day that the angel of death passed over Israelites, who had put the blood on their door posts, but killed the first born of the Egyptians. [Exodus 12:29](#) says that the Lord struck the firstborn in the land of Egypt around midnight. That means the lamb should have been killed already or the Israelites would not have been protected by the blood of the lamb at midnight.

My internet search was fairly conclusive that the modern Passover holiday begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, with the remembrance of the sacrifice beginning in the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup>. On the timing of the sacrifice, it seems that the Pharisees prevailed. However, I found many questions about the 14<sup>th</sup> vs. 15<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the day vs. the end of the day, and found many different answers from both Jews and Christians.

At least a couple times I came across an explanation, that from the third century B.C. when the Jews were subject to Egypt, they were forced into a calendar system where the day began and ended at sunrise. Apparently, this contributed to the confusion of the time for the Passover sacrifice and persisted to the time of Jesus and even today.<sup>673</sup>

A very clear and concise article written by Ronald H Stewart best describes my conclusions and more.<sup>674</sup>

I believe that the Last Supper was the Passover meal at the start of the day as Jesus Himself had commanded the Israelites. Jesus was tried and crucified on later on that same day.

[Matthew 26:19](#) So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. [Matthew 26:19 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:12](#) Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover [lamb], His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" [Mark 14:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>671</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6153/nasb20/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>672</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6153/nasb20/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>673</sup> [http://www.cogwriter.com/passover\\_on\\_the\\_fourteenth\\_or\\_fifteenth.htm](http://www.cogwriter.com/passover_on_the_fourteenth_or_fifteenth.htm)

<sup>674</sup> <http://www.giveshare.org/HolyDay/pas1415.htm> if the link is not available, I saved the content as a pdf ([http://btlb.org/Passover\\_14th\\_or\\_15th.pdf](http://btlb.org/Passover_14th_or_15th.pdf))

[Luke 22:8](#) And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." [Luke 22:8 NKJV](#)

As for the Passover being on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, I think it was a matter of speaking, where the Passover and the feast were spoken of as one event. I think many of the Jews, led by the Pharisees were planning to celebrate the Passover meal toward the end of that day. Hence John's comments to that effect. But I also think some must have observed their Passover at the start of the day.

[John 18:28](#) Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. [John 18:28 NKJV](#)

[John 19:14](#) Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" [John 19:14 NKJV](#)

I don't believe there is any evidence that would lead me to believe that the Last Supper Passover meal was at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> because that would mean the Jews would have crucified Jesus on the 15<sup>th</sup> which was to be a Sabbath day of rest, celebrating the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the Last Supper was the Passover meal or not?
- Do you think the Bible is clear about when the Passover meal is to be eaten?
- Why do you think modern Passover begins on the fifteenth of the month?

## Jesus promises to return to take His disciples Home with Him

[John 14](#)<sup>675</sup>

[John 14:1](#) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also. <sup>4</sup> "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

<sup>7</sup> "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup> "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own [authority]; but the Father who

<sup>675</sup> Strong. p317. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/316/mode/2up>



dwells in Me does the works. <sup>11</sup> "Believe Me that I [am] in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father. <sup>13</sup> "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> "If you ask anything in My name, I will do [it].

<sup>15</sup> "If you love Me, keep My commandments. <sup>16</sup> "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—<sup>17</sup> "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

<sup>19</sup> "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

<sup>20</sup> "At that day you will know that I [am] in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

<sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. <sup>24</sup> "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. <sup>28</sup> "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming [back] to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

<sup>29</sup> "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. <sup>30</sup> "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. <sup>31</sup> "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. [John 14:1-31 NKJV](#)

Probably like many other people, I memorized the first three verses of this chapter as a child. And why not, considering the wonderful directness of the promise that we will be taken to be with God. The promise of His return is great news for us but for the disciples what it meant was that He would be leaving them. This was greatly troubling to them, so they wanted to know where He was going and why they couldn't go with Him. Going implied a place and they wanted to know where it was and why they couldn't go with Him. Thomas was brave enough to ask the question they all were wondering, but Jesus' answer really wasn't the information they were looking for. They were looking for directions that they could navigate to get to a location, but instead Jesus said He was going to the Father, and that He is the only one who could get them there. Jesus, having mentioned the Father, then prompted them to ask if He could show them the Father. He answered by saying if you have seen Me you've seen the Father, if you know Me you know the Father. Then Jesus said He would send the Helper, the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Spirit. I believe the disciples had come to rely on Jesus for comfort and counsel. Jesus clearly said one of the things the Holy Spirit would do was to help them remember the things He had taught them.

There are two things Jesus said in this conversation that puzzled me. In [verse 12](#), He said: "he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father." How could any person do greater works than Jesus did? I don't think there was ever a person since who did more and greater miracles than Jesus did. There is no one else who can match the act of sacrificing their life to save the world. So, what greater works can human beings do? First, we should always remember to take things in their proper context. Jesus followed that statement with, "because I go to My Father." I seem to recall some other statements by Jesus regarding why He had to leave and what He could do when He left.

[John 16:7](#) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. [John 16:7 NKJV](#)

[John 15:26](#) "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. [John 15:26 NKJV](#)

[Acts 1:8](#) "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." <sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. [Acts 1:8-9 NKJV](#)

[John 14:26](#) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. [John 14:26 NKJV](#)

As hard as it may be to believe, Jesus said it was better for the disciples if He left, because if He didn't the Holy Spirit would not come. I really have no idea why the Holy Spirit could not come as long as Jesus was still on earth. The Bible says the Holy Spirit was with John the Baptist when Jesus was here on earth. But if Jesus were limited by His physical body to be in one place at a time, the Holy Spirit would be an advantage to them because they would need to go to all parts of the world and Jesus could not have been physically with every one of them. I only included one instance, but Jesus said multiple times that the Holy Spirit could help them remember the things Jesus said, and could give them words to speak. Probably countless times, after the fact, Jesus counseled them on what they could have said in certain situations, but the Holy Spirit would be able to give them the right words at the time they needed them. I think I could see how it could be to their advantage to have the Holy Spirit over the physical presence of Jesus, but would that translate to them performing greater works than Jesus did? I guess when Jesus was physically here on earth, I would say that most didn't understand His mission and were following Him for the hope of an earthly kingdom. After He left when there was no longer any thought of an earthly kingdom, the disciples with the help of the Holy Spirit could get down to business spreading the good news of salvation from sin through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus. In other words, the Holy Spirit would bring salvation to many people through them, and I think most would agree that spiritual healing and salvation are greater than physical. I still don't think anything could be greater than Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, but maybe He was just referring to greater works than His miracles of healing.

The other statement I found interesting was in [verse 28](#) where He said: "for My Father is greater than I." Is Jesus equal with God or not? Was Jesus just saying this about their relationship while He was here on earth? There are other places in the New Testament where Jesus seems to defer to the Father, or where the Father knows something the Son doesn't, or the Son is begotten of the Father.

[Matthew 24:36](#) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. [Matthew 24:36 NKJV](#)

[John 3:35](#) "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. [John 3:35 NKJV](#)

[John 8:28](#) Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [He], and [that] I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. [John 8:28 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 1:1](#) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by [His] Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; <sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of [His] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did He ever say:

"You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You"?

And again:

"I will be to Him a Father,  
And He shall be to Me a Son"? [Hebrews 1:1-5 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

I believe that even though Jesus set aside His glory and made Himself a man, a point is being made that He is not lower than the angels, and that He is still God, and is still to be worshipped.

What do you believe?

- What kind of dwelling places to you envision in heaven?
- If the disciples on the night before Jesus died did not have the belief of the Trinity, when do you think this understanding was formed?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "the Father is greater than I?"

## Jesus is the vine and we are the branches

[John 15:1-27](#), [John 13:34](#)<sup>676</sup>

[John 15:1](#) "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

<sup>5</sup> "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you

<sup>676</sup> Strong. p321. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/320/mode/2up>

will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

<sup>9</sup> "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

<sup>11</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and [that] your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup> "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. <sup>17</sup> "These things I command you, that you love one another. [John 15:1-17 NKJV](#)

[John 13:34](#) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. [John 13:34 NKJV](#)

[John 15:18](#) "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before [it hated] you. <sup>19</sup> "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> "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. <sup>21</sup> "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. <sup>22</sup> "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> "He who hates Me hates My Father also. <sup>24</sup> "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. <sup>25</sup> "But [this happened] that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law,

'They hated Me  
without a cause.'

[Psalm 109:3](#) They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,  
And fought against me without a cause. [Psalm 109:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>26</sup> "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. <sup>27</sup> "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. [John 15:18-27 NKJV](#)

I used to envision Jesus and the disciples going straight from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane, but if we are to take John's Gospel literally and chronologically, Jesus' words in John 15-17 were spoken to them in this time interval. In this chapter, just after they left the upper room, Jesus makes three main points.

1. Jesus is the vine, the Father is the vinedresser, we are the branches,
  - a. Branches that bear no fruit are cut off
  - b. Branches that bear fruit are pruned so they will bear more
  - c. We cannot bear fruit unless we abide in the vine (stay connected)
  - d. If we do not abide in Him, we will be like branches that have been cut off, dried up and gathered to burn
  - e. God is glorified when the branches bear much fruit
  - f. If we keep His commandments, we abide in God's love
  - g. Jesus taught these things so that His joy would be in us and our joy would be made full
2. Jesus gave a new commandment, that we should love one another as He loved us

- a. The greatest love is shown by a person giving up his life for a friend
  - b. We are God's friends if we keep His commandments
  - c. Our connection with God is not dependent on our initial action, because He chooses us first
3. If we choose to follow Jesus, we can expect to be hated by the world
- a. Being a follower of Jesus and being of the world are opposites
  - b. If we are of the world, the world would love us
  - c. If the world hates us and persecutes us for being followers of Jesus, they cannot claim ignorance and will have no excuse for their sin

Jesus' statement that He is the vine is a pretty well-known statement, but I think what is a lot less understood is what it means for the Father to be the vinedresser. Clearly Jesus is talking about roles, as He also mentions the Helper at the end of the chapter. What does it mean for a branch in Jesus to be cut off for not bearing fruit? Is this a person who attends church but doesn't bring anyone to Christ? But doesn't that describe most church goers? If the Father is the vinedresser, then He is the one who should do the cutting, but what does that mean? First of all, what is a branch? It is something that is alive, receiving nourishment from the vine. Since those who don't abide in Christ are like branches that are cut off and dried up, then the branch that is alive must by definition be connected to the vine. In the case of a real vine, pruning stimulates new growth, on which fruit often appears. If a branch represents a person, what is represented by the branches that grow out of that branch, or the branches that are pruned off? Is it stretching the analogy too far to say that branches growing out of a branch could represent people who are brought to Christ but are getting their nourishment from a person rather than directly from Jesus? Could a big branch with many small branches represent a pastor with many church members who would all fall away from Christ if he did? In this case pruning by the vinedresser could represent cutting off branches that are growing off a branch and then grafting it directly into the vine. Another type of pruning could represent cutting off people who are a bad influence. Pruning could also represent cutting off bad habits and sin to stimulate good growth. Or is the pruning all about growth from pain caused by cutting or in a way discipline?

[Hebrews 12:6](#) For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

<sup>7</sup> If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected [us], and we paid [them] respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> For they indeed for a few days chastened [us] as seemed [best] to them, but He for [our] profit, that [we] may be partakers of His holiness. <sup>11</sup> Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. [Hebrew 12:6-11 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 7:14](#) "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 7:14 NKJV](#)

In Romans, Paul used the analogy of grafting although with an olive tree.

[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>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, [remember that] you do not support the root, but the root [supports] you.

<sup>19</sup> You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." <sup>20</sup> Well [said]. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. <sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the natural

branches, He may not spare you either.<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in [His] goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

<sup>23</sup> And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

<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](#)

I think the olive tree analogy is a little different from the vine because I think it represents God's true people or representatives on earth. The Jews were at one time the branches of this tree but were cut off. Some who chose to believe in Jesus, were grafted back in. Gentiles who chose to believe in Jesus were also grafted in. However I am of the opinion that branches (people) who are connected to the vine (Jesus) will not be cut off until the end. I base this on the following parable.

[Matthew 13:24](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;<sup>25</sup> "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

<sup>26</sup> "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup> "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

<sup>28</sup> "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> '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 13:24-30 NKJV](#)

The second point Jesus made in this teaching is that we should love each other. On one hand, it's not really a new commandment because it's a summary of the latter half of the Ten. The command was given in Leviticus in the following way.

[Leviticus 19:8](#) 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 19:8 NKJV](#)

The Jews understood this command to apply to fellow Jews, but Jesus expanded that understanding in answering the lawyer with the story of the Good Samaritan in [Luke 10:25-37](#). Now He expanded it more by commanding us to love each other, not just as we love ourselves, but as He loves us. Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to give up His life so that we could be saved from sin. He emphasized His point by saying that the greatest love a person could show was to give his life for a friend. In his letter to the Romans Paul showed that Jesus went even farther than this:

[Romans 5:6](#) For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [Romans 5:6-8 NKJV](#)

If everyone truly followed this command, there would be no war or crime or poverty. This is obviously not going to happen in a sinful world, but think of the good will Christianity would have if they followed this command of Jesus.

While some good will can be earned by being a true follower of Jesus, we should not be surprised if we are hated by others just as many hated Him. Those who are opposed to the ways of the kingdom of God will naturally be at odds with His followers. But Jesus said that those who persecute you will be without excuse in the judgment because they have been shown the light and have rejected it.

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What do you believe?

- In the analogy of the vine and the branches, in what way do you envision the Father being the vinedresser?
- Do you think there are people who are connected to other people rather than Jesus for their spiritual nourishment?
- Do you think that true love for your enemies and a willingness to die rather than harm them will turn them from hating you?

## Jesus tries to prepare His disciples for His death and departure from them

[John 16](#)<sup>677</sup>

[John 16:1](#) "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. <sup>2</sup> "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. <sup>3</sup> "And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. <sup>4</sup> "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

<sup>5</sup> "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' <sup>6</sup> "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>11</sup> "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear [them] now. <sup>13</sup> "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup> "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare [it] to you. <sup>15</sup> "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare [it] to you.

<sup>16</sup> "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."

<sup>17</sup> Then [some] of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" <sup>18</sup> They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying."

<sup>19</sup> Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'? <sup>20</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup> "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being

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<sup>677</sup> Strong. p325. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/324/mode/2up>

has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup> "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

<sup>23</sup> "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. <sup>24</sup> "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. <sup>26</sup> "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; <sup>27</sup> "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. <sup>28</sup> "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

<sup>29</sup> His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! <sup>30</sup> "Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God."

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? <sup>32</sup> "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

<sup>33</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." [John 16:1-33 NKJV](#)

The first three verses of this chapter really go along with my third bullet point from the previous chapter. If they hated Jesus they will hate His followers. Jesus was killed by religious authorities and His followers will also be killed by religious people, thinking they are doing God's will. As I read this, I thought of all the people who were killed by the Roman Catholic Church of the Dark Ages. I also think of the Christians today who are persecuted and killed by Islamic terrorists, clearly thinking they are doing the will of God.

The rest of this chapter is dedicated to Jesus trying to prepare His disciples for His death and for their life when He is no longer with them. Jesus spoke of His death in figurative language because they could not bear to hear the truth. In fact, when He told them plainly in prior conversations that He would be killed, they thought He was speaking figuratively because it was so incomprehensible to them. Again, Jesus told them that unless He left, the Helper would not come to them. In this case Jesus said the Helper would convict the world of three things.

1. Sin – in rejecting Jesus but also of sin in general
2. Righteousness – of Jesus and that He was God, as He said He was
3. Judgment – of Satan the ruler of this world, that his true ideas and methods were exposed and he was proved wrong in his dispute with God

I believe Jesus had to leave because as long as He was present physically, there was the thought of the earthly kingdom. After all, even as Jesus was about to rise up to heaven, the disciples were still thinking there would be an earthly kingdom.

[Acts 1:6](#) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."



<sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. [Acts 1:6-9 NKJV](#)

In [verse 23](#) Jesus said "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you." That's a pretty clear and unambiguous statement. So how does one explain the many prayers that people have prayed in Jesus' name, where they didn't receive what they asked for? I guess the best answer I can give is that we should not form a whole belief or doctrine around a single Bible verse. Each verse must be taken in context and if you believe the Bible is without error and inspired from by God, then compare one verse with another seeking an understanding that is consistent throughout the entire Bible. Since this seemed like a topic that deserved more discussion than a paragraph or two, I wrote an Appendix on [Unanswered prayer](#).

What do you believe?

- Do you think the disciples understood yet that Jesus was going to die?
- What do you think the disciples believed or understood about the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think it means to Pray in Jesus' name?

## Jesus prays for His disciples

[John 17:1-26](#), [John 18:1](#), [Matthew 26:30](#), [Mark 14:26](#), [Luke 22:39](#)<sup>678</sup>

[John 17:1](#) Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. <sup>3</sup> "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup> "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

<sup>6</sup> "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. <sup>8</sup> "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received [them], and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

<sup>9</sup> "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We [are]. <sup>12</sup> "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

<sup>678</sup> Strong. p328. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/328/mode/2up>

<sup>20</sup> "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> "that they all may be one, as You, Father, [are] in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup> "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

<sup>24</sup> "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. <sup>26</sup> "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare [it], that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." [John 17:1-26 NKJV](#)

[John 18:1](#) When Jesus had spoken these words,

	<a href="#">Matthew 26:30</a> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out	<a href="#">Mark 14:26</a> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out	<a href="#">Luke 22:39</a> Coming out, He went
He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, ... <a href="#">John 18:1 NKJV</a>	to the Mount of Olives. <a href="#">Matthew 26:30 NKJV</a>	to the Mount of Olives. <a href="#">Mark 14:26 NKJV</a>	to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. <a href="#">Luke 22:39 NKJV</a>

As I read this prayer, I had several thoughts. It should have been pretty clear to the disciples that Jesus was going to be leaving them and going back to the Father. He was concerned for their well-being when His physical presence would no longer be with them. I believe the words of this prayer were primarily for their benefit, to help them understand that the connection He had with the Father in heaven, was to be theirs. He wanted them to know that though He was God, He depended on that connection with the Father even as they should and could. Then, the idea of Jesus praying got me wondering if prayer was any different for Him than it is for us. Obviously, it's different in that He is not praying to Jesus, but I mean the vast majority of people never hear God verbally speaking back to them when they pray. I don't know how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit communicate with each other, but I don't imagine they are limited to verbal communication. I just wondered if Jesus had any communication with the Father or Holy Spirit, as they did when He was not human, or if He was limited to what is possible for us. Another thing that stood out as I contemplated this prayer is that Jesus prayed as if Judas were already lost. I know he had already agreed to betray Jesus, but he hadn't actually gone through with it yet. Do you think it was possible for Judas to exercise his free will and choose not to betray Jesus? I believe the choice was his and God/Jesus had simply observed him making it. [Verse 20-21](#) lets us know that Jesus was not only praying for the Apostles, but for all who should choose to follow Him through their testimony. In [verses 22-24](#), Jesus prayed of glory again. Is this the same glory He spoke of in [verse 5](#)? On the surface it doesn't seem the same. [Verse 5](#) speaks of the glory Jesus had with the Father before He took human form. The glory in [verse 22](#) seems to be something Jesus received while in His human form, which He passed on to the disciples so that they could have the same oneness He had with the Father on earth. I think it's pretty clear what the first glory is, but what is the glory Jesus had, and we also can have with the Father here on earth? I think Jesus spoke of His coming death on the cross as Him being glorified.

[Luke 24:25](#) Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

<sup>26</sup> "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" [Luke 24:25-26 NKJV](#)

[John 12:23](#) But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. [John 12:23-24 NKJV](#)

[John 3:14](#) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. [John 3:14-15 NKJV](#)

Jesus also told Peter the kind of death by which he would glorify God.

[John 21:19](#) This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." [John 21:19 NKJV](#)

For me, maybe the question about the glory could be about who is being glorified. Who was glorified during the crucifixion of Jesus? Who was glorified by Peter's crucifixion? Who is glorified by the deaths of all faithful martyrs for Christ? I think Jesus was glorified because He was victorious over Satan and because of the salvation He accomplished for us through His death. But I think the works we do for God, and possibly the death we die for Him, should bring glory to God. Jesus performed many miracles during His ministry and the Apostles were also given the gift of miraculous healing, but I think they were not for the purpose of bringing glory to themselves.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus meant when He prayed "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was?"
- What does it mean to be one with the Father even as Jesus was? How is that even possible?
- Do you think Jesus was able to have more of a two-way conversation when He prayed or was He limited to more of the same experience we are?

## The garden of Gethsemane

[Matthew 26:36-56](#), [Mark 14:32-52](#), [Luke 22:40-48](#), [Luke 12:50](#), [John 18:1-12](#)<sup>679</sup>

[Matthew 26:36](#) Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

[Mark 14:32](#) Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

[Luke 22:40](#) When He came to the place, He said to them, His disciples entered. [John 18:1](#) ... where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. [John 18:1 NKJV](#)  
"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

[Matthew 26:37](#) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. <sup>38</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. ...

[Mark 14:33](#) And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. <sup>34</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, [even] to death. ...

[Luke 12:50](#) "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! [Luke 12:50 NKJV](#)

<sup>679</sup> Strong. p331. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n405/mode/2up>

[Matthew 26:38](#) ... Stay here and watch with Me."

<sup>39</sup> 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]."

<sup>40</sup> Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter,

"What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

<sup>41</sup> "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak."

[Matthew 26:42](#) Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

[Matthew 26:43](#) And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

[Matthew 26:44](#) So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

[Matthew 26:45](#) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are [you] still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

[Mark 14:34](#) ... Stay here and watch."

<sup>35</sup> He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

<sup>36</sup> 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]."

<sup>37</sup> Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"

<sup>38</sup> "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak."

[Luke 22:41](#) And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,

<sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."— <sup>45</sup> When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep?"

Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

[Mark 14:39](#) Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.

[Mark 14:40](#) And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

[Luke 22:44](#) And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.— <sup>43</sup> Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

[Mark 14:41](#) Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Matthew 26:47 And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve,

with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him."

<sup>49</sup> Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

<sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. [Matthew 26:36-50 NKJV](#)

[John 18:4](#) Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" <sup>5</sup> They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am [He]." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. <sup>6</sup> Now when He said to them, "I am [He]," they drew back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am [He]. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," <sup>9</sup> that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none." [John 18:4-9 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:49](#) When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" [Luke 22:49 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:51](#) And suddenly, one of those [who were] with Jesus stretched out [his] hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mark 14:43 And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve,

with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. <sup>44</sup> Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead [Him] away safely."

<sup>45</sup> As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. [Mark 14:32-45 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:47](#) And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

[Luke 22:47](#) And while He was still speaking,

behold, a multitude;

and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. <sup>48</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" [Luke 22:40-48 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:50](#) And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

[John 18:2](#) And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. <sup>3</sup> Then Judas, having received a detachment [of troops], and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. [John 18:2-3 NKJV](#)

[John 18:10](#) Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

[Luke 22:51](#) But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

Matthew 26:52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

[John 18:11](#) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. ...

John 18:11 ... Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

[Matthew 26:55](#) In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes,

"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

<sup>56</sup> "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.—

[Matthew 26:50](#) ... Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

[Matthew 26:50-56 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:48](#) Then Jesus answered and said to them,

"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? <sup>49</sup> "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me.

But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." <sup>50</sup> Then they all forsook Him and fled.—

[Mark 14:46](#) Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.

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[Luke 22:54](#) Having arrested Him, they led [Him] ... [Luke 22:50-54 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:52](#) Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him,

"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> "When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

[John 18:12](#) Then the detachment [of troops] and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. [John 18:10-12 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:51](#) Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around [his] naked [body]. And the young men laid hold of him, <sup>52</sup> and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked. [Mark 14:47-52 NKJV](#)

Matthew's account of the Garden of Gethsemane is the most complete. The details he left out were:

- The sweating drops of blood (Luke)
- Jesus being strengthened by an angel (Luke)
- Jesus asking who the mob was looking for, answering I am He, and they fell to the ground (John)
- The identity of the person who cut off the ear and the name of the servant whose ear was cut off (John)
- Jesus healing the severed [right] ear (Luke)
- The naked young man (Mark)

Luke was a doctor, so it should come as no surprise that he would include the sweat as drops of blood and the healing of the ear that was cut off. John was the one who often liked to give little details about people and who they were. He was also the one who had some connection with the High Priest that later allowed him to enter and observe the trial, so he may even have known of Malchus at the time. Finally, many believe that the naked young man was Mark, the author of the Gospel by his name.

Jesus as He often did, took Peter, James and John with Him but then left them and went a little further. Jesus wanted the disciples to pray for strength to withstand what He knew was coming. He Himself prayed that He might not have to drink the cup set before Him, but He had completely surrendered to do the will of the Father. What is the cup Jesus was praying about? Many probably assume that it was the crucifixion and death on the cross. I believe that it was the sin of the world that He had to assume responsibility for and the resulting separation from the Father that Jesus shrank back from. Ellen White expanded on this scene in the Desire of Ages.

He went a little distance from them—not so far but that they could both see and hear Him—and fell prostrate upon the ground. He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so

deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.

[White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p686](#)<sup>680</sup>

And what was to be gained by this sacrifice? How hopeless appeared the guilt and ingratitude of men! In its hardest features Satan pressed the situation upon the Redeemer: The people who claim to be above all others in temporal and spiritual advantages have rejected You. They are seeking to destroy You, the foundation, the center and seal of the promises made to them as a peculiar people. One of Your own disciples, who has listened to Your instruction, and has been among the foremost in church activities, will betray You. One of Your most zealous followers will deny You. All will forsake You. Christ's whole being abhorred the thought. That those whom He had undertaken to save, those whom He loved so much, should unite in the plots of Satan, this pierced His soul. The conflict was terrible. Its measure was the guilt of His nation, of His accusers and betrayer, the guilt of a world lying in wickedness. The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God's wrath against sin was crushing out His life. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p687](#)<sup>681</sup>

Three times Jesus went a little distance from Peter, James and John to pray, and three times He came back to find them sleeping. He had asked them to pray so that they could withstand temptation. I think Satan probably did everything within his power to keep them from praying. I wonder if God would still have sent an angel if the disciples had been able to stay awake to pray and comfort Jesus? Ellen White gives us an idea of how the conversation with the angel might have gone:

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p693-694](#)<sup>682</sup>

I think there is a saying that nothing good happens after midnight. I don't think there is anything magical that happens when the clock strikes midnight, but I think it does have something to do with darkness. In fact, the Jews

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<sup>680</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p686.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=686>

<sup>681</sup> White. p687. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=687>

<sup>682</sup> White. p693-694. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=693>

had Laws prohibiting criminal trials from happening at night.<sup>683</sup> Jesus also pointed out their hypocrisy with the following statement.

[Luke 22:53](#) "When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." [Luke 22:53 NKJV](#)

I think the law against criminal trial by night makes a lot of sense. The main reason anyone would want conduct a trial by night is to avoid the scrutiny of the general public. In addition to that, generally the people available at that time of night are often less than upstanding citizens. I think it's probably easier to assemble a mob of mischief makers at night than in broad daylight.

When Jesus asked the mob who they were looking for and answered them, I am He, they drew back and fell to the ground. John tells us this, but he doesn't attempt to give an explanation of why they drew back and fell to the ground. Was this similar to the times when Jesus chased the merchants from the temple, and they ran out rather than standing up to Him and challenging His authority? I expect that it was some sort of supernatural display of heavenly power or glory, such as when the angel came to roll back the stone of Jesus' tomb, and the guards fell to the ground as dead men. Ellen White suggests the following:

No traces of His recent agony were visible as Jesus stepped forth to meet His betrayer. Standing in advance of His disciples He said, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am He." As these words were spoken, the angel who had lately ministered to Jesus moved between Him and the mob. A divine light illuminated the Saviour's face, and a dovelike form overshadowed Him. In the presence of this divine glory, the murderous throng could not stand for a moment. They staggered back. Priests, elders, soldiers, and even Judas, fell as dead men to the ground. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p694](#)<sup>684</sup>

Regarding Peter's attack with the sword, Jesus was the one who actually told them to get it. This came up in the chapter where [Jesus predicts He will be betrayed and denied](#).

[Luke 22:35](#) And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." <sup>36</sup> Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take [it], and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. <sup>37</sup> "For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." <sup>38</sup> So they said, "Lord, look, here [are] two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." [Luke 22:35-38 NKJV](#)

So, it seems Jesus told the disciples to get a couple swords, but then He chastised Peter for using one of them. Why did He do that? Did Jesus literally mean for them to get swords? Is there any other place in His life where Jesus even remotely advocated violence or even self-defense? When a mob tried to throw Him off a cliff, He miraculously walked away [\[Luke 4:29\]](#). When John the Baptists was thrown in prison, He didn't try to break him out. When wrongfully condemned by an illegal trial, He willingly went along with it, even to the point of sacrificing His life. Later based on His teachings and example, the Apostles willingly suffered persecution [\[Acts 5:41\]](#), torture and death for His sake. So, the request to acquire swords seems completely out of character and purpose for Jesus. I could theorize that perhaps Jesus spoke figuratively when He told them to get a couple swords, but I rather choose to

<sup>683</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/practice-procedure>

<sup>684</sup> White. p694. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=694>



think that He had a purpose and a lesson to teach with the incident in the garden. Maybe Malchus and others were even converted and saved as a result of Jesus' miracle that night.

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What do you believe?

- What do you think the cup was that Jesus prayed about?
- Why do you think Judas need the signal of the kiss? Wasn't Jesus recognizable by everyone?
- Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to get a sword and then rebuked Peter for using it?

## Peter denies knowing Jesus in the courtyard of Annas

[John 18:13-27](#), [Matthew 22:58,69-75](#), [Mark 14:54-72](#), [Luke 22:54-62](#)<sup>685</sup>

[John 18:13](#) And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup> Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

[Luke 22:54](#) ... and brought Him into the high priest's house. ...

[John 18:15](#) And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so [did] another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

[Matthew 26:58](#) But Peter followed Him at a distance  
[Mark 14:54](#) But Peter followed Him at a distance, ...  
to the high priest's courtyard.

[Luke 22:54](#) ... But Peter followed at a distance. [Luke 22:54 NKJV](#)

[John 18:16](#) But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.—  
<sup>18</sup> Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. —

[Matthew 26:58](#) ... And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. [Matthew 22:58 NKJV](#)  
[Mark 14:54](#) ... right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.—

[Luke 22:55](#) Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

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<sup>685</sup> Strong. p338. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/338/mode/2up>

John 18:17 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter,

"You are not also [one] of this Man's disciples, are you?"

He said, "I am not."—

John 18:25 Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also [one] of His disciples, are you?"

He denied [it] and said, "I am not!"—

John 18:19 The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

<sup>20</sup> Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. <sup>21</sup> "Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."

<sup>22</sup> And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"—

[Matthew 26:69](#) Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying,

"You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

<sup>70</sup> But he denied it before [them] all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

[Matthew 26:71](#) And when he had gone out to the gateway, another [girl] saw him and said to those [who were] there, "This [fellow] also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

<sup>72</sup> But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

[Mark 14:66](#) Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. <sup>67</sup> And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said,

"You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

<sup>68</sup> But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." ...

[Mark 14:68](#) ... And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. <sup>69</sup> And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is [one] of them."

<sup>70</sup> But he denied it again. ...

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

[Luke 22:56](#) And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said,

"This man was also with Him."

<sup>57</sup> But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

[Luke 22:58](#) And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."

<p>John 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative [of him] whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" <sup>27</sup> Peter then denied again;</p>	<p>Matthew 26:73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are [one] of them, for your speech betrays you."</p>	<p>Mark 14:70 ... And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are [one] of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows [it]."</p>	<p>Luke 22:59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this [fellow] also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."</p>
<p>and immediately a rooster crowed. <a href="#">John 18:13-27 NKJV</a></p>	<p><sup>74</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, [saying], "I do not know the Man!"</p>	<p><sup>71</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" <sup>72</sup> A</p>	<p><sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"</p>
<p>Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." <sup>62</sup> So Peter went out and wept bitterly. <a href="#">Luke 22:54-62 NKJV</a></p>	<p>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. <a href="#">Matthew 26:69-75</a></p>	<p>Mark 14:72 ... 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. <a href="#">Mark 14:54-72 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.</p>

John, as he usually does, started out in [verse 13](#) by giving us a little background information about some of the people involved. He tells us that Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the High Priest that year. A little later in [verses 21,22](#) he was referred to as the High Priest. So, was Annas the High Priest or not? The answer is yes and no. Originally, I believe the office of High Priest was an appointment for life.

[Numbers 35:25](#) "So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. [Number 35:25 NKJV](#)

Aaron was the first High Priest, and it was God's command that his descendants were to occupy that as well as the other priestly offices.

[Exodus 27:21](#) "In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which [is] before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. [It shall be] a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel. [Exodus 27:21 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 29:29](#) "And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. [Exodus 29:29 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 30:30](#) "And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that [they] may minister to Me as priests. [Exodus 30:30 NKJV](#)

I believe genealogy was very important to Jews, but because of this command from God, it was especially important to descendants of Aaron, in order to prove eligibility to serve as priests. I found a pretty exhaustive list of High Priests in a [Jewish Encyclopedia website](#).<sup>686</sup> It seems to me that when there was no monarchy, the office of High Priest was the highest office in the land and hence had become highly politicized. Undoubtedly during the time of Jesus, it was very political and the Romans through Herod probably exerted their power over the Jews in the appointment of that office. In this particular case, it is pretty universally accepted that Annas had been High Priest but had been replaced by others, Caiaphas his son-in-law, being the current one. Apparently Annas was still considered by the Jews, perhaps because of his age, or some suggest his presidency over the Sanhedrin as an authority in the nation. I also think that just as some may still refer to former United States presidents as “president,” Annas probably was still referred to as High Priest.

So, what was Annas trying to accomplish by his questioning? I believe he was fishing for something that he could use against Jesus in a Roman court. The majority of the Sanhedrin had already accused Jesus of being a Sabbath breaker and a blasphemer, so they didn’t need any other evidence from their perspective, but they knew those accusations would not get them what they wanted in a Roman court, which was the death penalty.

I found it interesting that John used his connections to get himself and Peter into the courtyard showing that he was not trying to hide his association with Jesus. Peter on the other hand was apparently trying to mingle with the rabble, where he would hopefully not be recognized, or suspected as being a follower of Jesus. John probably got as close as he could so he could watch and listen to the proceedings. Peter who was trying to hide his identity, but could probably not hide his true feelings, had perfectly placed himself in a position to deny his Lord. Ellen White wrote:

Peter had not designed that his real character should be known. In assuming an air of indifference he had placed himself on the enemy's ground, and he became an easy prey to temptation. If he had been called to fight for his Master, he would have been a courageous soldier; but when the finger of scorn was pointed at him, he proved himself a coward. Many who do not shrink from active warfare for their Lord are driven by ridicule to deny their faith. By associating with those whom they should avoid, they place themselves in the way of temptation. They invite the enemy to tempt them, and are led to say and do that of which under other circumstances they would never have been guilty. The disciple of Christ who in our day disguises his faith through dread of suffering or reproach denies his Lord as really as did Peter in the judgment hall.

Peter tried to show no interest in the trial of his Master, but his heart was wrung with sorrow as he heard the cruel taunts, and saw the abuse He was suffering. More than this, he was surprised and angry that Jesus should humiliate Himself and His followers by submitting to such treatment. In order to conceal his true feelings, he endeavored to join with the persecutors of Jesus in their untimely jests. But his appearance was unnatural. He was acting a lie, and while seeking to talk unconcernedly he could not restrain expressions of indignation at the abuse heaped upon his Master. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p712](#)<sup>687</sup>

I could ask the same question about Peter that I asked about Judas, both of whose actions Jesus predicted mere hours before. Did he have a choice, or was he predestined to betray his Master? My belief is the same as it was for Judas, which is that Jesus merely told them what He had observed them choose. The strange thing, especially in the

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<sup>686</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7689-high-priest#anchor7>

<sup>687</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p712.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=712>

case of Peter is that even though he denied so vehemently that he would betray Jesus, he still did it. Even the foreknowledge didn't result in a change in his action.

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What do you believe?

- Why was John not afraid to reveal his identity, and why wasn't he persecuted at this time because of his connection with Jesus?
- Is it possible that some of those confronting Peter would merely have wanted to ask him about Jesus if he had not denied the connection?
- Do you think Peter could have chosen to not betray Jesus?

## Jesus taken to stand before Caiaphas

[Matthew 26:57,63-68](#), [Mark 14:53,55-65](#), [Luke 22:63-71](#), [John 18:24](#)<sup>688</sup>

[John 18:24](#) Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

[Matthew 26:57](#) And those who had laid hold of Jesus led [Him] away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. —

[Mark 14:53](#) And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. —

[Luke 22:66](#) As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council,

[Matthew 26:59](#) Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,<sup>60</sup> but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. ...

[Mark 14:55](#) Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none.<sup>56</sup> For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.<sup>57</sup> Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying,

[Matthew 26:60](#) ... But at last two false witnesses came forward<sup>61</sup> and said, "This [fellow] said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' "<sup>62</sup> And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What [is it] these men testify against You?"<sup>63</sup> But Jesus kept silent. ...

[Mark 14:58](#) "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' "<sup>59</sup> But not even then did their testimony agree.<sup>60</sup> And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What [is it] these men testify against You?"<sup>61</sup> But He kept silent and answered nothing. ...

[Luke 22:66](#) ... saying,<sup>67</sup> "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe.<sup>68</sup> "And if I also ask [you], you will by no means answer Me or let [Me] go.<sup>69</sup> "Hereafter

[Matthew 26:64](#) ... Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see ...

[Mark 14:62](#) ... And you will see ...

the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."<sup>70</sup> [Daniel 7:13](#) "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, [One] like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! ... [Daniel 7:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:64](#) ... the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." —

[Mark 14:62](#) ... the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

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<sup>688</sup> Strong. p341. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/340/mode/2up>

Luke 22:70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?"

So He said to them, "You [rightly] say that I am."

<sup>71</sup> And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."—

[Luke 22:63](#) Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him.

<sup>64</sup> And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" <sup>65</sup> And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

[Luke 22:63-71 NKJV](#)

Matthew 26:63 ... And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you said. ...

<sup>65</sup> 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!

<sup>66</sup> "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

Matthew 26:67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck [Him] with the palms of their hands,

<sup>68</sup> saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?" [Matthew 26:63-68 NKJV](#)

Mark 14:63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?" <sup>64</sup> "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Mark 14:65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him,

"Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands. [Mark 14:55-65 NKJV](#)

According to Luke day had dawned by the time they brought Jesus to the palace of Caiaphas. What occurred before Annas earlier in the morning was probably a preliminary hearing to try to determine the best options to achieve their goal of killing Jesus. Now it appears the whole council, is assembled for a trial, but they are still searching for a crime to accuse Him of. Jewish law required at least two witnesses in order to put someone to death.

[Deuteronomy 17:6](#) "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. [Deuteronomy 17:6 NKJV](#)

Now the priests were trying to find more than one person who could provide eye or ear witness accounts that were consistent with each other and could be used in Roman court to secure the death penalty. They had no problem resorting to false testimony, but as is usually the case when not simply telling the truth, there are often inconsistencies between statements from different people. They knew the temple was a symbol of pride, not only for them but for the Romans as well. Herod had invested a great deal of time and resources to turn it into one of the wonders of the world. They finally found two people who testified that Jesus said He would destroy the temple. But these were false statements because Jesus never said He would destroy the temple. This is what He actually said:

[John 2:18](#) So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body. [John 2:18-21 NKJV](#)

Notice, Jesus didn't say He would destroy the temple. The implication was that His questioners would destroy the temple, His body, and He would raise it up in three days. Even if He had said He would destroy it, that should hardly have been considered a capital offense.

They realized they needed more, so they pressed on. Jesus had not often responded directly to their questions about who He was and where He came from, but He had on occasion. They probably remembered the following exchange they had with Him and now they wished to get Him to make this statement in front of the whole council so they could accuse Him of blasphemy.

[John 8:58](#) Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."<sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. [John 8:58-59 NKJV](#)

In the previous chapter I mentioned the illegality of the trial by night, but here was another of their own laws they were willing to break if it would get them what they wanted. Jewish law we just read above, given to Moses by God, stated that the death penalty required at least two witnesses, but the High Priest and the scribes and elders, which composed the council, were willing to pronounce Jesus worthy of death on His own testimony.

Finally, those handling Jesus, probably temple guards and the mob were treating Him terribly. They were punching and slapping Him, spitting on Him, blind folding and mocking Him, and saying blasphemous things against Him. Ellen White suggest that the priests and rulers probably even joined in the mocking.

When the condemnation of Jesus was pronounced by the judges, a satanic fury took possession of the people. The roar of voices was like that of wild beasts. The crowd made a rush toward Jesus, crying, He is guilty, put Him to death! Had it not been for the Roman soldiers, Jesus would not have lived to be nailed to the cross of Calvary. He would have been torn in pieces before His judges, had not Roman authority interfered, and by force of arms restrained the violence of the mob.

Heathen men were angry at the brutal treatment of one against whom nothing had been proved. The Roman officers declared that the Jews in pronouncing condemnation upon Jesus were infringing upon the Roman power, and that it was even against the Jewish law to condemn a man to death upon his own testimony. This intervention brought a momentary lull in the proceedings; but the Jewish leaders were dead alike to pity and to shame.

Priests and rulers forgot the dignity of their office, and abused the Son of God with foul epithets. They taunted Him with His parentage. They declared that His presumption in proclaiming Himself the Messiah made Him deserving of the most ignominious death. The most dissolute men engaged in infamous abuse of the Saviour. An old garment was thrown over His head, and His persecutors struck Him in the face, saying, "Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?" When the garment was removed, one poor wretch spat in His face.

[White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p715](#)<sup>689</sup>

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What do you believe?

- Do you think there were members of the council, or Sanhedrin that were sympathetic to Jesus, that were present that day, or do you think they were all excluded?
- Do you think the Romans would consider a boast to be able to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days a crime worthy of death?

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<sup>689</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p715.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=715>

- What would cause some of the mob, who most likely had no reason to hate Jesus, treat Him so terribly?

## Jesus stands before Pilate

[Matthew 27:1-2,11-12](#), [Mark 15:1-5](#), [Luke 23:1-7](#), [John 18:28-38](#)<sup>690</sup>

<p><a href="#">John 18:28</a> Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:1</a> When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. <sup>2</sup> And when they had bound Him, they led Him away</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:1</a> Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, and delivered [Him] to Pilate.</p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:1</a> Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate.</p>
	<p>and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. <a href="#">Matthew 27:1-2 NKJV</a></p>	<p>and delivered [Him] to Pilate.</p>	<p>and led Him to Pilate.</p>

<sup>29</sup> Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

<sup>30</sup> They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

<sup>31</sup> Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," <sup>32</sup> that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. [John 18:28-32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:2](#) And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this [fellow] perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

<p>John 18:33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:11</a> Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:2</a> Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>	<p>Luke 23:3 Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>
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<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup> Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

<p>Jesus answered, "You say [rightly] that I am a king. For</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:11</a> ... Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you say."</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:2</a> ... He answered and said to him, "[It is as] you</p>	<p>Luke 23:3 ... He answered him and said, "[It is as] you say."</p>
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<sup>690</sup> Strong. p344. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/344/mode/2up>



this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all. [John 18:28-38 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:12](#) And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. <sup>13</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" <sup>14</sup> But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. [Matthew 27:11-14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:3](#) And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. <sup>4</sup> Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!" <sup>5</sup> But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled. [Mark 15:1-5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:4](#) So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man." <sup>5</sup> But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." <sup>6</sup> When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. <sup>7</sup> And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. [Luke 23:1-7 NKJV](#)

Now that it was daylight, not to mention with a couple preliminary trials and behind them, the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate. They were not looking for a trial, but merely a rubber stamp on their sentence, so they could put Jesus to death. I suspect Pilate had done this before, so they were probably expecting this to be done quickly. Ellen White said:

When the Saviour was brought into the judgment hall, Pilate looked upon Him with no friendly eyes. The Roman governor had been called from his bedchamber in haste, and he determined to do his work as quickly as possible. He was prepared to deal with the prisoner with magisterial severity. Assuming his severest expression, he turned to see what kind of man he had to examine, that he had been called from his repose at so early an hour. He knew that it must be someone whom the Jewish authorities were anxious to have tried and punished with haste.

Pilate looked at the men who had Jesus in charge, and then his gaze rested searchingly on Jesus. He had had to deal with all kinds of criminals; but never before had a man bearing marks of such goodness and nobility been brought before him. On His face he saw no sign of guilt, no expression of fear, no boldness or defiance. He saw a man of calm and dignified bearing, whose countenance bore not the marks of a criminal, but the signature of heaven.

Christ's appearance made a favorable impression upon Pilate. His better nature was roused. He had heard of Jesus and His works. His wife had told him something of the wonderful deeds performed by the Galilean prophet, who cured the sick and raised the dead. Now this revived as a dream in Pilate's mind. He recalled rumors that he had heard from several sources. He resolved to demand of the Jews their charges against the prisoner.

Who is this Man, and wherefore have ye brought Him? he said. What accusation bring ye against Him? The Jews were disconcerted. Knowing that they could not substantiate their charges against Christ, they did not desire a public examination. They answered that He was a deceiver called Jesus of Nazareth.

Again Pilate asked, "What accusation bring ye against this Man?" The priests did not answer his question, but in words that showed their irritation, they said, "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." When those composing the Sanhedrin, the first men of the nation, bring to you a man they deem

worthy of death, is there need to ask for an accusation against him? They hoped to impress Pilate with a sense of their importance, and thus lead him to accede to their request without going through many preliminaries. They were eager to have their sentence ratified; for they knew that the people who had witnessed Christ's marvelous works could tell a story very different from the fabrication they themselves were now rehearsing.

The priests thought that with the weak and vacillating Pilate they could carry through their plans without trouble. Before this he had signed the death warrant hastily, condemning to death men they knew were not worthy of death. In his estimation the life of a prisoner was of little account; whether he were innocent or guilty was of no special consequence. The priests hoped that Pilate would now inflict the death penalty on Jesus without giving Him a hearing. This they besought as a favor on the occasion of their great national festival.

But there was something in the prisoner that held Pilate back from this. He dared not do it. He read the purposes of the priests. He remembered how, not long before, Jesus had raised Lazarus, a man that had been dead four days; and he determined to know, before signing the sentence of condemnation, what were the charges against Him, and whether they could be proved. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p723](#)<sup>691</sup>

I think the priests knew that Pilate had no problem murdering innocent people in the name of keeping order.<sup>692</sup> According to Philo Judaeus, "he frequently would, without any cause given, put men to excessive torments, and arbitrarily condemn to death others, without any sentence of law."<sup>693</sup> I think the rebelliousness of the Jews probably tried his patience and brought out these baser parts of his nature, but Pilate was probably not at all used to seeing an accused behave as Jesus did. It quickly became obvious to him that Jesus was not guilty of any of the things the priests were accusing Him of. He must have at first determined to take a stand to not be pushed around by these annoying priests who were trying to manipulate him for their own purpose. Throughout the whole farce of a trial up to this point Jesus had made a point of not defending Himself against false accusations. He answered questions about His identity and His relationship to God, and in this case probably answered some questions in order to bring light to Pilate. But Pilate saw that he was not getting anywhere by trying to behave as a just judge, and when he realized that Jesus was from Galilee, he saw a way out. Galilee was under King Herod's jurisdiction, who just happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the Romans did not allow nations under their control to put people to death without their approval?
- Why do you think Jesus answered Pilate's questions?
- Why do you think the Jews didn't bring any witnesses before Pilate?

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<sup>691</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p723.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=723>

<sup>692</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link182HCH0003>

<sup>693</sup> *The Life of Pontius Pilate*. London, 1753, p13.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=St1bAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA13#v=onepage&q&f=false>

## Jesus stands before Herod after which He is returned to Pilate

[Luke 23:8-24](#), [Matthew 27:15-30,3-10](#), [Mark 15:6-18](#), [John 18:39-19:16](#), [Acts 1:18-19](#)<sup>694</sup>

[Luke 23:8](#) Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long [time] to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. <sup>9</sup> Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. <sup>10</sup> And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. <sup>11</sup> Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked [Him], arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup> That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

<sup>13</sup> Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, <sup>14</sup> said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined [Him] in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; <sup>15</sup> "no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. <sup>16</sup> "I will therefore chastise Him and release [Him]"

[Matthew 27:15](#) Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished.—

[Mark 15:6](#) Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.—

[Luke 23:17](#) [Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.] —

[John 18:39](#) "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. ...

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, when they had gathered together,

[Mark 15:8](#) Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask [him to do] just as he had always done for them.

Pilate said to them,

"Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" <sup>18</sup> For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

<sup>9</sup> But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

<sup>10</sup> For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.—

[John 18:39](#) ... Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

<sup>19</sup> While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."—

<sup>16</sup> And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.—

[Mark 15:7](#) And there was one named Barabbas, [who was] chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.—

[Luke 23:19](#) who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.—

[John 18:40](#) ... Now Barabbas was a robber.—

<sup>20</sup> But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" ...

[Mark 15:11](#) But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

<sup>694</sup> Strong. p347. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/346/mode/2up>

[Matthew 27:21](#) ...

They said, "Barabbas!"

<sup>22</sup> Pilate said to them,

"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

[They] all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

<sup>23</sup> Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather [that] a tumult was rising, he took water and washed [his] hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see [to it]."

<sup>25</sup> And all the people answered and said, "His blood [be] on us and on our children."

<sup>26</sup> Then he

released Barabbas to them;

and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered [Him] to be crucified.

[Matthew 27:27](#) Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. <sup>28</sup> And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. <sup>29</sup> 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!" <sup>30</sup> Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. [Mathew 27:15-30 NKJV](#)

[John 19:4](#) Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

[Luke 23:18](#) But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!"

[Mark 15:12](#) Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do [with Him] whom you call the King of the Jews?" <sup>13</sup> So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

<sup>14</sup> Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

[Mark 15:15](#) So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them;

and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged [Him], to be crucified.

[Mark 15:16](#) <sup>16</sup> Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison.

<sup>17</sup> And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His [head],

<sup>18</sup> and began to salute Him,

"Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup> Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. [Mark 15:6-18 NKJV](#)

[John 18:40](#) So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." ...

[Luke 23:20](#) Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them.

<sup>21</sup> But they shouted, saying, "Crucify [Him], crucify Him!"

<sup>22</sup> Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let [Him] go."

<sup>23</sup> But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.

[Luke 23:24](#) So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. <sup>25</sup> And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will. [Luke 23:8-24 NKJV](#)

[John 19:1](#) So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged [Him].

[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>3</sup> Then they said,

"Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.

<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And [Pilate] said to them, "Behold the Man!"

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify [Him], crucify [Him]!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify [Him], for I find no fault in Him."

<sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, <sup>9</sup> and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

<sup>10</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

<sup>12</sup> From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

<sup>13</sup> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called [The] Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> ... And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

<sup>15</sup> But they cried out, "Away with [Him], away with [Him]! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

<sup>16</sup> Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led [Him] away. — <sup>14</sup> Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. ... [John 18:39-19:16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:3](#) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, <sup>4</sup> saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What [is that] to us? You see [to it]!"

[Matthew 27:5](#) Then he threw down the pieces of silver [Acts 1:18](#) (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling in the temple and departed, and went and headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. hanged himself.

[Matthew 27:6](#) But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." <sup>7</sup> And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

[Matthew 27:8](#) Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. <sup>9</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ...

[Acts 1:19](#) And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) [Acts 1:18-19 NKJV](#)

Matthew 27:9 ... "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced,<sup>10</sup> "and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me." [Matthew 27:3-10 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 11:12](#) ... So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver.  
<sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter ... [Zechariah 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

First let's begin by addressing the Potters field prophecy. How do we explain that [Matthew 27:9](#) says Jeremiah, but those words are not found in our modern translations in Jeremiah but in Zechariah? Matthew Henry has this to say:

The words quoted are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, ch. 11:12. How they are here said to be spoken by Jeremy is a difficult question; but the credit of Christ's doctrine does not depend upon it; for that proves itself perfectly divine, though there should appear something human as to small circumstances in the penmen of it. The Syriac version, which is ancient, reads only, It was spoken by the prophet, not naming any, whence some have thought that Jeremy was added by some scribe; some think that the whole volume of the prophets, being in one book, and the prophecy of Jeremiah put first, it might not be improper, currente calamo-for a transcriber to quote any passage out of that volume, under his name. The Jews used to say, The spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah, and so they were as one prophet. Some suggest that it was spoken by Jeremiah, but written by Zechariah; or that Jeremiah wrote the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Zechariah.<sup>695</sup>

I would add one more possible explanation could be that at the time, there were some other writings of Jeremiah available that are not in our modern Bible. I realize that these explanations will probably not satisfy someone who is trying to use this discrepancy to prove the Bible is not inspired. The second thing that comes to mind when I read these verses in Zechariah is that it doesn't really seem like a prophecy, but that some key words matched. But then again, I think many of the prophecies are that way. For example, many of the prophecies quoted from the Psalms sound like David writing about his own experiences, but he was inspired to use certain words that would correlate with an incident in the life of Christ. For example, the following verse from Psalm 41 was quoted as being a fulfillment of Judas' betrayal.

[Psalm 41:9](#) Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,  
 Who ate my bread,  
 Has lifted up [his] heel against me. [Psalm 41:9 NKJV](#)

But if you read the chapter it sounds like David writing about enemies and false friends. In fact, probably many if not most prophecies from the Old Testament are like this.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that Jesus was not interested in defending Himself. Since, Herod didn't ask Him any of the questions He was inclined to answer, He simply remained silent. Now remember, this was the King Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist, but also liked listening to him, so perhaps he had some guilt or regret. The thought had occurred to Him that maybe Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life and this was an opportunity to save him and appease his conscience.

[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, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

<sup>15</sup> Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

<sup>695</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_027.cfm?a=956009](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_027.cfm?a=956009)

<sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" <sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. <sup>18</sup> Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

<sup>19</sup> Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; <sup>20</sup> 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 6:14-20 NKJV](#)

Ellen White had the following to say about Jesus' silence before Herod.

Herod's conscience was now far less sensitive than when he had trembled with horror at the request of Herodias for the head of John the Baptist. For a time he had felt the keen stings of remorse for his terrible act; but his moral perceptions had become more and more degraded by his licentious life. Now his heart had become so hardened that he could even boast of the punishment he had inflicted upon John for daring to reprove him. And he now threatened Jesus, declaring repeatedly that he had power to release or to condemn Him. But no sign from Jesus gave evidence that He heard a word.

Herod was irritated by this silence. It seemed to indicate utter indifference to his authority. To the vain and pompous king, open rebuke would have been less offensive than to be thus ignored. Again he angrily threatened Jesus, who still remained unmoved and silent. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p730](#)<sup>696</sup>

In spite of His irritation with Jesus' silence, Herod realized the same thing Pilate had, which was that Jesus was innocent and it was jealousy and hatred that motivated the Jews that accused Him. Herod decided that He would NOT take upon himself the responsibility for the death of Jesus, so He sent Him back to Pilate. Now apparently there had been some kind of quarrel between the two rulers. Some think it was because Pilate had murdered some Galileans, whom Herod considered his subjects.<sup>697</sup>

[Luke 13:1](#) There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [Luke 13:1 NKJV](#)

With Jesus being from Galilee, Pilate had thought he would defer to Herod, and let him be responsible for deciding the fate of one of his own subjects. In doing this, he had also hoped to smooth over the quarrel the two had going. According to [Luke 23:12](#), at least Pilate succeeded on that account, because it says they became friends after this, but now he still had Jesus to deal with.

Before Pilate again, the priests continued to apply pressure to try to get what they wanted. They knew that Pilate had attracted the attention of the Emperor for his inability to keep peace in Judea, and this was a card they were willing to play. The Jews were never happy about the fact that they were subject to a ruling power, and there were among them, people who were willing to use violence in an attempt to annoy and destabilize the foreign administration. To make matters worse, Pilate seemed to try to irritate the Jews and to try to get them to react, possibly so that he could use deadly force against them. Even though we know the Jews would have loved to have a king to lead a rebellion against the Romans, they were now willing to accuse Jesus of claiming to be this type of king in an attempt to secure His condemnation. But Pilate wasn't buying it. The demeanor of Jesus combined with the

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<sup>696</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p730.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=730>

<sup>697</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. Footnote 8. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202H FOOT>

idea that they were trying to accuse one of their own as being a threat to Rome just didn't add up. Pilate tried standing Jesus side-by-side with Barabbas, a convicted murderer and thief, to see if he could appeal to the mob's better nature but that didn't work. He could not afford for word to get back to Rome that he was not willing to kill someone accused of insurrection and rebellion. He tried having Jesus scourged, hoping that would satisfy His accusers, but it did not. He was beginning to lose his resolve to not condemn an innocent man to death, and even washed his hands, declaring that he was not responsible. In response to this, the priests led the mob in the sad chant, "His blood [be] on us and on our children." [\[Matthew 27:25\]](#) But, then Pilate suddenly became alarmed when he heard that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God. Now he was worried for a different reason. His wife had sent him a message warning him that she had had a dream about Jesus and that he should not have anything to do with killing Him. So, he took Jesus aside and wanted to question Him on this topic. By this time Jesus must have known that Pilate was not seeking truth but was only concerned about his own skin. So, He didn't bother trying to explain His divinity to Pilate, but instead remained silent. The silent treatment annoyed Pilate but he was still not ready to give in yet. By now, the priests and the mob were in a satanic frenzy, all shouting for crucifixion. They were so desperate by this point that they were even willing to embrace Caesar as their king in order to secure the condemnation and death of Jesus. Pilate finally made his decision. He didn't want to condemn an innocent man but he thought it preferable to the Emperor hearing that he was not willing to punish someone accused of insurrection against Rome.

Finally, I would like to comment on the scourging that was so casually mentioned. For those who have seen a movie of the crucifixion, you may have an idea what this entailed. In my limited internet search, I didn't find a lot of secular historical descriptions of this type of punishment by the Romans. I did find a number of religious based articles mostly related to the scourging of Jesus. This was a procedure that is generally believed to be performed with a multi-tailed whip generally made of leather, with the addition of hard or sharp objects attached to the ends. Sharp objects were intended to cut and even bite and tear when pulled back.<sup>698</sup> Picture lead balls and sharp pieces of metal or bone attached to the end of the whip, applied to the entire back side, with the person's hands bound to a post. Jewish law did not allow someone to be punished with more than forty lashes or strokes. It was pretty traditional for them to only give thirty-nine lashes, possibly to avoid accidentally giving more than forty, as Paul experience five times.

[Deuteronomy 25:1](#) "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that [the judges] may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, <sup>2</sup> "then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. <sup>3</sup> "Forty blows he may give him [and] no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight. [Deuteronomy 25:1-3 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:24](#) From the Jews five times I received forty [stripes] minus one. [2 Corinthians 11:24 NKJV](#)

I don't know if the Romans had a limit on the number of lashes, but clearly a person could easily be killed with that type of punishment and they didn't want that, because then they couldn't be tortured on the cross. Some believe Jesus was actually scourged on two occasions, once when Pilate was trying to appease the crowd without killing Him, and the usual one that preceded a crucifixion. In any case it was an incredibly cruel and painful punishment

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<sup>698</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scourge#Description>



that His accusers seemed to even enjoy. Ellen White suggests that Satan himself was in the mob, even leading them in their cruel treatment of Jesus.

Jesus was taken, faint with weariness and covered with wounds, and scourged in the sight of the multitude. "And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium, and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they ... did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshiped Him." Occasionally some wicked hand snatched the reed that had been placed in His hand, and struck the crown upon His brow, forcing the thorns into His temples, and sending the blood trickling down His face and beard.

Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A maddened throng enclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by the unfeeling mob. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed, and the vulgar jest and insulting sneer are passed from lip to lip.

Satan led the cruel mob in its abuse of the Saviour. It was his purpose to provoke Him to retaliation if possible, or to drive Him to perform a miracle to release Himself, and thus break up the plan of salvation. One stain upon His human life, one failure of His humanity to endure the terrible test, and the Lamb of God would have been an imperfect offering, and the redemption of man a failure. But He who by a command could bring the heavenly host to His aid—He who could have driven that mob in terror from His sight by the flashing forth of His divine majesty—submitted with perfect calmness to the coarsest insult and outrage.

Christ's enemies had demanded a miracle as evidence of His divinity. They had evidence far greater than any they had sought. As their cruelty degraded His torturers below humanity into the likeness of Satan, so did His meekness and patience exalt Jesus above humanity, and prove His kinship to God. His abasement was the pledge of His exaltation. The blood drops of agony that from His wounded temples flowed down His face and beard were the pledge of His anointing with "the oil of gladness" (Hebrews 1:9.) as our great high priest. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p734](#)<sup>699</sup>

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What do you believe?

- What do you think it means to be responsible for the death of an innocent person?
- Do you think the Jews did bear responsibility?
- Do you think Pilate was absolved of responsibility when he ultimately allowed the crucifixion to happen?

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<sup>699</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p734.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=734>

## The crucifixion and death of Jesus

[Matthew 27:31-50,55-56](#), [Mark 15:20-37,40-41](#), [Luke 23:26-46,49](#), [John 19:16-30](#)<sup>700</sup>

[Matthew 27:31](#) And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His [own] clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

[Mark 15:20](#) 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.

[John 19:16](#) Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led [Him] away. <sup>17</sup> And He, bearing His cross, went out ...

[Matthew 27:32](#) Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name.

[Mark 15:21](#) Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.

[Luke 23:26](#) Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear [it] after Jesus.

Him they compelled to bear His cross.

[Luke 23:27](#) And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.

<sup>28</sup> But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed [are] the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'

<sup>30</sup> "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' <sup>31</sup> "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"—

[Hosea 10:8](#) ... They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!" [Hosea 10:8 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:22](#) And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.

[Matthew 27:33](#) And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

[Luke 23:33](#) And when they had come to the place called Calvary, ...

[John 19:17](#) ... to a place called [the Place] of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,

[Mark 15:23](#) Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take [it].—

[Matthew 27:34](#) they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted [it], He would not drink.

[Mark 15:25](#) Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.—

[Matthew 27:35](#) Then they crucified Him, ... —

[Luke 23:33](#) ... there they crucified Him, ... —

[Mark 15:27](#) With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. <sup>28</sup> So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors."—

<sup>38</sup> Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.—

[Luke 23:32](#) There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. — [Luke 23:33](#) and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

[John 19:18](#) where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

[Isaiah 53:12](#) ... And He was numbered with the transgressors, ... [Isaiah 53:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>700</sup> String. p355. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/354/mode/2up>

[Luke 23:34](#) Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. ... —

<a href="#">John 19:19</a> Now Pilate wrote a title and put [it] on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.	<a href="#">Matthew 27:37</a> And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—	<a href="#">Mark 15:26</a> And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.—	<a href="#">Luke 23:38</a> And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—
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<sup>20</sup> Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, [and] Latin.

[John 19:21](#) Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" <sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

<a href="#">John 19:23</a> Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.	<a href="#">Matthew 27:35</a> ... and divided His garments,	<a href="#">Mark 15:24</a> And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments,	<a href="#">Luke 23:34</a> ... And they divided His garments
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<sup>24</sup> They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:	casting lots for them [to determine] what every man should take.	and cast lots.
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"They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things.	"They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."	<a href="#">Psalm 22:18</a> They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. <a href="#">Psalm 22:18 NKJV</a>
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[Matthew 27:36](#) Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.—

<a href="#">Matthew 27:39</a> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build [it] in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."	<a href="#">Mark 15:29</a> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! [You] who destroy the temple and build [it] in three days, <sup>30</sup> "save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"
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Matthew 27:41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, <sup>42</sup> "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. <sup>43</sup> "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

Mark 15:31 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. <sup>32</sup> "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." ...  
[Psalm 22:8](#) "... Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" [Psalm 22:8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:35](#) And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

[Luke 23:36](#) The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."—

Luke 23:39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." <sup>40</sup> But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."—

Matthew 27:44 Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.—

Mark 15:32 ... Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.—

[John 19:25](#) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

[Matthew 27:55](#) And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, <sup>56</sup> among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. [Matthew 27:55-56 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:40](#) There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, <sup>41</sup> who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. [Mark 15:40-41 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:49](#) But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. [Luke 23:49 NKJV](#)

John 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own [home].

[Matthew 27:45](#) Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. <sup>46</sup> 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?"

[Mark 15:33](#) Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup> 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?"

[Luke 23:44](#) Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. <sup>45</sup> Then the sun was darkened, ... <sup>46</sup> And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, ...  
[Psalm 22:1](#) ... My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? ... [Psalm 22:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:47](#) Some of those who stood there, when they heard [that], said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" — <sup>49</sup> The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." —

[Mark 15:35](#) Some of those who stood by, when they heard [that], said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" <sup>36</sup> ... "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." —

[John 19:28](#) After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" <sup>29</sup> Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there;

and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put [it] on hyssop, and put [it] to His mouth. <sup>30</sup> So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" ...

[Matthew 27:48](#) Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled [it] with sour wine and put [it] on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. —

[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, ...

[Luke 23:46](#) ... He said,

"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' "

Having said this, He breathed His last. [Luke 23:26-46 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:50](#) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, ...

[Mark 15:37](#) And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ...

[Psalm 31:5](#) Into Your hand I commit my spirit; ... [Psalm 31:5 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:37](#) ... and breathed His last. [John 19:30](#) ... And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. [John 19:16-30 NKJV](#)

Crucifixion was an extremely cruel way to kill someone. It was not invented by the Romans but it was used extensively by them to punish rebels and people of lower class who had been condemned to death. The idea was to dehumanize them by stripping them naked, then inflicting multiple sources of excruciating pain, but at the same time prolonging the torture for days if possible, with death usually coming through suffocation. This was accomplished by hanging someone from a tree or poll from their arms. Sometimes there was a cross bar where the arms would be outstretched as Jesus apparently was. Hands or wrists were either tied or nailed to the cross so that when the body weight hung on them, it would not only be painful, but hard to breath. In order to prolong death, the feet or ankles would be tied or nailed to the cross in a way that would allow support of the body weight, thus making it easier for the person to take a breath. Of course this was done in a way that would cause extreme pain each time weight was put on the legs to take a breath. One of the methods that was used to hasten death was to break the legs, making it difficult to support the body weight

to breath. Crucifixion was considered so cruel and dehumanizing that Roman citizens could not be executed that way except in some cases of military desertion.<sup>701</sup> It was also intended to be a deterrent to rebellion or criminal behavior.

As I contemplate this, I wonder how people can be so cruel that they would be able to inflict such torture on a fellow human being. I think one of the ways people have justified this to themselves was to think themselves a higher form of life, than the slaves or poor that would be subject to crucifixion. I think another way this is justified is by hatred. In the case of the Roman/Jew relationship, rebels of a conquered people who would kill your own soldiers or citizens are easier to hate. Ultimately, I believe that it shows the nature of sin, that people would be able to justify torturing others this way, and that Satan could wish this upon his own creator.

There were at least seven instances of things said or done during the crucifixion that the Gospel writers pointed out fulfilled prophecy. To think that God would know the suffering that His own creation would inflict on Him, and yet willingly subject Himself to it is an incredible statement of His love. I think the love shown by God is the complete opposite of the hatred demonstrated by Satan and those who crucified Him.

In the timeline presented, Jesus was lifted up on the cross at the third hour of the day which would have been the equivalent of 9 AM Friday morning. There are other ideas and proposals about the day of the crucifixion, but I believe the day to be Friday. During the hours from 9 to noon, many were still mocking Jesus as He hung on the cross. Talk about kicking someone when they are down. I think Pilate was angry with himself for being manipulated by the Jews, and partly to spite them, he made a sign on which he wrote "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." To make sure everyone could read it, he wrote it in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. So, in support of their claim that they had no king but Caesar, Pilate tried to make it appear that the priests were Roman sympathizers and wanted Jesus killed because the people were embracing Jesus as their king. They realized this and tried to get Pilate to change the sign, but he flatly refused.

Probably one of the brightest moments for Jesus on the cross was His conversation with the repentant thief. It is one of the best examples from the mouth of Jesus Himself that we are not saved by our good works, but only by accepting the gift of salvation that is offered to all, regardless of their past sins. It is unfortunate that this beautiful scene has become a source of contention for those who believe in death as sleep as opposed to the doorway to the afterlife. Since I include myself in this camp, I must try to explain what Jesus meant by the statement to the thief that made it sound like he would be in Paradise after he died that same day. Our most common argument is that the statement by Jesus as originally written does not have punctuation, which was of course added later by translators. Clearly the placement of the comma can have a big difference on the implication of His words.

- Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise
- Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise

In my opinion, I think the translators were influenced by their current beliefs regarding the state of the dead. The question is, if the Bible is the inspired Word of God, would that inspiration not extend to its translations as well? I believe it should and hence, we should try to understand the statement on the cross without arguing punctuation. But

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<sup>701</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion>

before you can do that you must first understand what really happened, based on Jesus's own words after He was resurrected.

[John 20:17](#) Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and [to] My God and your God.' " [John 20:17 NKJV](#)

After His resurrection, Jesus Himself had still not been to heaven. I would say that even with the comma where it is, we can interpret it a couple ways that would still be consistent with John 20:17.

- When we accept Jesus and the gift of salvation that He offers, we are truly saved at that moment and in a way can experience paradise on earth.
- Knowing the thief would die that day, Jesus knew that the next thing he would experience upon waking from the sleep of death, would be the resurrection of the righteous.

Following this Strong chose to insert the naming of the faithful women who were there with Jesus at the cross. It should be noted that only one of the twelve disciples, John, was at the cross. These are the names or associations of the women who were there.

- Mary the mother of Jesus
- The sister of Mary the mother of Jesus
- Mary the wife of Clopas, who may have been the same person as the sister mentioned above
- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joses
- The mother of the disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee
- Salome, who may be the same person as the mother of James and John mentioned above

Obviously, Mary was a very popular name among the Jews at that time. Wikipedia has an article that discusses the Mary's in the New Testament and who they possibly were.<sup>702</sup> I wrote an Appendix on the [Women at the cross and tomb](#), which also goes into detail about the possible relationships of these faithful women.

In the timeline of the crucifixion day, the next thing that is mentioned is the 6<sup>th</sup> hour of the day, or noon. The gospel record is very brief about the three hours from noon to 3 PM. Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention that there was darkness over the whole land during these three hours. Ellen White had the following to say about this period:

With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour's despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. "There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed.

<sup>702</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Testament\\_people\\_named\\_Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament_people_named_Mary)

And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son. All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As the face of Cain expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence,—the image of God. But His accusers would not give heed to the signet of heaven. Through long hours of agony Christ had been gazed upon by the jeering multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p753-754](#)<sup>703</sup>

At 3 PM after six hours on the cross, Jesus cried out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Then after tasting the vinegar wine, He said “Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'.” I believe the death of Jesus on the cross was similar to the second or final death that will be experienced by those who are lost. It is actually fitting because that is the death the saved will be pardoned from experiencing from because they have accepted Jesus as their substitute. It was quite unusual for someone to die within six hours of being lifted up on the cross, so it is somewhat natural to speculate about the cause of Jesus’ death, which I will do in the next chapter.

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What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus allow Himself to die such a terrible death?
- Would a much less painful death have paid the price for sin?
- How do you interpret the statement by Jesus, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”?

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<sup>703</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p753-754.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=753>



## The burial of Jesus

[Matthew 27:51-54,57-61](#), [Mark 15:38-39,42-47](#), [Luke 23:45,47-48,50-56](#), [John 19:31-42](#)<sup>704</sup>

[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,<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened,

they feared greatly, saying,

"Truly this was the Son of God!" [Matthew 27:51-54 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:38](#) Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

<sup>39</sup> So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him,

saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said,

"Truly this Man was the Son of God!" [Mark 15:38-39 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:45](#) ... and the veil of the temple was torn in two.—

<sup>47</sup> So when the centurion saw what had happened,

he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

<sup>48</sup> And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. [Luke 23:45,47-48 NKJV](#)

[John 19:31](#) Therefore, because it was the Preparation [Day], that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away.<sup>32</sup> Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.<sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.<sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.<sup>35</sup> And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.<sup>36</sup> For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled,

"Not [one] of His bones shall be broken."

[Psalm 34:20](#) ... Not one of them is broken. [Psalm 34:20 NKJV](#)

<sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says,

"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

[Psalm 22:17](#) ... They look [and] stare at Me.<sup>16</sup> ... They pierced My hands and My feet; [Psalm 22:17,16 NKJV](#)

<sup>704</sup> Strong. p363. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/362/mode/2up>

[Mark 15:42](#) Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member,

who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

<sup>44</sup> Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time.

[John 19:38](#) ... and Pilate gave [him] permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. <sup>39</sup> And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

[John 19:40](#) Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

<sup>41</sup> Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

<sup>42</sup> So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation [Day], for the tomb was nearby.

[John 19:31-42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:57](#) Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph,

who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ...

[Matthew 27:58](#) ... Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> When Joseph had taken the body, ...

[Matthew 27:59](#) ... he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

<sup>60</sup> and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

[Luke 23:54](#) That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. — <sup>50</sup> Now behold, [there was] a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. <sup>51</sup> He had not consented to their decision and deed. [He was] from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[Mark 15:45](#) So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

[Mark 15:46](#) Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen.

And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

[John 19:38](#) After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews,

asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; ...

[Luke 23:53](#) Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen,

and laid it in a tomb [that was] hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.—

[Luke 23:55](#) And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.

[Matthew 27:61](#) And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. [Matthew 27:57-61 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:47](#) And Mary Magdalene and Mary [the mother] of Joses observed where He was laid. [Mark 15:42-47 NKJV](#)

<sup>56</sup> Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. [Luke 23:50-56 NKJV](#)

Immediately after Jesus said it is finished and died, there was an earthquake and the veil of the Temple was torn. I have always assumed this to be the curtain separating the Holy from the Most Holy place in the Temple. Only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Most Holy place and even he was only to go in there once a year. If this was the veil that was torn, then only the priest on duty, if he were in the Holy place at the time would have seen it happen. Regardless of who could see it, this was a symbolic act. To me this was God's way of saying that the sanctuary and its sacrificial services were no longer needed. They had served their purpose and now that the actual sacrifice of the Son of God was accomplished, the symbols and services that pointed forward to that event no longer had a purpose. From this point forward sinners should confess their sins directly to God in prayer, rather than over an animal sacrifice. In fact, even the system of priests was ended, because Jesus would be our mediator in heaven. Paul, speaking of Jesus after He had returned to heaven wrote:

[Hebrews 8:1](#) Now [this is] the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup> a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. <sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore [it is] necessary that this One also have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; <sup>5</sup> who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See [that] you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." <sup>6</sup> But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. [Hebrews 8:1-6 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 4:14](#) Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all [points] tempted as [we are, yet] without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. [Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV](#)

The sequence of the resurrected saints is a little puzzling to me? Were these saints raised when Jesus died or when He was resurrected on Sunday? Matthew who is the only one to mention it says:

[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](#)

Taken very literally, it sounds like tombs were opened by the earthquake. Certain saints came back to life, but didn't come out of their tombs until Jesus was resurrected. I think I will choose to interpret the sequence as follows. When Jesus died, there was an earthquake and tombs were opened. But when Jesus was resurrected, certain selected saints

were also resurrected and went into Jerusalem and spread the word that Jesus was alive. So, in the next chapter covering the resurrection, I will speculate more about these saints who were brought to life.

I don't know what if any the Roman centurion knew or heard of Jesus before this day, but at the end of the day, he was willing to outwardly declare his belief that Jesus was truly the Son of God. The Bible doesn't tell us anymore about this character, but it is likely that after the resurrection, he became a follower of Jesus. One legend in Christian history identifies a man named Longinus as the centurion who pierced the side of Jesus.<sup>705</sup> It is an interesting footnote, but the identity of this man is not the important thing. What is, is that a non-Jew, a career soldier, a man used to violence and death, recognized in the innocent suffering Jesus, the Son of God. A few more interesting questions that may arise are: since Romans believed in many gods, did this centurion believe Jesus to be one of these? Why did he say Son of God? Or did he understand Jesus to be the Son of the God of the Jews, or the Son of the God of all people?

Now I'm pretty sure it was not unheard of for criminals and rebels to be left hanging on the cross over the weekend. And it's not as if the priests could hide what they had done, after all Jesus was crucified in broad daylight and had been on the cross for the better part of the day. However, I suspect they were thinking of all the pilgrims who would be coming into the city for the Passover, and did not wish for them to be greeted by the sight of Jesus, who was very popular with the common people, hanging on the cross. They now requested Pilate to have the soldiers break the legs of the criminals, to speed up their death, so they could be removed from the crosses. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, as the upper body tired from hanging on the cross, the legs were needed to lift the body to be able to expand the lungs and take a breath. I suspect Pilate was also anxious to avoid any additional attention or questions about the events of that day, so he readily granted their request. I believe the centurion and the soldiers at the cross probably already knew that Jesus was dead, but when they received the command of Pilate, they broke the legs of the two criminals but saw no need to do the same to Jesus. Without knowing it they played their part in the fulfillment of prophecy, by not breaking His bones but instead by piercing His side, to prove or make sure that He was already dead.

In addition to the next day being the Sabbath, John adds that it was a high day. I don't know exactly what he meant, because he didn't elaborate, but some of the possible interpretations are:

- It was one of the annual or festival Sabbaths, and not necessarily a weekly Sabbath day.<sup>706</sup>
- According to Matthew Henry, it was a weekly Sabbath that occurred during one of the annual festival days.<sup>707</sup>
- Seventh-Day Adventists among others believe it meant it was a weekly Sabbath that coincided with one of their festival Sabbaths.<sup>708</sup> Some have attempted to use this correlation to narrow down the year(s) that Jesus was crucified, assuming the Jewish lunar calendar back then was consistent with what we can extrapolate.

I believe the crucifixion took place at the start of Passover in the spring of 31 A.D., which fulfilled another segment of the 70-week prophecy from [Daniel 9:24-27](#). You can read the details of my conclusions in [Appendix B – Prophetic time & Daniel's 70 week prophecy](#).

It is a pretty widely held belief that Nicodemus and Joseph were both members of this council mentioned in [Mark 15:43](#) and [Luke 23:50](#). This is the first we hear of Joseph of Arimathea, but this is the same Nicodemus who visited Jesus, at night, earlier in His ministry [[John 3](#)]. [John 3:1](#) identifies him as a Pharisee and calls him a ruler of the Jews, and [John 7:48-50](#) reconfirms this identity. This ruling council which today we call the Sanhedrin, was as much political as it was

<sup>705</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus>

<sup>706</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High\\_Sabbaths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Sabbaths)

<sup>707</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_019.cfm?a=1016031](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_019.cfm?a=1016031)

<sup>708</sup> <http://sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-19.htm>

religious, and contained representatives from different parties, the two most prominent being the Pharisees and the Sadducees. There was thought to be one national council, and also regional and local councils, not unlike the federal/state/county/city government structure in the United States. This is discussed in greater detail with references in my chapter titled [Nicodemus](#) where I covered [John 3](#). Ellen White suggested the following about these two men, possibly based on [John 7:50-51](#).

Neither Joseph nor Nicodemus had openly accepted the Saviour while He was living. They knew that such a step would exclude them from the Sanhedrin, and they hoped to protect Him by their influence in its councils. For a time they had seemed to succeed; but the wily priests, seeing their favor to Christ, had thwarted their plans. In their absence Jesus had been condemned and delivered to be crucified. Now that He was dead, they no longer concealed their attachment to Him. While the disciples feared to show themselves openly as His followers, Joseph and Nicodemus came boldly to their aid. The help of these rich and honored men was greatly needed at this time. They could do for their dead Master what it was impossible for the poor disciples to do; and their wealth and influence protected them, in a great measure, from the malice of the priests and rulers. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p773-774](#)<sup>709</sup>

Nicodemus, when he saw Jesus lifted up on the cross, remembered His words spoken by night in the Mount of Olives: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15. On that Sabbath, when Christ lay in the grave, Nicodemus had opportunity for reflection. A clearer light now illuminated his mind, and the words which Jesus had spoken to him were no longer mysterious. He felt that he had lost much by not connecting himself with the Saviour during His life. Now he recalled the events of Calvary. The prayer of Christ for His murderers and His answer to the petition of the dying thief spoke to the heart of the learned councilor. Again he looked upon the Saviour in His agony; again he heard that last cry, "It is finished," spoken like the words of a conqueror. Again he beheld the reeling earth, the darkened heavens, the rent veil, the shivered rocks, and his faith was forever established. The very event that destroyed the hopes of the disciples convinced Joseph and Nicodemus of the divinity of Jesus. Their fears were overcome by the courage of a firm and unwavering faith. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p775-776](#)<sup>710</sup>

Being on the council gave Joseph and Nicodemus access to Pilate, and when they made their request of him, he was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. He called for his centurion and got a full account of the events of the crucifixion. Whether the centurion added any other information about his conclusions about the nature of Jesus, we are not told. Believing Jesus was innocent, Pilate possibly felt some regret or sympathy and readily granted their request.

Thus, even as Jesus rested on the Sabbath after He completed His work of creating the world, he now rested in the tomb on the Sabbath after completing His work of redemption.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think the veil in the temple was torn?
- What do you think the centurion meant when he called Jesus the Son of God?

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<sup>709</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p773-774.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=773>

<sup>710</sup> White. p775-776. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=775>

- Do you think the priests were heartless in asking for legs to be broken rather than just running them all through with spears? Or do you think there was a specific reason they requested this method of accelerating death?

## Resurrection and appearance to the women

[Matthew 27:62-28:15](#), [Mark 16:1-11](#), [Luke 24:1-11](#), [John 20:1-18](#)<sup>711</sup>

[Matthew 27:62](#) On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate,<sup>63</sup> saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.'<sup>64</sup> "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.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."<sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make [it] as secure as you know how."<sup>66</sup> So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. [Matthew 27:62-66 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:1](#) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.—

[Matthew 28:2](#) And behold, [Mark 16:9](#) Now when [He] rose early on the first [day] of the week, ... — there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.<sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.—

<a href="#">Mark 16:2</a> Very early in the morning,	<a href="#">Matthew 28:1</a> Now after the Sabbath,	<a href="#">Luke 24:1</a> Now	<a href="#">John 20:1</a> Now
on the first [day] of the week,	as the first [day] of the week began to dawn,	on the first [day] of the week,	on the first [day] of the week
they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.	Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.—	very early in the morning, they, and certain [other women] with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.	Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, ...

<a href="#">Mark 16:3</a> And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away--for it was very large.	<a href="#">Luke 24:2</a> But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.	<a href="#">John 20:1</a> ... while it was still dark, and saw [that] the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
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The following "she" is Mary Magdalene.

[John 20:2](#) Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." [John 20:2 NKJV](#)

<sup>711</sup> Strong. p367. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/366/mode/2up>

The following "they" are the other women.

<p>Luke 24:3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. <sup>5</sup> Then, as they were afraid and bowed [their] faces to the earth, they said to them,</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 28:5</a> But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.</p>	<p>Mark 16:5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.</p>
<p>"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"</p> <p><sup>6</sup> "He is not here, but is risen!</p>	<p>Mark 16:6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.</p>	<p>Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."</p>
<p>Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words.</p>	<p>Mark 16:8 So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.</p>	<p>Mark 16:9 "But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."</p>

Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words.

<p><a href="#">Matthew 28:7</a> "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."</p>	<p>Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."</p>
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<p>Matthew 28:8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy,</p>	<p>Mark 16:8 So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.</p>
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and ran to bring His disciples word. <sup>9</sup> And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go [and] tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

[Luke 24:9](#) Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> It was ... Joanna, Mary [the mother] of James, and the other [women] with them, who told these things to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

[Matthew 28:11](#) Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. <sup>12</sup> When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup> saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him [away] while we slept.' " <sup>14</sup> "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. [Matthew 28:1-15 NKJV](#)

It was Mary Magdalene who earlier ran from the tomb that is now speaking to "them" who are the disciples.

John 20:2 ... and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." <sup>3</sup> Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying [there]; yet he did not go in.

<sup>John 20:6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying [there],  
<sup>7</sup> and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

<sup>Luke 24:12</sup> Nevertheless, Peter got up and ran to the tomb; and when he stooped and looked in, he saw the linen wrappings only;

and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

<sup>John 20:11</sup> 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."

<sup>14</sup> Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing [there], and did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

<sup>Mark 16:9</sup> ... He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and [to] My God and your God.' "

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and [that] He had spoken these things to her.

<sup>Mark 16:10</sup> She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.

<sup>Luke 24:10</sup> ... Mary Magdalene ... [Luke 24:1-11 NKJV](#)

[John 20:1-18 NKJV](#)

<sup>Mark 16:11</sup> And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. [Mark 16:1-11 NKJV](#)

The earth quaked at the moment Jesus died and again the moment He came back to life. The Bible doesn't tell us how many guards were there to witness the actual event but they were the only people privileged to see it with their own eyes. Something that I wondered was, did the priests actually believe it was over when they crucified Jesus on the cross? Did they really believe they could keep someone in the grave who could raise the dead, heal any kind of sickness, control the weather and create matter (multiplying bread and fish)? I think they probably hoped that Jesus would remain dead and realized there was nothing they could do to stop Him from coming to life, but at least they could make sure the disciples didn't steal the body and then tell people He was alive. In the end, their action to prevent the fake news of the resurrection of Jesus, provided eyewitnesses to the event. Yes, the eyewitness account was corrupted by money but I believe the guards told some people the truth before they reached the priests, and I think in private, they probably told others the truth as well. After all which story made them look more incompetent? I wonder how many of those guards if any chose to become followers of Jesus after that experience.



Even though the Bible verses covering this were in the previous chapter, I wanted to pick up the topic again of the resurrected saints. Recall what Matthew wrote:

[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](#)

Who were these people and what became of them? Since the Bible doesn't directly tell us anymore than we have just read, we can only speculate. It is very possible that some of the tombs that were maintained by the Pharisees, the ones for known martyrs from their past history, were broken open. Recall what Jesus said to them about the tombs of the prophets that had been killed in the days of their fathers.

[Matthew 23:29](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> "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 23:29-30 NKJV](#)

When Jesus cried out with a loud voice "It is finished," and died, He finished His work of providing a substitute death to pay the price for our sin.

[Romans 6:23](#) For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23 NKJV](#)

In effect He rescued humanity from the clutches of death. What better way to symbolize this defeat of death than to free some of its prisoners? In the rituals and ceremonies given to the Israelites, there is a commonly used term that comes to mind in this case. In fact, Paul directly associated the resurrection of Jesus with it.

[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](#)

Ten times Jesus referred to the salvation of humanity, or the resurrection at the end of the age as a harvest. In the Old Testament the firstfruits were the first portion of the harvest which were to be ceremonially presented to the Lord as an offering. Paul clearly identified the resurrected Jesus as the firstfruit of those who were asleep. I think it is fitting that He would have additional firstfruits of His labor to present to God when He ascended to heaven. Ellen white had the following to say about this:

When Jesus, as he hung upon the cross, cried out, It is finished, the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were shaken open; for when Jesus arose from the dead, and conquered death and the grave; when he walked forth from his prison house a triumphant conqueror; while the earth was reeling and shaking, and the excellent glory of heaven clustered around the sacred spot, obedient to his call, many of the righteous dead came forth as witnesses that he had risen. Those favored, resurrected saints came forth glorified. They were a few chosen and holy ones who had lived in every age from creation, even down to the days of Christ. And while the chief priests and Pharisees were seeking to cover up the resurrection of Christ, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare his glory.

Those who were resurrected were of different stature and form. I was informed that the inhabitants of earth had been degenerating, losing their strength and comeliness. Satan has the power of disease and death, and in every age the curse has been more visible, and the power of Satan more plainly seen. Some of those raised were more noble in appearance and form than others. I was informed that those who lived in the days of Noah and

Abraham were more like the angels in form, in comeliness and strength. But every generation has been growing weaker, and more subject to disease, and their lives of shorter duration. Satan has been learning how to annoy men, and to enfeeble the race.

Those holy ones who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared unto many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead, and added, We be risen with him. They bore testimony that it was by his mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves. Notwithstanding the lying reports circulated, the matter could not be concealed by Satan, his angels, or the chief priests; for this holy company, brought forth from their graves, spread the wonderful, joyful news; also Jesus showed himself unto his sorrowing, heart-broken disciples, dispelling their fears, and causing them gladness and joy. [Spiritual Gifts, Volume 1. White. p69-70](#)<sup>712</sup>

Getting back to the women who were at the cross and at the tomb when Jesus was buried, I think Jesus honored the love and devotion of these women by appearing to them first. I made a table and discussed them in [Appendix H- Women at the cross and the tomb](#). I had generally thought that among the women, Jesus had only appeared to Mary Magdalene, before ascending to heaven. But upon reading Strong's arrangement, I realize that from [Matthew 28:9-10](#), it says Jesus met and greeted "them," which if taken literally should not be referring to Mary Magdalene alone. Since a single Gospel account doesn't mention both meetings, I suppose they could also be interpreted and explained as a single encounter. Strong proposed the following timeline of events resurrection morning.<sup>713</sup>

Time (AM)	Occurrence	Matthew 28	Mark 16	Luke 24	John 20
4:00	Earthquake and Resurrection	2-4	9		
4:15	The women set out for the sepulcher	1	2-3	1	1
4:30	They arrive, Mary Magdalene returns		4	2	2
4:35	Their interview with two angels	5-7	5-7	3-8	
4:45	Mary Magdalene reaches Peter and John's house				2
4:45	The other women flee from the sepulcher	8	8	9	
4:50	Peter, John and Mary Magdalene set out for it			12	3
4:50	The other women meet Jesus	9-10			
4:55	The soldiers report their disaster	11-15			
4:57	John arrives at the sepulcher			12	4-5
5:00	Peter arrives there, their observation				6-9
5:05	They both return home			12	10
5:05	Mary Magdalene arrives at the sepulcher				11
5:05	The other women report their interview with Christ, to the other Apostles			9-11	
5:07	Mary Magdalene sees the two angels				12-13
5:10	She meets with Christ		9		14-17
5:30	She reports to the disciples		10-11	11	18

<sup>712</sup> White, Ellen. *Spiritual Gifts, Volume 1*. 1858, p69-70.

<http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=1SG&lang=en&pagenumber=69>

<sup>713</sup> Strong. p370. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/370/mode/2up>

I suppose something that deserves some discussion before we end this chapter is the three days in the tomb. Here are some of the statements Jesus made regarding this time span. There were several ways this three-day statement was made. 1) Three days and three nights. 2) After three days. 3) Three days later. 4) In three days.

[Matthew 12:40](#) "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. [Matthew 12:40 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, and after three days rise again. [Mark 8:31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:31](#) For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." [Mark 9:31 NKJV](#)

[John 2:19](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [John 2:19 NKJV](#)

The priests understood Jesus to mean "After three days."

[Matthew 27:63](#) saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' [Matthew 27:63 NKJV](#)

According to common belief, Jesus wasn't in the tomb for three nights, nor was He even there for three full days. He was there for the last portion of Friday, all of Saturday, and the first part of Sunday. Taken literally, these different statements of Jesus cannot all be reconciled. One way of reconciling this is understanding that the Jews would count any part of a day as a full day when doing this type of counting. There are many Bible verses to support this idea as well including the following statement of Jesus.

[Luke 13:32](#) And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third [day] I shall be perfected.'<sup>33</sup> "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the [day] following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. [Luke 13:32-33 NKJV](#)

Thus, the last portion of Friday counted as one day, all of Saturday counted as the second day, and any part of Sunday after sunset on Saturday counted as the third day. Another very simple familiar way to express it is "the day after tomorrow."<sup>714</sup> I believe the three days and three nights was a figure of speech. Many who take the three full days and nights literally explain this by saying that Thursday was a ceremonial Sabbath, and that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday. So, you get Wednesday, Thursday, Friday nights and Jesus was resurrected after sunset on Saturday.<sup>715 716</sup> Finally, there was a third interesting explanation I came across from Amazing Facts. Doug Batchelor said one could interpret the heart of the earth in a way that would begin the three days and three nights with the suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane on Thursday.

So the phrase "in the heart of the earth" can easily be translated as "in the midst of the world"—or in the grip of this lost planet—that Jesus came to save!<sup>717</sup>

<sup>714</sup> <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/81/t/three-days-and-three-nights>

<sup>715</sup> Fredrick, William. *Infallible Proof by Three Immutable Witnesses proving Wednesday Crucifixion*. Clyde, OH. 1916.

[https://books.google.com/books?id=WBQAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=WBQAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>716</sup> Nuesch, John. *Exposition of Heavenly Truths*. 1902, p212. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iPFMAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA212>

<sup>717</sup> <https://www.amazingfacts.org/news-and-features/news/item/id/10899/t/three-days-and-three-nights>

This provides yet another way to harmonize the three-day statements.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think these saints who were resurrected were all over the world, or just in Jerusalem?
- Do you think there was one or two separate meetings with Jesus before He went up to heaven?
- How long do you believe Jesus was in the tomb?

## The walk to Emmaus

[Luke 24:13-49](#), [Mark 16:12-18](#), [John 20:19-22](#), [Luke 10:19](#)<sup>718</sup>

[Luke 24:13](#) Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And they talked together of all these things which had happened. <sup>15</sup> So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. [Mark 16:12](#) After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.

<sup>17</sup> And He said to them, "What kind of conversation [is] this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

<sup>18</sup> Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

<sup>19</sup> And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. <sup>23</sup> "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. <sup>24</sup> "And certain of those [who were] with us went to the tomb and found [it] just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

<sup>25</sup> Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

<sup>26</sup> "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

<sup>28</sup> Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

<sup>29</sup> But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

<sup>32</sup> And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

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<sup>718</sup> Strong. p376. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/376/mode/2up>

Luke 24:33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those [who were] with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> And they told about the things [that had happened] on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Mark 16:13 And they went ...

[1 Corinthians 15:5](#) and that He appeared to Cephas ...

Mark 16:13 ... and told [it] to the rest, [but] they did not believe them either.

Luke 24:36 Now as they said these things,

[John 20:19](#) Then, the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews,

Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them,

Mark 16:14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; ...

Jesus came and stood in the midst,

1 Corinthians 15:5 ... then by the twelve. [1 Corinthians 15:5 NKJV](#)

and said to them, "Peace to you." <sup>37</sup> But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

and said to them, "Peace [be] with you."

Luke 24:38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

Mark 16:14 ... and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Luke 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." <sup>40</sup> When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. <sup>41</sup> But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" <sup>42</sup> So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. <sup>43</sup> And He took [it] and ate in their presence.

[John 20:20](#) When He had said this, He showed them [His] hands and His side.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Luke 24:44 Then He said to them, "These [are] the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and [the] Prophets and [the] Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

<sup>46</sup> 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 the third day, <sup>47</sup> "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> "And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." [Luke 24:13-49 NKJV](#)

[John 20:21](#) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." [Mark 16:12-18 NKJV](#)

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on [them], and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the [sins] of any, they are retained." [John 20:19-23 NKJV](#)

The geographical location of this town of Emmaus is not known, and there is not even any commemorative site to visit.<sup>719</sup> Since Jesus and these disciples were talking as they were walking, I would estimate they were probably travelling at a leisurely pace, which could have taken roughly three to four hours for the 7-mile journey. Since Jesus was crucified and resurrected at Passover time, we can know that sunset was approximately 7 PM. I would guess the disciples had left around 3 PM to give them plenty of time to arrive home before dark, but in their concentrated attention to the words of Jesus, they may have taken closer to four hours. I wondered, why were these two disciples who were not among the twelve apostles, privileged to get the first extended face to face visit from Jesus? Only one of them was named, a man named Cleopas. Many have speculated that he could be the same person John called Clopas who would be the uncle of Jesus through marriage to His mother's sister.

[John 19:25](#) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. [John 19:25 NKJV](#)

I was suddenly struck with the thought that maybe the second, the unnamed person was the wife or Cleopas. After all, if they were both in Jerusalem for the Passover, what would be more natural than for them to be travelling back home together?

In His wisdom, Jesus realized that the two would be too excited to pay attention to the conversation if they had known who He was, so He hid His identity. In that 3-4 hour Bible study, Jesus explained to them how all their scriptures, our Old Testament, pointed forward to Him. Oh, how I would love to read a transcript of that conversation.

In their excitement on finally discovering who their traveling companion was, these two disciples now retraced their steps at night, which was probably not the safest thing to do. When they reached the upper room where the twelve had been hanging out, I think they were received with a combination of belief and doubt. Simon Peter had seen and spoken to Jesus, but I think the others may have wondered why Jesus hadn't appeared to them yet. Suddenly, Jesus just appeared among them, frightening them. Jesus gently reproved them for their unwillingness to believe the testimony of those who had seen Him. Finally, after seeing the scars in his hands and feet and side, and seeing Him eat something, they finally were reassured that it really was Jesus in the flesh.

Next, I believe Jesus gave the same Bible study to the entire group that he had given to the two on the road to Emmaus. It was critical for their commission to be able to know and explain from the scriptures that Jesus was indeed the Messiah

<sup>719</sup> <http://www.seetheholyland.net/emmaus/>

that had been promised to humanity, and that the Jews had anticipated their entire history. I love what it says in Luke 24:45.

[Luke 24:45](#) And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. [Luke 24:45 NKJV](#)

This is what most Bible scholars would hopefully wish for, to actually understand what God meant, by the words He inspired. This is what we should ask for each time we sit down to study the Bible. I think we have all experienced varying degrees of clarity or obscurity when studying the Bible. The Apostle Paul described it as seeing in a mirror dimly as opposed to face to face.

Finally, I have to comment on the verses from John which seem to justify the practice the Catholic Church has of receiving confession and giving absolution. Is this what Jesus intended? Is there anywhere else in the Bible that seems to give human beings the authority to receive confession and give absolution for sin? There are many places in the Bible which speak of God granting pardon or forgiveness for sin. There was also the exchange between the Jewish scribes and Jesus when they thought or said to each other, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

[Mark 2:1](#) And again He entered Capernaum after [some] days, and it was heard that He was in the house.

<sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive [them], not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four [men]. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." <sup>6</sup> And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this [Man] speak blasphemies like this? **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**"

<sup>8</sup> But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?" <sup>9</sup> "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '[Your] sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?'" <sup>10</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup> "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." <sup>12</sup> Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw [anything] like this!" [Mark 2:1-12 NKJV](#)

Notice that Jesus didn't dispute the thought that only God can forgive sin, but He demonstrated that He had the power to forgive because He was God, by healing the man as well. That doesn't mean that everyone who can heal, even miraculously is God, because there were many people in Bible stories who healed. I don't think that there is really any debate that forgiveness for sin comes from God. I think the debate is whether God has given any person on earth the right to forgive on His behalf. The Catholic Church claims that God gave to the Apostles and consequently to the Catholic priesthood, the commission to stand and act in His place on earth.<sup>720 721 722</sup> I did a word search in the Bible for the words confess/confession and there were three hits in the NKJV New Testament that had to do with sins.

[James 5:16](#) **Confess** [your] trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. [James 5:16 NKJV](#)

<sup>720</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm)

<sup>721</sup> <http://www.scripturecatholic.com/sacrament-confession-forgiveness-sins/>

<sup>722</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-forgiveness-of-sins>

The one in James is also quoted by the Catholic Church as evidence that we should confess to a Priest. I would argue that it doesn't say to confess your sins to the Apostles or the church, but to each other. Nor does it say that we absolve each other, but that we pray for each other.

[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](#)

[Hebrews 4:14](#) Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] **confession**.<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all [points] tempted as [we are, yet] without sin.<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. [Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV](#)

John makes it clear that it is God who forgives us and cleanses us, and Paul that we bring our confession with confidence to our high priest in heaven. I did not find any place in the New Testament where the Apostles taught that sins must be confessed to them in order for people to receive forgiveness.

So, if Jesus' statement didn't apply to forgiveness, then what did He mean by it. Wayne Jackson states a Biblical idiom whereby one is said to actually do what he is merely authorized to declare. For example, Pharaoh's butler said regarding Joseph:

[Genesis 41:13](#) "And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him." [Genesis 41:13 NKJV](#)

Joseph did not actually restore the butler to his office, nor did he personally hang the baker. He merely announced, by prophetic insight, what the fate of these men would be. In other words, the apostles (and others since that time) were only authorized to declare forgiveness consistent with what the Lord had already determined.<sup>723</sup>

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez summarized his explanation of this verse in the following way:

In other words, the authority bestowed on the church by Christ—to forgive or not to forgive—is the authority to preach the gospel and to decide who can or cannot be baptized. It is a tremendous responsibility that should not be taken lightly.<sup>724</sup>

Numerous others interpret the verse to apply to discipline of church members which we do have evidence of in the New Testament. For example, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Apostles, Peter said they were lying to the Holy Spirit and they died.

[Acts 5:1](#) But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.<sup>2</sup> And he kept back [part] of the proceeds, his wife also being aware [of it], and brought a certain part and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.<sup>3</sup> But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back [part] of the price of the land for yourself?<sup>4</sup> "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

<sup>723</sup> <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/763-can-man-forgive-sins>

<sup>724</sup> <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-nt-texts/john-2023>



<sup>5</sup> Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. <sup>6</sup> And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried [him] out, and buried [him]. [Acts 5:1-6 NKJV](#)

Paul also spoke of church discipline in [1 Corinthians 5](#), [Galatians 6:1](#), [2 Thessalonians 3:6-15](#), [1 Timothy 5:19-20](#), [Titus 3:9-11](#). (texts compiled by Jonathan Leeman<sup>725</sup>) This is not to say that sinners are not welcome in church, after all Jesus embraced and welcomed them into His presence. I think it means that there comes a time when a person who refuses to repent or acknowledging their wrong and is doing harm to other members and to the reputation of God, that they must be disowned.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus had anything particular in mind by appearing to the women and other people before appearing to the bulk of the twelve?
- Why doesn't God help everyone to see clearly when they pray for understanding of the Scriptures?
- What do you think the verse about forgiving and retaining sins refers to?

## Jesus appears to more than 500 people over forty days before ascending to heaven

[John 20:24-21:25](#), [Matthew 28:16-20](#), [Mark 16:19-20](#), [Luke 24:50-53](#), [Acts 1:1-12](#), [1 Corinthians 15:6-7](#)<sup>726</sup>

[John 20:24](#) Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand [here], and put [it] into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed [are] those who have not seen and [yet] have believed." [John 20:24-29 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 28:16](#) Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, ...

[John 21:1](#) After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed [Himself]: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the [sons] of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."

<sup>725</sup> <https://www.9marks.org/article/church-discipline-primer/>

<sup>726</sup> String. p381. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/380/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find [some]." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on [his] outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. <sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. <sup>9</sup> Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

<sup>11</sup> Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come [and] eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"--knowing that it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

<sup>14</sup> This [is] now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

<sup>15</sup> So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

<sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

<sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. <sup>18</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." <sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

<sup>20</sup> Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" <sup>21</sup> Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what [about] this man?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you? You follow Me." <sup>23</sup> Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you?"

[1 Corinthians 15:6](#) After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, ...

[Matthew 28:16](#) ... to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen. [Matthew 28:16-20 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:7](#) After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. [1 Corinthians 15:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Acts 1:3](#) to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. — <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, —

<sup>4</sup> And being assembled together with [them], He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," [He said], "you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup> "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." <sup>6</sup> Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

[Acts 1:9](#) Now when He had spoken these things, ...

[Mark 16:19](#) So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, ...

[Luke 24:50](#) And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

<a href="#">Acts 1:9</a> ... while they watched, He was	<a href="#">Mark 16:19</a> ... He was received up into
taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.	heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

[Acts 1:10](#) And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup> who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This [same] Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

[Acts 1:12](#) Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. [Acts 1:2-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:52](#) And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

[Luke 24:53](#) and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen. [Luke 24:50-53 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:20](#) And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with [them] and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. [Mark 16:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Acts 1:1](#) The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [Acts 1:1 NKJV](#)

[John 21:24](#) This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. <sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. [John 21:1-25 NKJV](#)

[John 20:30](#) And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. [John 20:30-31 NKJV](#)

Thomas' claim of unbelief I think was more about his hurt feelings because Jesus had not appeared to him. It's hard to imagine that he could really doubt the testimony of the other ten disciples that much. Jesus gently rebuked him just like he had the other disciples for not believing the testimony of others. I believe Jesus really wanted to emphasize the point of needing to believe without seeing because of all the people who would need to do so after He returned to heaven.

At the start of His ministry, Jesus performed a fishing miracle when He first started calling disciples to follow. He now repeats this miracle, I believe reaffirming their calling and His commitment to support them. I think they were still uncertain of what they would be doing and whether Jesus would remain with them, in fact just before He ascended to

heaven, they asked if the kingdom would now be restored to Israel. Shortly after the miracle of the fish, and the breakfast Jesus had prepared for the disciples, He reaffirmed Peter's standing among the disciples. I'm sure there were questions among the others after they heard of his denials. Jesus now asked three times, once for each denial, if Peter loved Him. Each time Peter answered yes, Jesus affirmed his calling to lead and mentor the converts to the faith. Jesus concluded this conversation by letting Peter know how he would die for his faith.

We don't know exactly how many times Jesus appeared and to how many people but these are the encounters that we know about.

- He appeared to Mary Magdalene and probably the other faithful women first on Sunday morning
- He appeared to Peter and the two disciples on the walk to Emmaus in two separate encounters Sunday
- He appeared to ten disciples not including Thomas, the two from Emmaus, and anyone else who happened to be in the upper room on Sunday night
- Eight days after appearing to the group in the upper room, He appeared there again, this time with Thomas present
- He appeared to the eleven or at least to the fishermen at the sea where He performed a miracle for them
- He had a teaching session with more than 500 in attendance
- According to Paul, He appeared to James. I believe Paul was referring to the brother of Jesus and not the Apostle James

The famous last words from Jesus in Matthew have been referred to as the great commission. It contains a command and a promise which was made to not only the Apostles but to all followers till the end of the age.

[Matthew 28:19](#) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen. [Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV](#)

It must have been difficult for Jesus to give this commission and leave knowing how horribly wrong it would go in the dark ages.

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What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus only appeared to people here and there rather than living with them as He did before He died?
- Do you think the disciples really understood their commission when Jesus ascended?
- Do you believe the world is better off with flawed representatives for God, than none at all?

# 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>727</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>728</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>727</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g602/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>728</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g602/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>729 730</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>731</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>732 733 734</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>735</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>729</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>730</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>731</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Revelation#Canonical\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation#Canonical_history)

<sup>732</sup> Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the Church*. Hartford, F. J. Huntington, 1835, p32.

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

<sup>733</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patmos>

<sup>734</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Patmos/@35.1087288,5.2220815,5z>

<sup>735</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>736</sup> This literary style is well known to occur over and over in the Bible.<sup>737</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>738</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

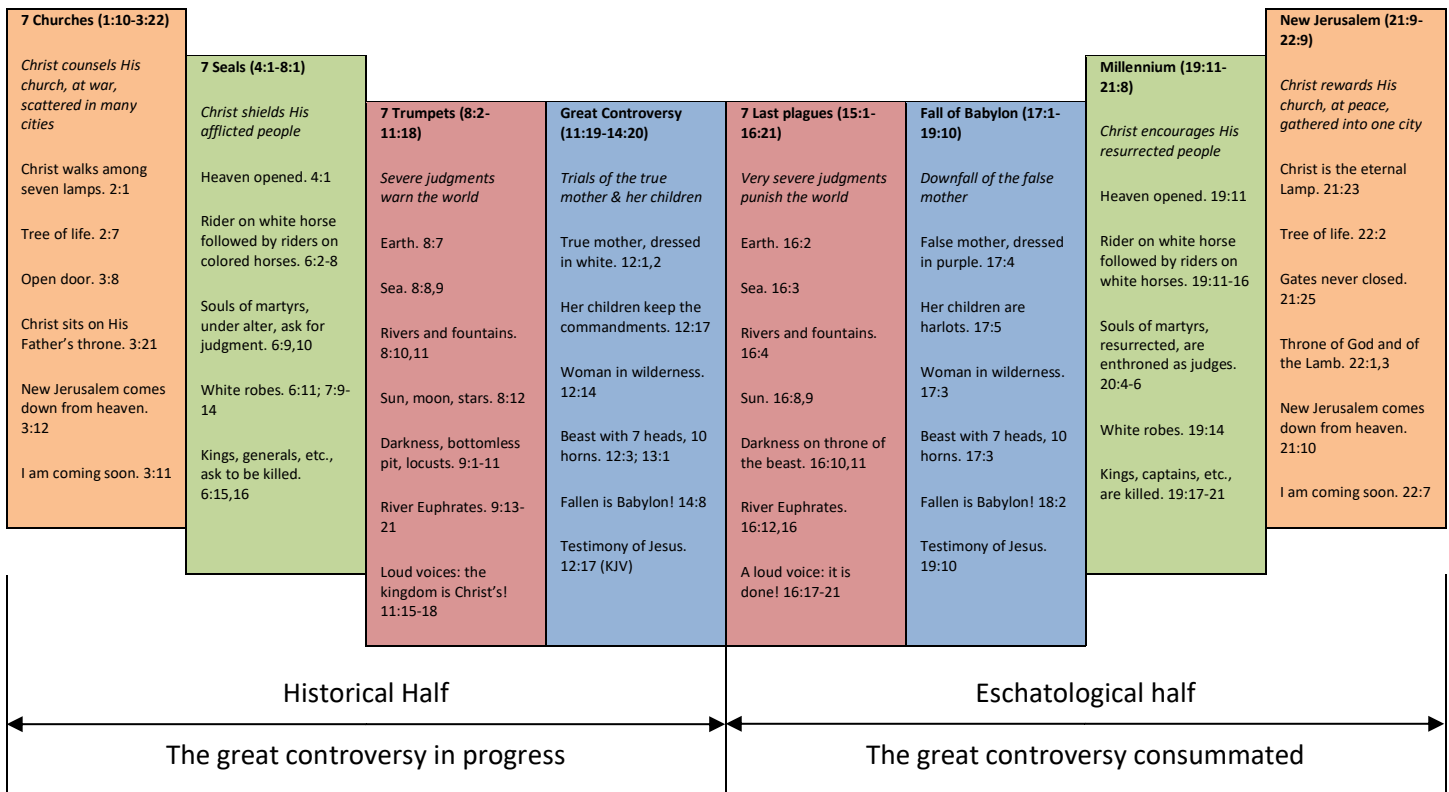
<sup>736</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic\\_structure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic_structure)

<sup>737</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic\\_structure#Use\\_in\\_Hebrew\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastic_structure#Use_in_Hebrew_Bible)

<sup>738</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](#)

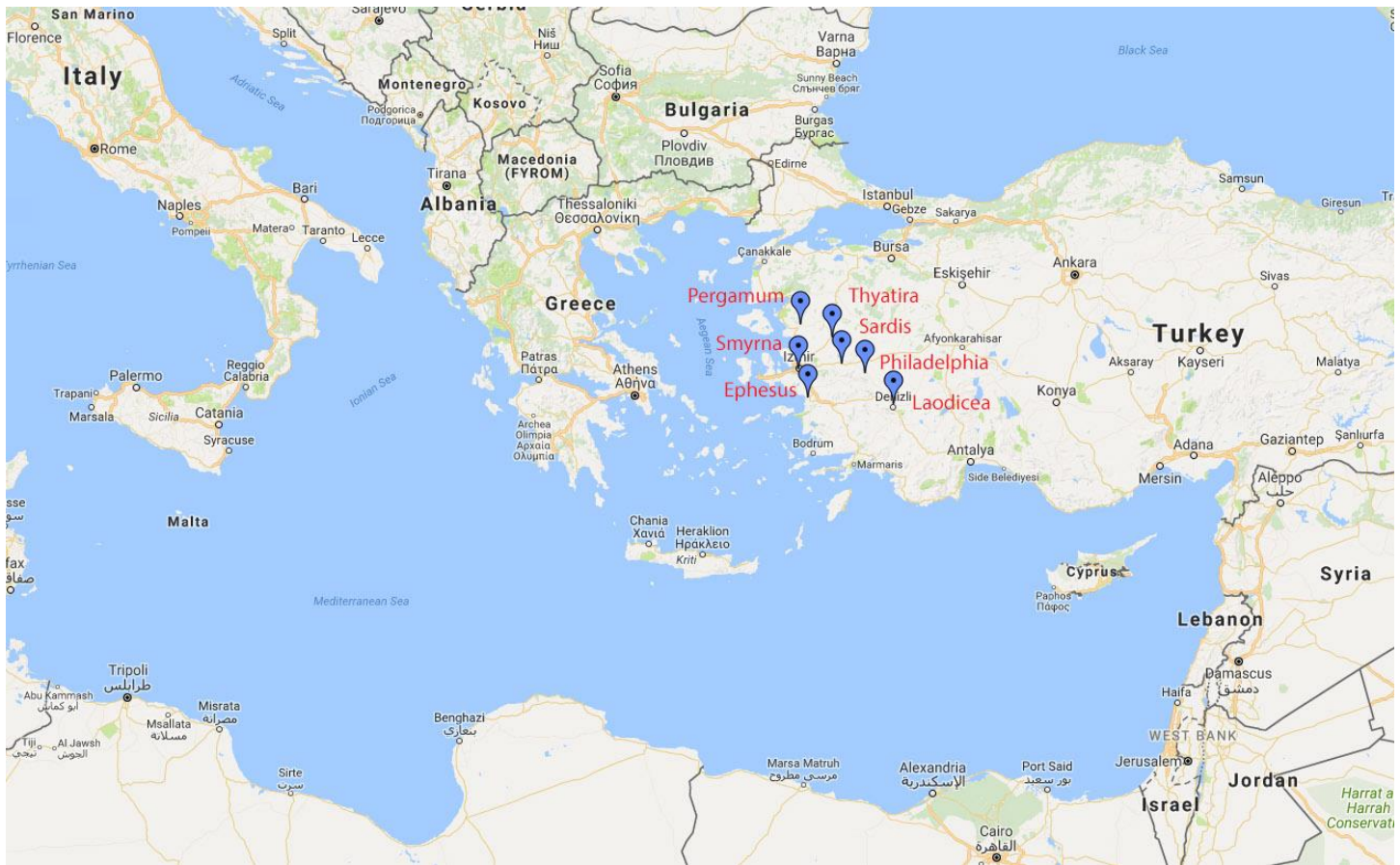
[Verse 8, 17, 18](#) identifies the source of the vision as:

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>739 740 741</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.

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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>742</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>743</sup> Later, the Apostle

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<sup>742</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>

<sup>743</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>744 745 746 747</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>744</sup> Young. p309. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA309>

<sup>745</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>746</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>747</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>748 749</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>750</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>751</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>752 753 754</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>755 756 757 758</sup>

<sup>748</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna>

<sup>749</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>750</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>751</sup> Goodrich. p35. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA35>

<sup>752</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna#Roman\\_and\\_Byzantine\\_period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smyrna#Roman_and_Byzantine_period)

<sup>753</sup> Goodrich. p32. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>754</sup> Briscoe. p287. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA287>

<sup>755</sup> [http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Revelation\\_seven-churches\\_love\\_idolatry](http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Revelation_seven-churches_love_idolatry)

<sup>756</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/related-topics/representative-of-seven-stages-of-church-history.html>

<sup>757</sup> <http://cgi.org/the-seven-churches-of-the-apocalypse/>

<sup>758</sup> <http://christianitybeliefs.org/revelation-timeline-decoded/the-seven-churches-of-revelation-2-and-3/>



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>759 760 761</sup> One thing that can clearly be 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>762 763</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>764 765</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>766</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>767</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>768</sup>

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<sup>759</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>760</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>761</sup> Goodrich. p50. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA50>

<sup>762</sup> Goodrich. p51. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA51>

<sup>763</sup> Goodrich. p56. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA56>

<sup>764</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologeticus>

<sup>765</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologeticus#Date>

<sup>766</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>767</sup> Goodrich. p34. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA34>

<sup>768</sup> Goodrich. p38-43. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA38>

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>769</sup>

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>770</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>771 772 773</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>774</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>775 776</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

<sup>769</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev\\_002.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev_002.cfm)

<sup>770</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Rev/Message-Smyrna>

<sup>771</sup> Goodrich. p36. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA36>

<sup>772</sup> Gibbon. p65. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA65>

<sup>773</sup> Gibbon. p80. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA80>

<sup>774</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>775</sup> Goodrich. p44. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA44>

<sup>776</sup> Gibbon. p70. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA70>

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>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>777 778</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>779</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>780</sup> Though the conversion of Constantine must have been slow if it was a true conversion at all, as it

<sup>777</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pergamon>

<sup>778</sup> *New International Encyclopædia – Volume 18*. New York, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1917, p334.

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

<sup>779</sup> World Digital Library. <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/11739/>

<sup>780</sup> Goodrich. p50. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA50>

was not until his final illness that he was baptized,<sup>781</sup> it was during this era, that persecution stopped<sup>782</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 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>783 784</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>785 786 787 788 789 790</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>791</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>792</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

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<sup>781</sup> Gibbon. p249. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA249>

<sup>782</sup> Gibbon. p252. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA252>

<sup>783</sup> Goodrich. p51. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA51>

<sup>784</sup> Gibbon. p257. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA257>

<sup>785</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Council\\_of\\_Nicaea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea)

<sup>786</sup> Goodrich. p54. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA54>

<sup>787</sup> Gibbon. p317. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA317>

<sup>788</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Council-of-Nicaea-Christianity-325>

<sup>789</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11044a.htm>

<sup>790</sup> <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum01.htm>

<sup>791</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipas\\_of\\_Pergamum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipas_of_Pergamum)

<sup>792</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>]

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 through the use of Temple prostitutes. 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>793</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>794</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>795</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>796</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>797</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 discernor 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.

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<sup>793</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>794</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>795</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius>

<sup>796</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>797</sup> Gibbon. p317. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9UsOAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA317>

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 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>798</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

<sup>798</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>]]

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](#)

## 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>799</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

<sup>799</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thyatira>

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.

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>800</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

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<sup>800</sup> Oman, Charles. *The Dark Ages 476-918*, London, Rivingtons, 1901, p200-2031.  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=3kEQAAAAAJ&pg=PA200>



are expressed in the “Dictates,” drawn up by Hildebrand himself of 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 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>801</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>802</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>803</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

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<sup>801</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>802</sup> Vincent. p337. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAIAAJ&pg=PA337>

<sup>803</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>

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 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>804</sup> They began to accept payment for the sale of forgiveness of sins.<sup>805</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>806</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>807 808 809 810 811</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,

<sup>804</sup> Gibbon. p454. <https://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA454>

<sup>805</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>806</sup> Clare. p134. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA134>

<sup>807</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>808</sup> Legge. p150. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA150>

<sup>809</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>810</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>811</sup> Clare. p327. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA327>

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 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>812</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](#)

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<sup>812</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution)

[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. 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 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>813 814 815 816 817</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 metallurgists of Sardis discovered the secret of separating gold from silver, thereby producing both metals of a purity never known before. [Wikipedia](#)<sup>818</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>819</sup> who wrote a letter to the Emperor Marcus Antonius sometime between 170 and 180, on behalf of persecuted Christians.<sup>820 821</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>822 823</sup>

<sup>813</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sardis>

<sup>814</sup> Clare. p33. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA33>

<sup>815</sup> Clare. p45. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA45>

<sup>816</sup> Clare. p55. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA55>

<sup>817</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>

<sup>818</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>819</sup> Cruttwell, Charles Thomas. *A Literary History of Early Christianity*. London, Charles Griffin & Co., 1893, p95.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=NVcOAOAAIAAJ&pg=PA95>

<sup>820</sup> Platts, John. *A New Universal Biography*. London, Sherwood, Jones and Co., 1825, p166.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=x05LcArWCWAC&pg=PA166>

<sup>821</sup> Miall, James Goodeve. *Memorials of Early Christianity*. Boston, Gould & Lincoln, 1853, p185.

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

<sup>822</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin\\_Luther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther)

<sup>823</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five\\_Theses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five_Theses)

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>824</sup>

825

- 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.
- 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 through 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>826 827 828</sup> In addition to that reformers in power were known to have killed and even tortured heretics and Catholics.<sup>829 830</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.

[Mathew 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

<sup>824</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_solae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_solae)

<sup>825</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=F1gMAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA97>

<sup>826</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology\\_of\\_John\\_Calvin#Predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology_of_John_Calvin#Predestination)

<sup>827</sup> Calvin, John. *Calvin's Calvinism*. London, Wertheim and Macintosh, 1856, p185.

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

<sup>828</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination#Double\\_predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination#Double_predestination)

<sup>829</sup> Wylie, J. A.. The History of Protestantism. London, Cassell & Company, p333.

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

<sup>830</sup> Unity. Chicago, Unity Publishing Company, 1908, p44. <https://books.google.com/books?id=WWxJAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA42>

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](#)

[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 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"?
- I 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>831</sup>

Gibbon mentions the city a couple times in connection with the Crusades, during 12<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>832 833</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

<sup>831</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ala%C5%9Fehir#Ancient\\_Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ala%C5%9Fehir#Ancient_Philadelphia)

<sup>832</sup> Gibbon. p557. <https://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA557>

<sup>833</sup> Gibbon. p564. <https://books.google.com/books?id=sqALAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA564>

## 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 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>834</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>835</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>836</sup> starting small around 1830, and expanding greatly in 1840's.<sup>837</sup> As you can 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>838</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>834</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible\\_society#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_society#History)

<sup>835</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Christian\\_missions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Christian_missions)

<sup>836</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Miller\\_\(preacher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Miller_(preacher))

<sup>837</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millerism>

<sup>838</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>]

<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 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>839</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

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<sup>839</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laodicea\\_on\\_the\\_Lycus#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laodicea_on_the_Lycus#History)

- 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 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>840</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

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<sup>840</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)

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](#)

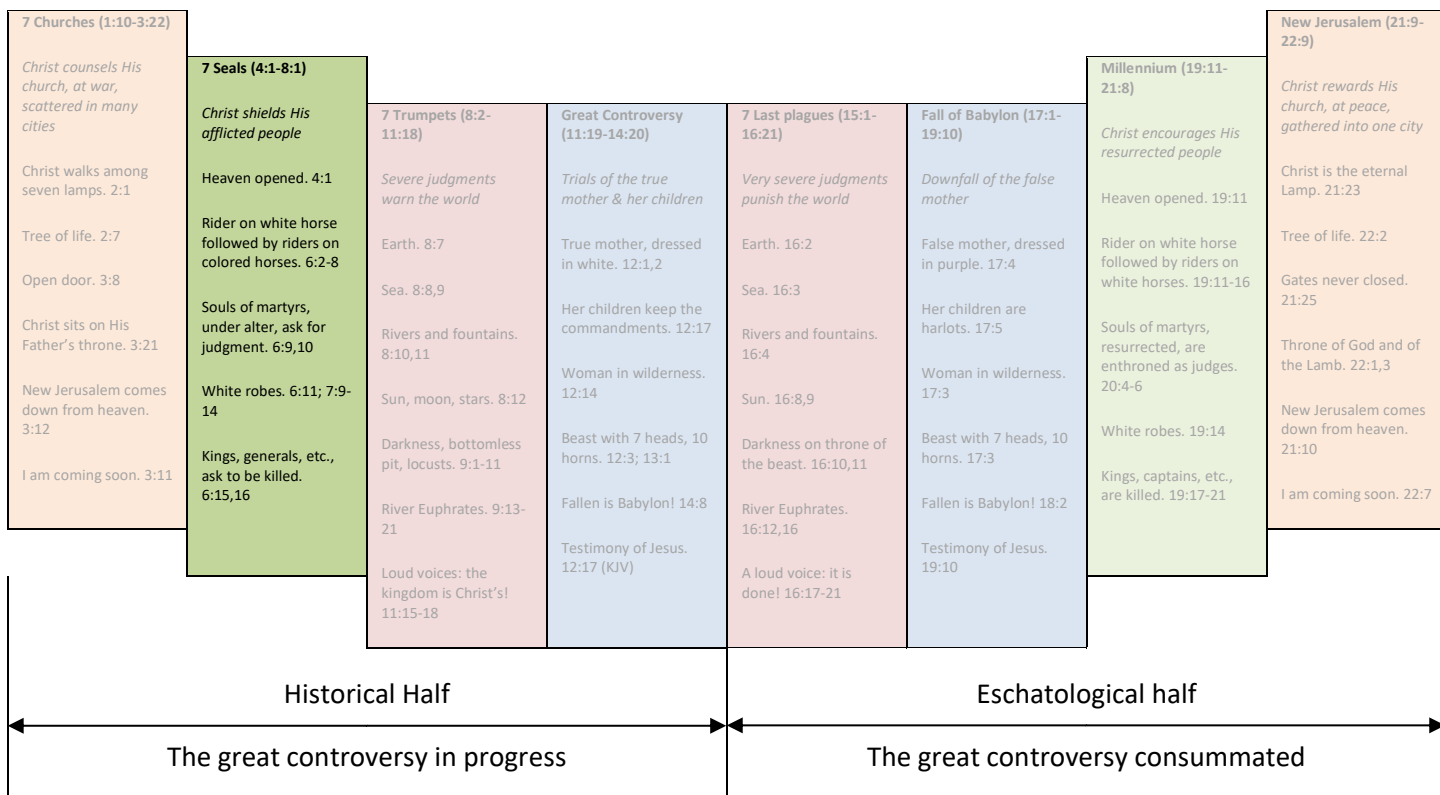
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What do you believe?

- Does the negative state of this last church cause you to go back and rethink the timeline interpretation of the seven churches?
- 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>841</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>842</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>841</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev\\_004.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Rev/Rev_004.cfm)

<sup>842</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 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>843</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>844</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 refer to fallen angels.<sup>845</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.

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<sup>843</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>844</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>845</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>846</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.

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<sup>846</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.

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>847</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>847</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7198/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

[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>848</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>849</sup>, which was used 18 times in the KJV and always translated to crown. Strong's definition is:

<sup>848</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5115/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>849</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4735/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>850</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>850</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4735/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>851</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>852 853 854</sup>

<sup>851</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>852</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>853</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>854</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>855</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>855</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>856</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>856</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5515/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



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>857 858</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>859</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>860</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>861</sup>

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<sup>857</sup> <http://webwitness.org.au/estimates.html>

<sup>858</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>859</sup> Dowling, John. *The History of Romanism*. New York, Edward Walker, 1845, p541. <https://books.google.com/books?id=aQIQAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA541>

<sup>860</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>861</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 Albigeois 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>862</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>863</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.

...

#### 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 cremaios 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>864</sup>

<sup>862</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>863</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>864</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>865</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>865</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>866</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>866</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>867 868 869 870 871</sup>

<sup>867</sup> [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lisbon\\_earthquake\\_1755](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lisbon_earthquake_1755)

<sup>868</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>869</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1755\\_Lisbon\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1755_Lisbon_earthquake)

<sup>870</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGhv6zcBPxQ>

<sup>871</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>872</sup>, Calabria, Italy in 1783<sup>873</sup>, Sichuan, China in 1786<sup>874</sup>, and Quito, Ecuador in 1797.<sup>875</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>876</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>872</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1780\\_Tabriz\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1780_Tabriz_earthquake)

<sup>873</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1783\\_Calabrian\\_earthquakes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1783_Calabrian_earthquakes)

<sup>874</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1786\\_Kangding-Luding\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1786_Kangding-Luding_earthquake)

<sup>875</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1797\\_Riobamba\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1797_Riobamba_earthquake)

<sup>876</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>877</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>878</sup> and some could see no moon at all.<sup>879</sup> I’m sure there are many more historical eye-witness accounts of that day, but Wikipedia has compiled a few online sources.<sup>880</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>881</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>877</sup> <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/new-england-dark-day-1780/>

<sup>878</sup> <https://storiesfromipswich.org/2014/07/25/the-dark-day-1780/>

<sup>879</sup> [https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech\\_0519](https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech_0519)

<sup>880</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_England's\\_Dark\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England's_Dark_Day)

<sup>881</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>882</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>883</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>884 885</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>886</sup>

<sup>882</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>883</sup> <https://leonid.arc.nasa.gov/history.html>

<sup>884</sup> <http://meteorshowersonline.com/leonids.html>

<sup>885</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonids>

<sup>886</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>887</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>887</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>888</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>888</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>889</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>890</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>891</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>889</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g299/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>890</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>891</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.

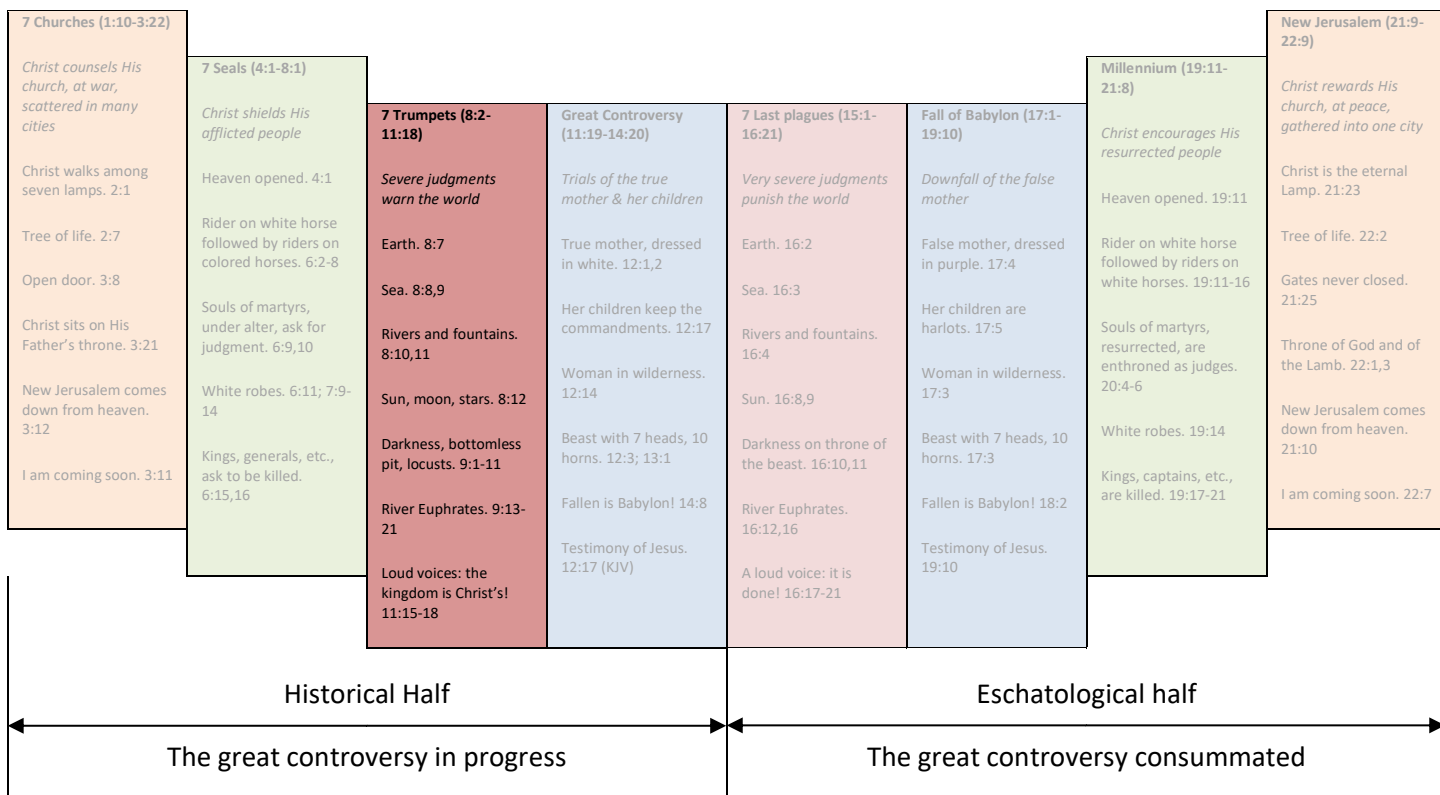
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What do you believe?

- 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>892</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>892</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3031/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>893 894</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>893</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House\\_of\\_Avtinas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Avtinas)

<sup>894</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>895</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>896</sup>

<sup>895</sup> Smith. p539. <https://books.google.com/books?id=00FDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA539>

<sup>896</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>897</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](#)

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<sup>897</sup> Thiele. p163. [http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=9](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=9) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.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>898</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

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<sup>898</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>899</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>899</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>900</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>901</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>900</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>901</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>902</sup> I also read Maxwell, on the seven trumpets, who referenced Thiele, in his well-known book *God Cares vol2*.<sup>903</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>904</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>905</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>906</sup> I would add that

<sup>902</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>903</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>904</sup> Paulien, Jon. *Interpreting the Seven Trumpets*. Berrien Springs, MI, February, 1986. <http://btlib.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf>

<sup>905</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>906</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>907</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>908</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>909</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>910</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>907</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>908</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>909</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>910</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>911</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>911</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>912</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>913</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>914</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>912</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>913</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>914</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>915</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](#)

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<sup>915</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, [ἄψινθιον, apsinthion](#)<sup>916</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>917</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>918</sup>

<sup>916</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g894/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

<sup>917</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3939/nasb20/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>918</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3939/nasb20/wlc/0-1/>

## 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>919</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>920</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>921</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>922</sup>

Then he quickly burned out, dying young after a night of drinking and partying, as did Alexander the Great.<sup>923</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>924</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>919</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>920</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>921</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>922</sup> Gibbon. p529. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA529>

<sup>923</sup> Gibbon. p548. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA548>

<sup>924</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>925</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>926</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>927</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?

<sup>925</sup> Paulien. p83. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=83](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=83)

<sup>926</sup> Paulien. p85. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=85](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=85)

<sup>927</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>928</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](#)

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<sup>928</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>929</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>930</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>931</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>932</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>933</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>934</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>929</sup> Thiele. p169. [http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=15](http://btlb.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>930</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>931</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>932</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>933</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>934</sup> Paulien. p85-90. <http://btlb.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>935</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>936 937</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>935</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>936</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>937</sup> Paulien. p86-87. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=86](http://btlb.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>938</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>938</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3321/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

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>939</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>939</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3759/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

<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>940</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>941</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>942</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>940</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g12/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

<sup>941</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5421/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

<sup>942</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5421/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

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>943 944 945</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>946</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>943</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scorpion>

<sup>944</sup> <https://askabiologist.asu.edu/explore/not-so-scary-scorpions>

<sup>945</sup> [https://www.emedicinehealth.com/wilderness\\_scorpion\\_sting/article\\_em.htm](https://www.emedicinehealth.com/wilderness_scorpion_sting/article_em.htm)

<sup>946</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>947</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>947</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 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250751\)\].pdf#page=88](http://btlib.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation I. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250751)].pdf#page=88)  
<https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.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>948</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>949</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>948</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3671/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>949</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3671/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>



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>950</sup> is

<sup>950</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

only used this once in the Bible, but the Greek version of the Hebrew word אַבְדּוֹן, 'abaddown'<sup>951</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>952</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>953</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>951</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h11/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>952</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g622/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>953</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>954 955 956 957 958 959</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>960 961</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>962 963</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>964</sup>

Another interpretation that Paulien, LaRondelle, Stefanovic seem to agree on, as shown in the Table<sup>965 966</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

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<sup>954</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>955</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>956</sup> Thiele. p172. [http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=18](http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=18) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=18>

<sup>957</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>958</sup> Maxwell. p242-251.

<sup>959</sup> Newton, Isaac. *Observations Upon the Apocalypse of St. John – Part II*. 1733, p303.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=gW5BAAAACAAJ&pg=PA303>

<sup>960</sup> Keith. p307. <https://books.google.com/books?id=m8qhkkgUIWoC&pg=PA307>

<sup>961</sup> Newton. p305. <https://books.google.com/books?id=gW5BAAAACAAJ&pg=PA305>

<sup>962</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>963</sup> Thiele. p174. [http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitallibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=20](http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitallibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=20) <https://repo.adventistdigitallibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=20>

<sup>964</sup> Maxwell. p251.

<sup>965</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>966</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>967</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>968</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.

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<sup>967</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>968</sup> Paulien, Jon. *Interpreting the Seven Trumpets*. Berrien Springs, MI, February, 1986, p87. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=87](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=87)

In 2013, Jon Hjorleifur 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>969</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>970 971 972</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>969</sup> Steffansson, Jon Hjorleifur. *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>970</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>971</sup> Keith. p300. <https://books.google.com/books?id=m8qhkkgUIWoC&pg=PA300>

<sup>972</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.

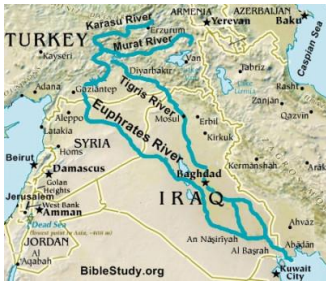
### *Euphrates River*

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>973</sup> It is also currently not a boundary in today’s geography.<sup>974</sup>

<sup>973</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall\\_of\\_Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Babylon)

<sup>974</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>975</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>975</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>976</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 [אַנְשָׁא](#), 'enash'<sup>977</sup>, which itself was used 25 times in the KJV, and mostly translated to man. Four times from the Hebrew word [בָּשָׂר](#), 'basar'<sup>978</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>979</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>976</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h120/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>977</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h606/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>978</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1320/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>979</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g444/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>980</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>981</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 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>980</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulfur>

<sup>981</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>982 983 984 985 986</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>987</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>988</sup> Smith linked the angels to the four principle sultanies at the time, Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Bagdad.<sup>989</sup> Keith to Persia, Kerman, Syria, and Roum.<sup>990</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>991</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>992 993 994</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>982</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>983</sup> Keith. p1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA1>

<sup>984</sup> Thiele. p177. [http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=23](http://btlb.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>985</sup> Maxwell. p251-257.

<sup>986</sup> Newton, Isaac. *Observations Upon the Apocalypse of St. John – Part II*. 1733, p305.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=gW5BAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA305>

<sup>987</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>988</sup> Keith. p25. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA25>

<sup>989</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>990</sup> Keith. p10. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA10>

<sup>991</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>992</sup> Gibbon. p1168. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1168>

<sup>993</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall\\_of\\_Constantinople](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Constantinople)

<sup>994</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>995</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>996</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>997</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>998</sup> Litch used Gibbon's July 27, 1299,<sup>999</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>1000 1001</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>1002</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>1003</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>1004</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>1005</sup> In

<sup>995</sup> Keith. p23. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA23>

<sup>996</sup> Keith. p30. <https://books.google.com/books?id=9PO8yINDF9gC&pg=PA30>

<sup>997</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%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.pdf#page=26),

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=theses>

<sup>998</sup> Steffanson. p16. [http://btlb.org/From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy the History of the Ad.pdf#page=29](http://btlb.org/From%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.pdf#page=29)

<sup>999</sup> Gibbon. p1119. <https://books.google.com/books?id=uHdEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1119>

<sup>1000</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>1001</sup> Thiele. p174. [http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974](http://btlb.org/Thiele,%20Edwin%20R.%20Outline%20Studies%20in%20Revelation%20II.%20Avondale%20College,%201974)

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<sup>1002</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>1003</sup> Steffanson. p56. [http://btlb.org/From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy the History of the Ad.pdf#page=69](http://btlb.org/From%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.pdf#page=69)

<sup>1004</sup> Steffanson. p58. [http://btlb.org/From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy the History of the Ad.pdf#page=71](http://btlb.org/From%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.pdf#page=71)

<sup>1005</sup> Steffanson. p86. [http://btlb.org/From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy the History of the Ad.pdf#page=99](http://btlb.org/From%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.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>1006 1007</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>1008</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>1009</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>1010</sup> The hour, day, month, and year, probably a decisive moment in time.<sup>1011</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>1012</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>1013</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>1006</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%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.pdf#page=142)

<sup>1007</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%20Clear%20Fulfillment%20to%20Complex%20Prophecy%20the%20History%20of%20the%20Ad.pdf#page=70)

<sup>1008</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>1009</sup> Paulien. p87-88. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=87](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=87)

<sup>1010</sup> Paulien. p16. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=16](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=16)

<sup>1011</sup> Paulien. p49. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=49](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=49)

<sup>1012</sup> Paulien. p86-87. [http://btlb.org/Interpreting the Seven Trumpets.pdf#page=86](http://btlb.org/Interpreting%20the%20Seven%20Trumpets.pdf#page=86)

<sup>1013</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>1014</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>1014</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>1015</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>1015</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, Yesees, 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>1016</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>1017</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>1018</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>1019</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>1020</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>1016</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>1017</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>1018</sup> Wolff. p429. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA429>

<sup>1019</sup> Wolff. p482. <https://books.google.com/books?id=GTCurVPPNOUC&pg=PA482>

<sup>1020</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>1021</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>1021</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>1022</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>1022</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>1023</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>1023</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>1024</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 it's 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 it's 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>1024</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>1025 1026 1027</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>1025</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/onias-temple-of>

<sup>1026</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/book-13/chapter-3.html>

<sup>1027</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>1028</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>1029</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>1030</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>1028</sup> Maxwell. p278.

<sup>1029</sup> Thiele, Edwin R. *Outline Studies in Revelation II*. Avondale College, 1974, p188. [http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 \[adventistdigitalibrary.org\(adl-22250752\)\].pdf#page=8](http://btlb.org/Thiele, Edwin R. Outline Studies in Revelation II. Avondale College, 1974 [adventistdigitalibrary.org(adl-22250752)].pdf#page=8)  
<https://repo.adventistdigitalibrary.org/PDFs/adl-22/adl-22250752.pdf#page=34>

<sup>1030</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>1031</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>1032</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>1033</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>1034</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>1035</sup> Though I did not examine every single one of his sources, I

<sup>1031</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>1032</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>1033</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>1034</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>1035</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>1036</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>1037</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>1038</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.

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?

2009 Andrews University Press, 2009. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3055&context=auss>, [http://btlb.org/The\\_Reign\\_of\\_Terror.pdf#page=10](http://btlb.org/The_Reign_of_Terror.pdf#page=10)

<sup>1036</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>1037</sup> <http://www.wycliffe.net/statistics>

<sup>1038</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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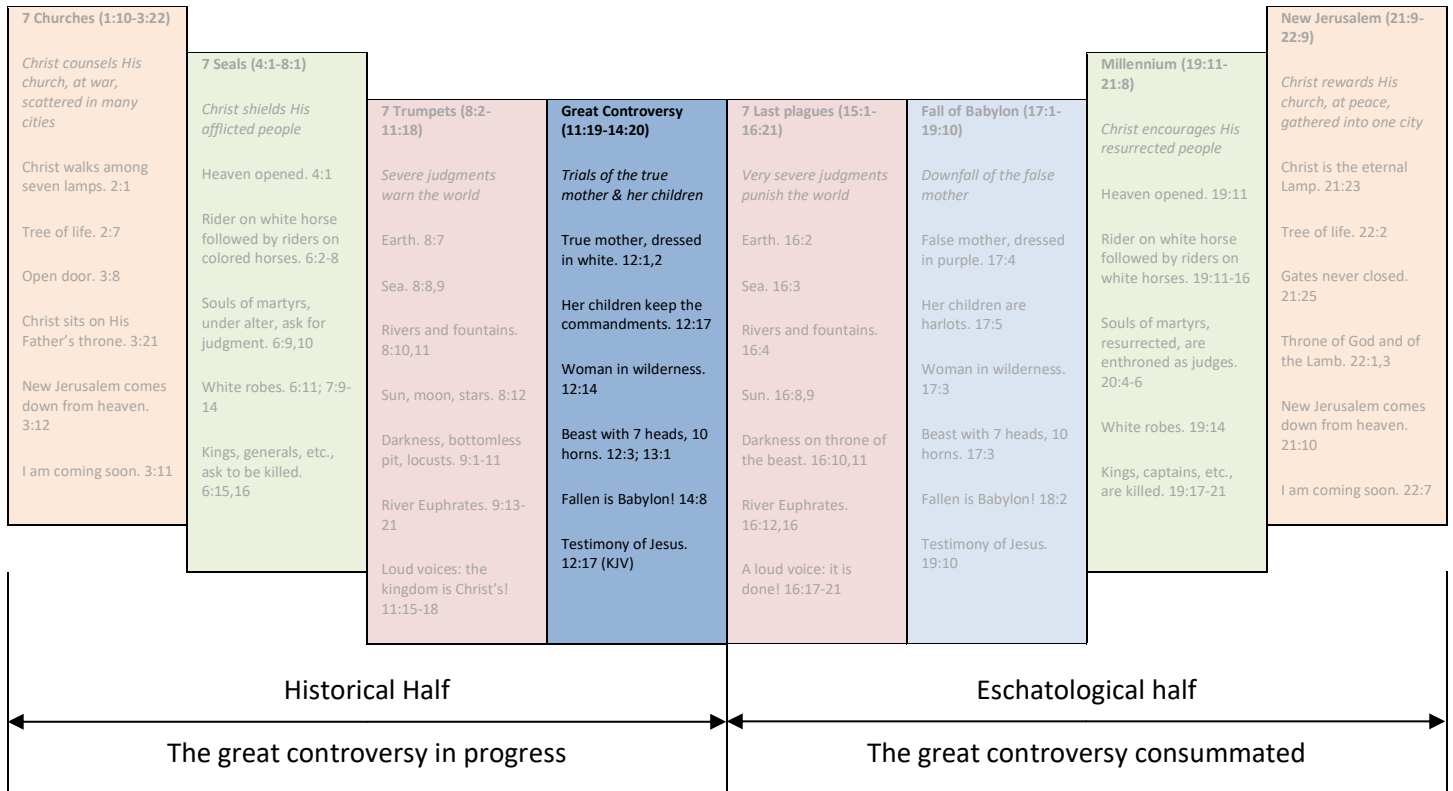
What do you believe?

- 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>1039</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>1040</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>1041</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>1042</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>1043</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>1039</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ark-of-the-covenant#where>

<sup>1040</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ark-of-the-covenant#where>

<sup>1041</sup> <https://www.history.com/news/fate-of-the-lost-ark-revealed>

<sup>1042</sup> <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/keepers-of-the-lost-ark-179998820/>

<sup>1043</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ark-of-the-covenant#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>1044</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>1044</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>1045</sup> The women in [verse 9](#), are thought to represent the nation, Rome that carried away the woman to her punishment.<sup>1046</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>1045</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>1046</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](#) 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](#)

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](#) 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. [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>1047</sup>, was the same in both NASB and NKJV

<sup>1047</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2232/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

translations. 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>1048</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>1048</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2232/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

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>1049</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>1049</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>1050</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>1050</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1238/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

- 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.

*Daniel and the Revelation*<sup>1051</sup>

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>1051</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>1052</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>1053</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>1052</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4464/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1053</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4603/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



[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>1054</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>1054</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p493-500.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAAYAAJ&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>1055</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.

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?

<sup>1055</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, blasphemía](#)<sup>1056</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>1057</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>1056</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g988/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1057</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>1058 1059</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>1060</sup>  
<sup>1061 1062</sup>

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>1063</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>1058</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>1059</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14257a.htm>

<sup>1060</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_hills\\_of\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_hills_of_Rome)

<sup>1061</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>1062</sup> <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-seven-hills-of-rome.html>

<sup>1063</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>1064 1065 1066</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>1067</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>1068</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>1069</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>1070</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>1064</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/10/nyregion/10indulgence.html>

<sup>1065</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/tract/myths-about-indulgences>

<sup>1066</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/penance>

<sup>1067</sup> [https://amazingdiscoveries.org/R-Pope\\_Rome\\_blasphemy\\_power\\_Jesus](https://amazingdiscoveries.org/R-Pope_Rome_blasphemy_power_Jesus)

<sup>1068</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>1069</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>1070</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>1071 1072 1073 1074 1075</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>1076 1077 1078 1079</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>1080 1081 1082 1083 1084</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>1085</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>1086</sup> Toward the end of 2018, with the world population at 7.35 billion, Catholic membership stood at 1.3 billion.<sup>1087</sup>

<sup>1071</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>1072</sup> Legge. p150. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA150>

<sup>1073</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>1074</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>1075</sup> Clare. p327. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA327>

<sup>1076</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>1077</sup> Clare. p413. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA413>

<sup>1078</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>1079</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>1080</sup> <https://vatican.com/The-Lateran-Treaty/>

<sup>1081</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Lateran-Treaty>

<sup>1082</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran\\_Treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran_Treaty)

<sup>1083</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>1084</sup> <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/va-lateran-treaties.htm>

<sup>1085</sup> <http://graphics.wsj.com/catholics-world/>

<sup>1086</sup> <https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/global-catholic-population-tops-128-billion-half-are-10-countries>

<sup>1087</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>1088</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>1089</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>1088</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenism#Three\\_approaches\\_to\\_Christian\\_unity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenism#Three_approaches_to_Christian_unity)

<sup>1089</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>1090</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>1091</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.

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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](#)

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<sup>1090</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/31/u-s-protestants-are-not-defined-by-reformation-era-controversies-500-years-later/>

<sup>1091</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>1092</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>1093</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>1094</sup> <sup>1095</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>1096</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>1097</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>1092</sup> Legge. p23. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA23>

<sup>1093</sup> Clare. p161. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA161>

<sup>1094</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>1095</sup> Legge. p36. <http://books.google.com/books?id=HKYpAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA36>

<sup>1096</sup> Vincent. p396-397. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FUKXAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA396>

<sup>1097</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](#) I 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 its 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>1098</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

<sup>1098</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>1099</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>1099</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kln-oMxDRQ&list=PLWUxCrdrDmx0LknCes14gSk-qK6cCPQL0&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>1100</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>1100</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>1101</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>1101</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5579/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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>1102</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>1102</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g299/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1103</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>1103</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3933/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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.

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>1104</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>1105</sup>

### *Everlasting gospel*

The word gospel is used many times in the Bible. It is translated from the Greek word [εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)<sup>1106</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>1104</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3321/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1105</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3321/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1106</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2098/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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>1107</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>1108</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>1107</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5610/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1108</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2920/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



## 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>1109</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>1109</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>1110</sup>

Nevertheless, Lacunza made a positive contribution by stirring up interest in the judgment, the second advent, and premillennialism.<sup>1111</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>1112</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>1113</sup>

William Cuninghame (1776-1849), a Scottish layman who attended Drummond’s prophetic conferences, wrote 21 books on the prophecies.<sup>1114</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>1110</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>1111</sup> Maxwell. p417. [24. Froom. v3, p303-324.]

<sup>1112</sup> Maxwell. p417. [25. Froom. v3, p461-481.]

<sup>1113</sup> Maxwell. p417. [26. Froom. v3, p434-439, 449-456.]

<sup>1114</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>1115</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>1116</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>1117</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>1118</sup>

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<sup>1115</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>1116</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>1117</sup> Maxwell. p417. [30. Froom. v3, p687-700.]

<sup>1118</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 Heintzpetter, 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>1119</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>1120</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>1121</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>1119</sup> Maxwell. p417. [32. Mourant Brock, *Glorification* (American Millennial Association reprint, 1845), in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, v3, p705, 706]

<sup>1120</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>1121</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>1122</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>1122</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 drawn 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 drawn 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>1123</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>1124</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

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<sup>1123</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>1124</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>1125</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>1125</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>1126</sup>

<sup>1126</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>1127</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>1128</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>1127</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4712/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1128</sup> <http://www.criovoice.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.

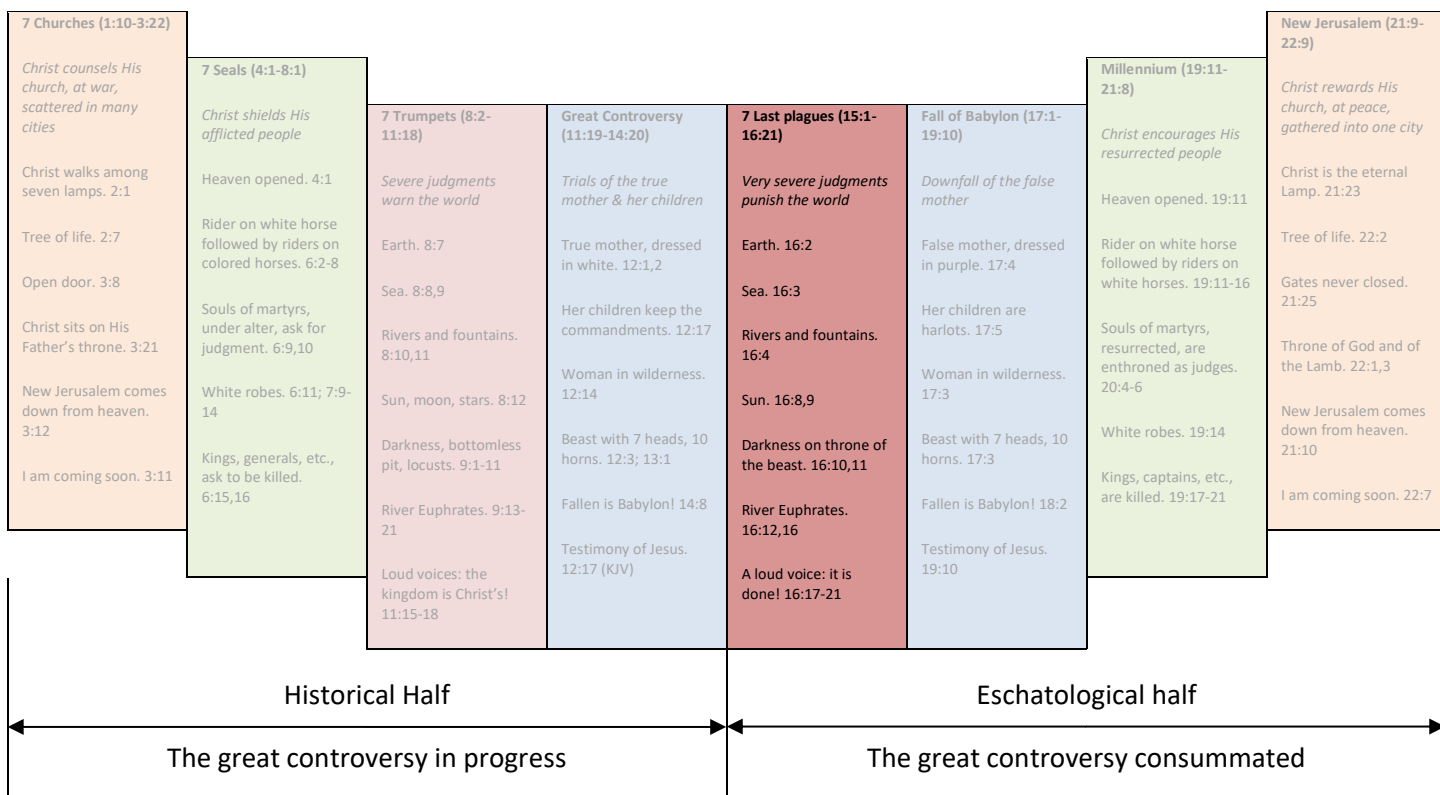
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What do you believe?

- 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>1129</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>1129</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 [נִגַּף, neḡā](#)<sup>1130</sup> was translated to plague 65 times. In the New Testament, the word [πληγή, plēgē](#)<sup>1131</sup> was translated to plague 12 times. Based on the fact that there were 10 plagues on Egypt, we have the

<sup>1130</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5061/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1131</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4127/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

notion that a 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-axe 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>1132</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>1132</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2223/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1133</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>1134</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>1135</sup> It was most often translated to evil in the KJV. The following are some examples.

<sup>1133</sup> Anderson, Roy Allan. *Unfolding the Revelation*. Boise, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1974, p164.

<sup>1134</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2556/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1135</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2556/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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>1136</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>1137</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 [בָּאֵשׁ](#), [bā'aš](#)<sup>1138</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>1136</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2214/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1137</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1741/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1138</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h887/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

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>1139</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>1140</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>1139</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1668/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1140</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1668/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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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>1141</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>1141</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>1142</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>1143</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>1144</sup> which is of Hebrew origin, [הַר, har](#)<sup>1145</sup> [מְגִדּוֹן, m'gīdōn](#)<sup>1146</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>1147</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>1142</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Armageddon>

<sup>1143</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Armageddon>

<sup>1144</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g717/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1145</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h2022/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1146</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4023/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1147</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8590/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

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](#)

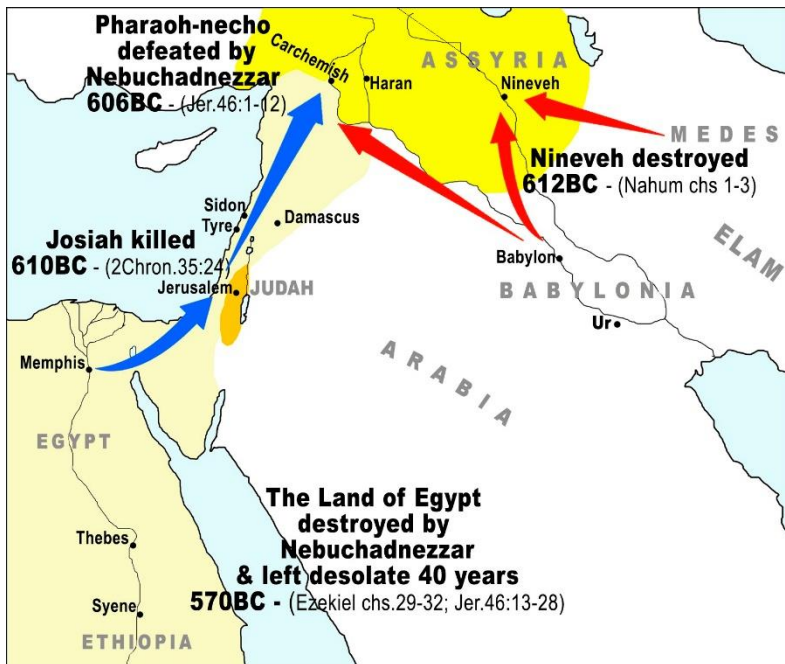
This verse from 1 Chronicles comes from some Israelite genealogy and geography. Again, we see the connection with Manasseh.

[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>1148</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>1148</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>1149</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>1150</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>1149</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>1150</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>1151</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>1152</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>1151</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>1152</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>1153</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.

<sup>1153</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>1154</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>1154</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>1155</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>1155</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>1156</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?

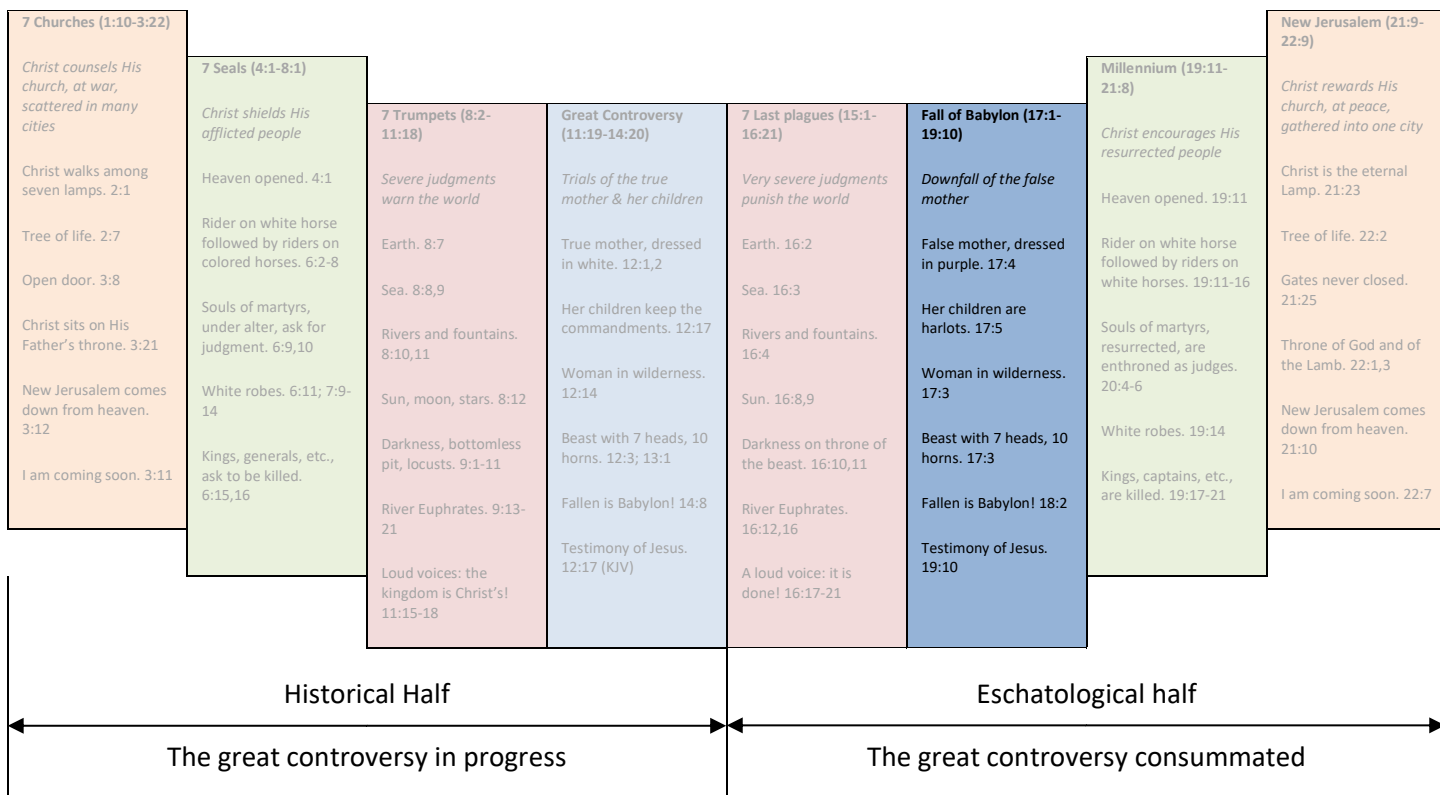
- Do you think the earthquake and hail are literal?
- What do you think the city being split in three parts means?
- Do you believe that God causes these plagues?

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<sup>1156</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>1157</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>1157</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4202/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1158</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>1159</sup>

It was used in the following ways in the Bible.<sup>1160</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>1158</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3466/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1159</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3466/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1160</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3466/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1161</sup>.

The outline of biblical use of the Greek word is:<sup>1162</sup>

5. a foul thing, a detestable thing
  - A. of idols and things pertaining to idolatry

<sup>1161</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g946/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1162</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g946/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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 [יִקְוֹשׁ, šiqqûš](#)<sup>1163</sup>, which means detestable thing or idol, abominable thing, abomination, idol, detested thing.<sup>1164</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>1163</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8251/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1164</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8251/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

[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>1165</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>1166</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>1167</sup>

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<sup>1165</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>1166</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>1167</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>1168</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>1168</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>1169</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>1169</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g169/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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 [μισεῶ, miseō](#)<sup>1170</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>1170</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3404/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



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>1171</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

<sup>1171</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>1172</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>1173</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](#)]

<sup>1172</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>1173</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, sygkoinōneō](#)<sup>1174</sup>, which was defined this way: to share in company with, i.e. co-participate in:—communicate (have fellowship) with, be partaker of.<sup>1175</sup>

<sup>1174</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4790/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1175</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4790/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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: <sup>2</sup> "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, <sup>3</sup> "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: <sup>4</sup> "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, strēniāō](#)<sup>1176</sup>, which also was used only twice and meant: to be luxurious:—live deliciously<sup>1177</sup>.

Torment was used 15 times in the NKJV. In this reference it was translated from the Greek word [βασανισμός, basanismos](#)<sup>1178</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>1176</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4763/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1177</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4763/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1178</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g929/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1179</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>1180</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>1179</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2288/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1180</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1698/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

### *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>1181</sup>, with the definition: of uncertain affinity; to sob, i.e. wail aloud (whereas [G1145](#) is rather to cry silently):—bewail, weep.<sup>1182</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>1181</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2799/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1182</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2799/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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, κοπτό](#)<sup>1183</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>1184</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>1185</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>1183</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2875/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1184</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2875/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1185</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3996/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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>1186</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>1187</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>1188</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>1186</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1117/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1187</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3759/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1188</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2049/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



*Rejoice heaven, apostles, and prophets, for God has avenged you on her*

Heaven is translated from the word [οὐρανός, ouranos](#)<sup>1189</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>1190</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>1191</sup>

The word prophets was used 237 times in the NKJV. In this instance, it was translated from the Greek word [προφήτης, prophētēs](#)<sup>1192</sup>, which has this outline of biblical use<sup>1193</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>1189</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3772/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1190</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g652/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1191</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g652/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1192</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4396/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1193</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4396/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

- 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)

Avenge is from the Greek word [κρίμα, krima](#)<sup>1194</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>1195</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>1196</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>1194</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2917/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1195</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2917/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1196</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>1197</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>1198</sup>

Sorcery is translated from [φαρμακεία, pharmakeia](#)<sup>1199</sup>, which is defined: medication ("pharmacy"), i.e. (by extension) magic (literally or figuratively):—sorcery, witchcraft.<sup>1200</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>1197</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4105/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1198</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4105/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1199</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5331/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1200</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5331/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

### *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>1201</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>1202</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>1203</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>1204</sup>

Glory is translated from the Greek word [δόξα, doxa](#)<sup>1205</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>1206</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>1207</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>1208</sup>

### *Because His judgments are true and righteous*

Judgments is translated from the word [κρίσις, krisis](#)<sup>1209</sup>, meaning: decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, justice (especially, divine law):—accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment.<sup>1210</sup>

### *He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her immorality*

“He has judged,” [κρίνω, krinō](#)<sup>1211</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>1212</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>1201</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g239/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1202</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g239/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1203</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4991/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1204</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4991/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1205</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1391/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1206</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1391/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1207</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1411/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1208</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1411/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1209</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2920/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1210</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2920/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1211</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2919/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1212</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2919/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

Corrupted, [φθείρω, phtheirō](#)<sup>1213</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>1214</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>1215</sup>, meaning: ek-dik-eh'-o; from G1558; to vindicate, retaliate, punish:—a (re-)venge.<sup>1216</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>1213</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5351/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1214</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5351/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1215</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1556/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1216</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1556/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1217</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>1217</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1039/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



“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>1218</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>1219</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>1218</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g40/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1219</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g40/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

*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>1220</sup>, meaning: from [G3144](#); evidence given (judicially or genitive case):—record, report, testimony, witness.<sup>1221</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>1222</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>1223</sup> And prophecy from [προφητεία, prophēteia](#)<sup>1224</sup>, meaning: from [G4396](#) ("prophecy"); prediction (scriptural or other):—prophecy, prophesying.<sup>1225</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>1226</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>1220</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3141/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1221</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3141/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1222</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4151/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1223</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4151/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1224</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4394/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1225</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4394/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1226</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.

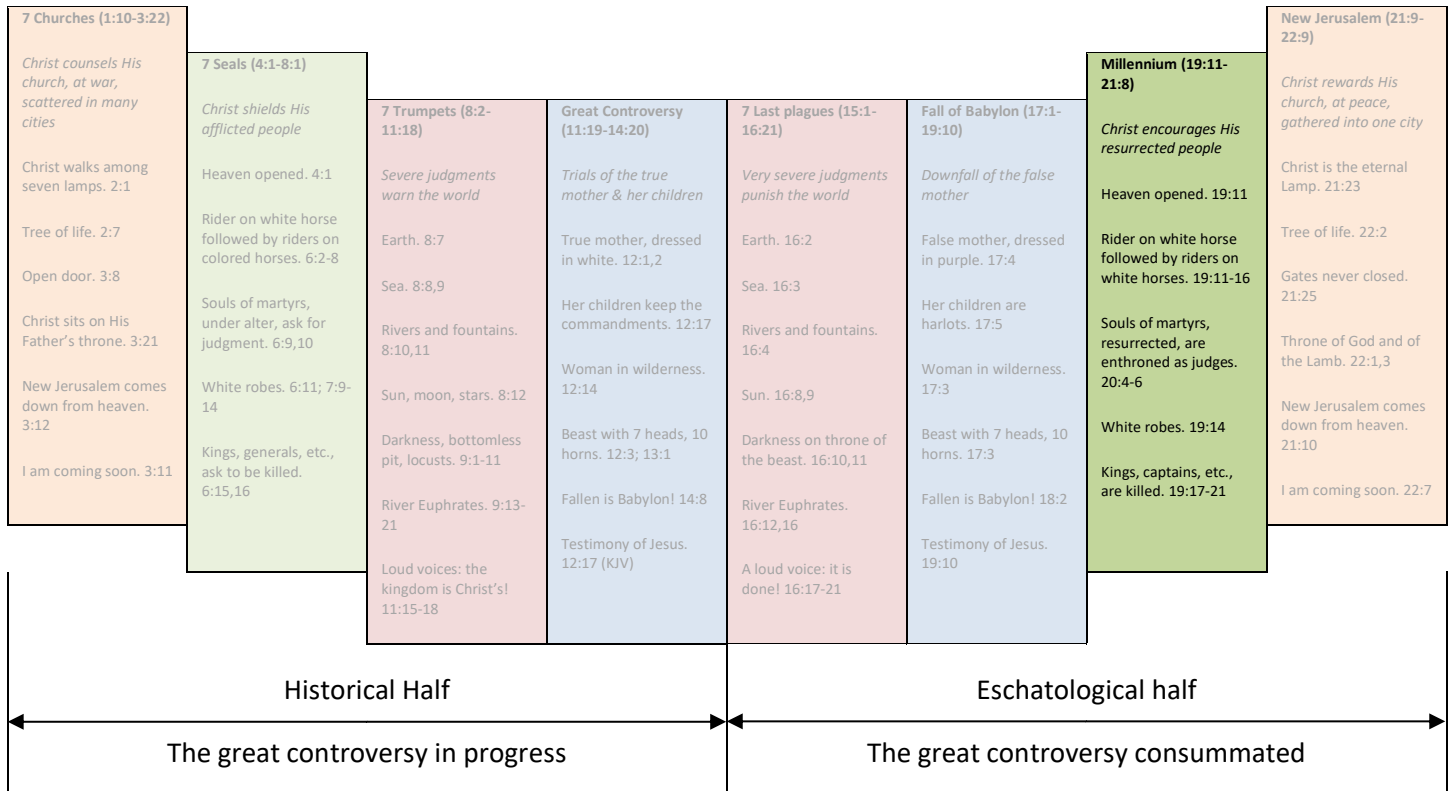
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What do you believe?

- 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>1227</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>1227</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4103/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

### *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 [ἄνθρωπος, μέσος](#)<sup>1228</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>1228</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3382/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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.

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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>1229</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](#).

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<sup>1229</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3321/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

***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>1230</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>1230</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3732/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

## 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>1231</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>1232</sup>, which is obviously where we get the English word mega from.

Chain from the word [ἄλυσις, halysis](#)<sup>1233</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>1231</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2807/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1232</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3173/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1233</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g254/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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>1234</sup>

<sup>1234</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>1235</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>1236</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>1235</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>1236</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>1237</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>1238</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>1237</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1463/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

<sup>1238</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>1239</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>1239</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g928/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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 mention just as 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 mentions 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?

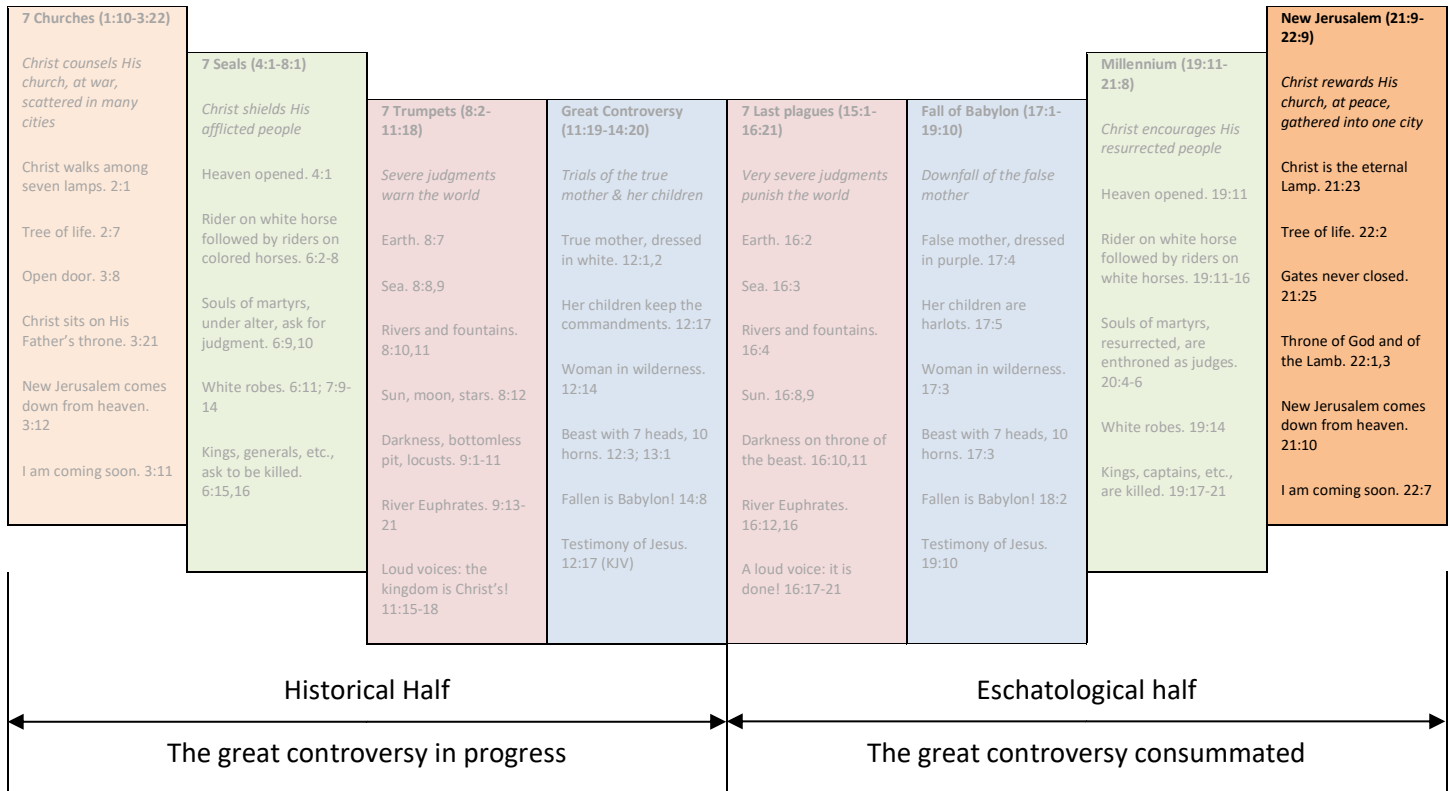


What do you believe?

- 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>1240</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>1241</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>1242</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>1240</sup> [https://www.minerals.net/gemstone/jasper\\_gemstone.aspx](https://www.minerals.net/gemstone/jasper_gemstone.aspx)

<sup>1241</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2393/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1242</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2393/nasb20/tr/0-1/>

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>1243</sup> [κάλαμος](#), [kalamos](#)<sup>1244</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>1243</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5552/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1244</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2563/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

[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>1245</sup> [γιλιάς, chilias](#)<sup>1246</sup> [στάδιον, stadion](#)<sup>1247</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>1248</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>1249</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>1250</sup> [τεσσαράκοντα, tessarakonta](#)<sup>1251</sup> [τέσσαρες, tessares](#)<sup>1252</sup> [πίχυς, pēchys](#)<sup>1253</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>1245</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1427/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1246</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5505/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1247</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4712/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1248</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion\\_\(running\\_race\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion_(running_race))

<sup>1249</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4712/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1250</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1540/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1251</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5062/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1252</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5064/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1253</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4083/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

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>1254</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>1255</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>1256</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>1254</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>1255</sup> <https://revelation-armageddon.com/2018/07/shape-new-jerusalem-pyramid-cube-new-earth-7/>

<sup>1256</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2470/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



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>1257</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>1257</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>1258</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>1259</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>1258</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball\\_valve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball_valve)

<sup>1259</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>1260</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>1260</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 though 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.

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>1261</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>1262</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>1261</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5035/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1262</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5035/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

### *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>1263</sup>, which can be a metaphor for a man of impure mind, an impudent man.<sup>1264</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>1263</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2965/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

<sup>1264</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2965/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

### *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?

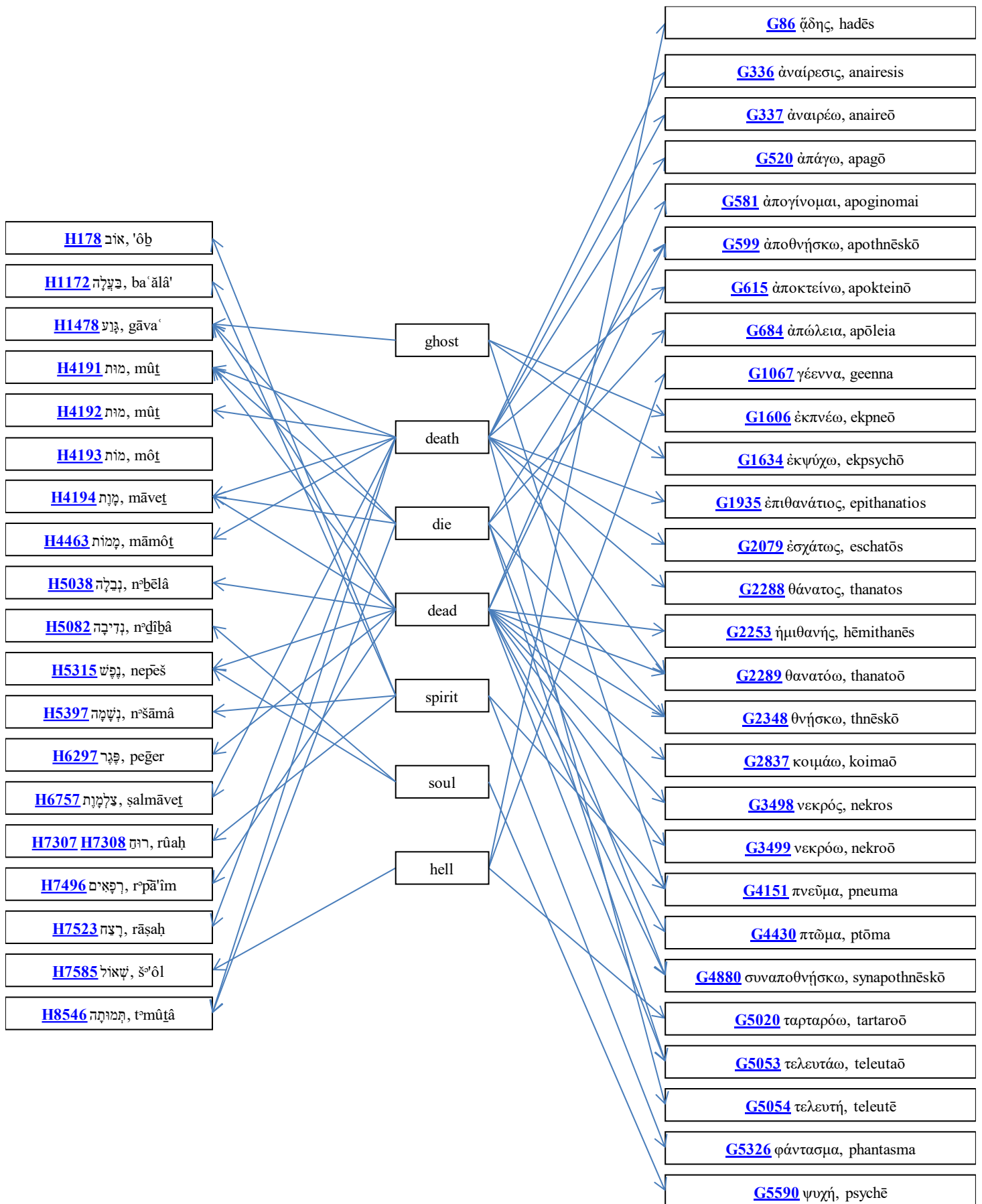
- Do you think the warning about adding or taking away was meant to apply to the whole Bible or just the book John was writing at the time?
- Do you think it is worse to add or take away from the scriptures?
- What are your thoughts on the coming quickly?

# 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 I will look at is the results on the LexiConc tab after searching for these words using <http://blueletterbible.org>. This will give me 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. When searching for English words, the translation of the Bible will make a difference. Since the KJV seems to be the default translation when working with the Strong's numbers, I will use that.

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	n <sup>o</sup> dībā	<b>soul</b>
<a href="#">H5315</a>	נֶפֶשׁ	nepēš	<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 thou wilt not leave my soul[[H5315](#)] in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

[Psalm 16:10 KJV](#)

[Psalm 119:25](#) DALETH. My soul[[H5315](#)] cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. [Psalm 119:25](#)

[KJV](#)

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 whosoever will save his life[[G5590](#)] shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life[[G5590](#)] for my sake, the same shall save it. [Luke 9:24 KJV](#)

[Luke 17:33](#) Whosoever shall seek to save his life[[G5590](#)] shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. [Luke 17:33 KJV](#)

[John 10:17](#) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life[[G5590](#)], that I might take it again. [John 10:17 KJV](#)

[John 12:25](#) He that loveth his life[[G5590](#)] shall lose it; and he that hateth his life[[G5590](#)] in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. [John 12:25 KJV](#)

[Acts 2:27](#) Because thou wilt not leave my soul[[G5590](#)] in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [Acts 2:27 KJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:9](#) Receiving the end of your faith, [even] the salvation of [your] souls[[G5590](#)]. [1 Peter 1:9 KJV](#)

[Revelation 20:4](#) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls[[G5590](#)] of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not

worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4 KJV](#)

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	'ôb	familiar <b>spirit(s)</b> , bottles
<a href="#">H1172</a>	בַּעֲלָה	ba'ălâ	mistress, hath (a familiar <b>spirit</b> )
<a href="#">H5397</a>	נְשָׁמָה	n°šāmâ	breath, blast, <b>spirit</b> , inspiration, souls
<a href="#">H7307</a>	רוּחַ	rûah	<b>Spirit</b> or <b>spirit</b> , wind, breath, side, mind, blast, vain, air, anger, cool, courage, misc
<a href="#">H7308</a>	רוּחַ (Aramaic)	rûah	<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 that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath[[H7307](#)]; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all [is] vanity. <sup>20</sup> All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. <sup>21</sup> Who knoweth the spirit[[H7307](#)] of man that goeth upward, and the spirit[[H7307](#)] of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? [Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 KJV](#)

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 shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit[[H7307](#)] shall return unto God who gave it. [Ecclesiastes 12:7 KJV](#)

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](#) And he shall go before him in the spirit[[G4151](#)] and power of Elias, 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 KJV](#)

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 ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for 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](#) And her spirit[[G4151](#)] came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. [Luke 8:55 KJV](#)

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 sleepeth. 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 with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit[[G4151](#)]: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. [Luke 23:46 KJV](#)

[John 19:30](#) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost[[G4151](#)]. [John 19:30 KJV](#)

[Acts 7:59](#) And they stoned Stephen, calling upon [God], and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit[[G4151](#)]. [Acts 7:59 KJV](#)

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 affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit[G4151]. [Luke 24:37 KJV](#)

[Luke 24:39](#) Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit[G4151] hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. [Luke 24:39 KJV](#)

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.

[Romans 8:9](#) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit[G4151], if so be that the Spirit[G4151] of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit[G4151] of Christ, he is none of his. [Romans 8:9 KJV](#)

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](#) To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit[G4151] may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. [1 Corinthians 5:5 KJV](#)

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, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits[G4151] of just men made perfect, [Hebrews 12:23 KJV](#)

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 hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit[[G4151](#)]: [1 Peter 3:18 KJV](#)

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.

[G5326](#) is used twice, translated to spirit in the KJV. It doesn't indicate anywhere that the disciples thought it was the spirit of a person who had died.

[Matthew 14:26](#) And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit[[5326](#)]; and they cried out for fear. [Matthew 14:26 KJV](#)

[Mark 6:49](#) But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit[[5326](#)], and cried out: [Mark 6:49 KJV](#)

#### Old Testament (Hebrew) for "[ghost](#)"

<a href="#">H1478</a>	גָּוַעַ	gāva'	die, give up the <b>ghost</b> , dead, perish, dead
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For [H1478](#), 23 of the 24 verses in the KJV are translated to words pertaining to dying, and one of Aaron regarding his state of death. None made any mention of consciousness after it.

#### New Testament (Greek) for "[ghost](#)"

<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 KJV are about Jesus giving up the ghost, meaning that He died.

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 "[dead](#)"

<a href="#">H1478</a>	גָּוַעַ	gāva'	die, give up the ghost, <b>dead</b> , perish, <b>dead</b>
<a href="#">H4191</a>	מֵוַת	mût	die, <b>dead</b> , slay, death, surely, kill, <b>dead</b> man, <b>dead</b> body, in no wise, misc
<a href="#">H4194</a>	מָוַת	māvet	death, die, <b>dead</b> , deadly, slay
<a href="#">H5038</a>	נַבְלָה	n <sup>o</sup> bēlā	carcase, <b>dead</b> body, dieth of itself, <b>dead</b> of itself, died, body

<a href="#">H5315</a>	נֶפֶשׁ	nepeš	soul, life, person, mind, heart, creature, body, himself, yourselves, <b>dead</b> , will, desire, man, themselves, any, appetite, misc
<a href="#">H6297</a>	פֶּגֶר	peġer	carcase, <b>dead</b> body, corpse
<a href="#">H7496</a>	רְפָאִים	r <sup>o</sup> pā'im	<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 dieth[[H4194](#)], and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where [is] he? <sup>11</sup> [As] the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: <sup>12</sup> So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens [be] no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. <sup>13</sup> O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> If a man die[[H4194](#)], shall he live [again]? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. <sup>15</sup> Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. [Job 14:10-15 KJV](#)

[Job 21:23](#) One dieth[[H4194](#)] in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. <sup>24</sup> His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. <sup>25</sup> And another dieth[[H4194](#)] in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. <sup>26</sup> They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. [Job 21:23-26 KJV](#)

[Psalm 115:17](#) The dead[[H4194](#)] praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. [Psalm 115:17 KJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:3](#) This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead[[H4194](#)]. <sup>4</sup> For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead[[H4194](#)] lion. <sup>5</sup> For the living know that they shall die[[H4194](#)]: but the dead[[H4194](#)] know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun. [Ecclesiastes 9:3-6 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 26:19](#) Thy dead[[H4194](#)] [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. [Isaiah 26:19 KJV](#)

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 157 occurrences in 152 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[[H4194](#)] [there is] no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? [Psalm 6:5 KJV](#)

[Psalm 49:17](#) For when he dieth[[H4194](#)] he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. [Psalm 49:17 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 38:18](#) For the grave cannot praise thee, death [[H4194](#)] can [not] celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. [Isaiah 38:18 KJV](#)

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](#) Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body [[H5038](#)] shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. [Isaiah 26:19 KJV](#)

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 carcasses [[H6297](#)] of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. [Isaiah 66:24 KJV](#)

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 makes it sound 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](#) Dead [[H7496](#)] [things] are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. [Job 26:5 KJV](#)

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](#) Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead [[H7496](#)] arise [and] praise thee? Selah. [Psalm 88:10 KJV](#)

I believe David is asking rhetorical questions. A few verses before in [88:5](#) it says, Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more..." So the answers to the two questions in verse 10 are no and no.

[Proverbs 9:18](#) But he knoweth not that the dead [[H7496](#)] [are] there; [and that] her guests [are] in the depths of hell. [Proverbs 9:18 KJV](#)

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 moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead [[H7496](#)] for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. [Isaiah 14:9 KJV](#)

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, the grave will spontaneously give up its dead.

[Isaiah 26:14](#) [They are] dead, they shall not live; [they are] deceased[[H7496](#)], they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. [Isaiah 26:14 KJV](#)

[Isaiah 26:19](#) Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead[[H7496](#)]. [Isaiah 26:19 KJV](#)

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, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust."

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>	ἡμιθανής	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, carcase, corpse
<a href="#">G4880</a>	συναποθνήσκω	synapothnēskō	die with, be <b>dead</b> with
<a href="#">G5053</a>	τελευταίω	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. The following is one verse mentioning:

[Luke 16:22](#) And it came to pass, that the beggar died[[G599](#)], and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died[[G599](#)], and was buried; [Luke 16:22 KJV](#)

The story of the rich man and Lazarus, is possibly 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 I will draw from my 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](#) Neither can they die[[G599](#)] any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. [Luke 20:36 KJV](#)

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 cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die[[G599](#)]. [John 6:50 KJV](#)

[John 6:58](#) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead[[G599](#)]: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. [John 6:58 KJV](#)

[John 8:52](#) Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead[[G599](#)], and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. [John 8:52 NKJV](#)

[John 11:25](#) Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead[[G599](#)], yet shall he live: <sup>26</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die[[G599](#)]. Believest thou this? [John 11:25-26 KJV](#)

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 went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die[[G599](#)]: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die[[G599](#)]; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? [John 21:23 KJV](#)

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 be dead[[G599](#)] with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: <sup>9</sup> Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth[[G599](#)] no more; death hath no more dominion over him. [Romans 6:8-9 KJV](#)

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 in that he died[[G599](#)], he died[[G599](#)] unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. [Romans 6:10 KJV](#)

[Romans 14:9](#) For to this end Christ both died[[G599](#)], and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. [Romans 14:9 KJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:15](#) And [that] he died[G599] for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died[G599] for them, and rose again. [2 Corinthians 5:15 KJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:14](#) For if we believe that Jesus died[G599] and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. [1 Thessalonians 4:14 KJV](#)

Paul mentions multiple times that Christ died and lived again.

[Hebrews 11:4](#) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead[G599] yet speaketh. [Hebrews 11:4 KJV](#)

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](#) And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die[G599] in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. [Revelation 14:13 KJV](#)

John wrote in Revelation that those who die in the Lord will rest from their labors, and 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 that was dead[G2348] came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. [John 11:44 KJV](#)

This verse in John is about Lazarus who died but was brought back to life by Jesus.

[Acts 25:19](#) But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead[G2348], whom Paul affirmed to be alive. [Acts 25:19 KJV](#)

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 said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth[G2837]; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. [John 11:11 KJV](#)

[Acts 13:36](#) For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep[G2837], and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: [Acts 13:36 KJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13](#) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep[G2837], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep[G2837] in Jesus will God bring with him. <sup>15</sup> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are

asleep[[G2837](#)]. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: <sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 KJV](#)

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[[G3498](#)], cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. [Matthew 10:8 KJV](#)

[Matthew 11:5](#) The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead[[G3498](#)] are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. [Matthew 11:5 KJV](#)

[Luke 7:15](#) And he that was dead[[G3498](#)] sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. [Luke 7:15 KJV](#)

[Luke 7:22](#) Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead[[G3498](#)] are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. [Luke 7:22 KJV](#)

[John 12:1](#) Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead[[G3498](#)]. [John 12:1 KJV](#)

[John 12:9](#) Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead[[G3498](#)]. [John 12:9 KJV](#)

[John 12:17](#) The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead[[G3498](#)], bare record. [John 12:17 KJV](#)

These verses all refer to the resurrection of the dead by Jesus and His disciples.

[Matthew 14:2](#) And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead[[G3498](#)]; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. [Matthew 14:2 KJV](#)

[Mark 6:14](#) And king Herod heard [of him]; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead[[G3498](#)], and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. [Mark 6:14 KJV](#)

[Luke 9:7](#) Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead[[G3498](#)]; [Luke 9:7 KJV](#)

These verses are not saying that John the Baptist had risen, but that is what Herod was speculating.

[Matthew 22:31](#) But as touching the resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)], have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, <sup>32</sup> I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead[[G3498](#)], but of the living. [Matthew 22:31-32 KJV](#)

[Mark 12:25](#) For when they shall rise from the dead[G3498], they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. <sup>26</sup> And as touching the dead[G3498], that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I [am] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? <sup>27</sup> He is not the God of the dead[G3498], but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

[Mark 12:25-27 KJV](#)

[Luke 20:35](#) But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead[G3498], neither marry, nor are given in marriage: <sup>36</sup> Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> Now that the dead[G3498] are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. <sup>38</sup> For he is not a God of the dead[G3498], but of the living: for all live unto him. [Luke](#)

[20:35-38 KJV](#)

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 whose wife she would be when they were all resurrected.

[Matthew 17:9](#) And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead[G3498]. [Matthew 17:9 KJV](#)

[Mark 9:9](#) And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead[G3498]. <sup>10</sup> And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead[G3498] should mean. [Mark 9:9-10 KJV](#)

[Matthew 27:64](#) Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead[G3498]: so the last error shall be worse than the first. [Matthew 27:64 KJV](#)

[Matthew 28:7](#) And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead[G3498]; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. [Matthew 28:7 KJV](#)

[Luke 24:5](#) And as they were afraid, and bowed down [their] faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead[G3498]? [Luke 24:5 KJV](#)

[Luke 24:46](#) And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead[G3498] the third day: [Luke 24:46 KJV](#)

[John 2:22](#) When therefore he was risen from the dead[G3498], his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. [John 2:22 KJV](#)

[John 20:9](#) For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead[G3498]. [John 20:9 KJV](#)

[John 21:14](#) This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead[G3498]. [John 21:14 KJV](#)



[Acts 3:15](#) And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead[[G3498](#)]; whereof we are witnesses.

[Acts 3:15 KJV](#)

[Acts 4:2](#) Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead[[G3498](#)]. [Acts 4:2 KJV](#)

[Acts 4:10](#) Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead[[G3498](#)], [even] by him doth this man stand here before you whole. [Acts 4:10 KJV](#)

[Acts 10:41](#) Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, [even] to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead[[G3498](#)]. <sup>42</sup> And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God [to be] the Judge of quick and dead[[G3498](#)]. [Acts 10:41-42 KJV](#)

[Acts 13:30](#) But God raised him from the dead[[G3498](#)]: [Acts 13:30 KJV](#)

[Acts 13:34](#) And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead[[G3498](#)], [now] no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. [Acts 13:34 KJV](#)

[Acts 17:3](#) Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead[[G3498](#)]; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. [Acts 17:3 KJV](#)

[Acts 17:31](#) Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead[[G3498](#)]. <sup>32</sup> And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)], some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this [matter]. [Acts 17:31-32 KJV](#)

[Acts 26:23](#) That Christ should suffer, [and] that he should be the first that should rise from the dead[[G3498](#)], and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. [Acts 26:23 KJV](#)

[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[[G3498](#)]: [Romans 1:4 KJV](#)

[Romans 4:24](#) But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead[[G3498](#)]; [Romans 4:24 KJV](#)

[Romans 6:4](#) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead[[G3498](#)] by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [Romans 6:4 KJV](#)

[Romans 6:9](#) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead[[G3498](#)] dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. [Romans 6:9 KJV](#)

[Romans 7:4](#) Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, [even] to him who is raised from the dead[[G3498](#)], that we should bring forth fruit unto God. [Romans 7:4 KJV](#)

[Romans 8:11](#) But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead[[G3498](#)] dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead[[G3498](#)] shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. [Romans 8:11 KJV](#)

[Romans 10:9](#) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead[G3498], thou shalt be saved. [Romans 10:9 KJV](#)

[Romans 14:9](#) For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead[G3498] and living. [Romans 14:9 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:12](#) Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead[G3498], how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead[G3498]? [1 Corinthians 15:12 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:20](#) But now is Christ risen from the dead[G3498], [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept. [1 Corinthians 15:20 KJV](#)

[Galatians 1:1](#) Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead[G3498];) [Galatians 1:1 KJV](#)

[Ephesians 1:20](#) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead[G3498], and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places], [Ephesians 1:20 KJV](#)

[Colossians 1:18](#) And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead[G3498]; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence. [Colossians 1:18 KJV](#)

[Colossians 2:12](#) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead[G3498]. [Colossians 2:12 KJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 1:10](#) And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead[G3498], [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. [1 Thessalonians 1:10 KJV](#)

[2 Timothy 2:8](#) Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead[G3498] according to my gospel: [2 Timothy 2:8 KJV](#)

[Hebrews 13:20](#) Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead[G3498] our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, [Hebrews 13:20 KJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:3](#) Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead[G3498], [1 Peter 1:3 KJV](#)

[1 Peter 1:21](#) Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead[G3498], and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. [1 Peter 1:21 KJV](#)

[Revelation 1:18](#) | [am] he that liveth, and was dead[G3498]; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. [Revelation 1:18 KJV](#)

[Revelation 2:8](#) And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead[G3498], and is alive; [Revelation 2:8 KJV](#)

All the texts in the section above refer to Jesus' resurrection.

[Luke 16:31](#) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead[G3498]. [Luke 16:31 KJV](#)

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 raiseth up the dead[[G3498](#)], and quickeneth [them]; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. [John 5:21 KJV](#)

[John 5:25](#) Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead[[G3498](#)] shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. [John 5:25 KJV](#)

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 the 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: of the hope and resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)] I am called in question. [Acts 23:6 KJV](#)

[Acts 24:21](#) Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)] I am called in question by you this day. [Acts 24:21 KJV](#)

[Acts 26:8](#) Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead[[G3498](#)]? [Acts 26:8 KJV](#)

[Romans 4:17](#) (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, [even] God, who quickeneth the dead[[G3498](#)], and calleth those things which be not as though they were. [Romans 4:17 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:13](#) But if there be no resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)], then is Christ not risen: [1 Corinthians 15:13 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:15](#) Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead[[G3498](#)] rise not. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead[[G3498](#)] rise not, then is not Christ raised: [1 Corinthians 15:15-16 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:21](#) For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)]. [1 Corinthians 15:21 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:29](#) Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead[[G3498](#)], if the dead[[G3498](#)] rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? [1 Corinthians 15:29 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:32](#) If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead[[G3498](#)] rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. [1 Corinthians 15:32 KJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 1:9](#) But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead[[G3498](#)]: [2 Corinthians 1:9 KJV](#)

[Philippians 3:11](#) If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)]. [Philippians 3:11 KJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead[[G3498](#)] in Christ shall rise first: [1 Thessalonians 4:16 KJV](#)

[Hebrews 6:2](#) Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead[[G3498](#)], and of eternal judgment. [Hebrews 6:2 KJV](#)

From the block of 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 the casting away of them [be] the reconciling of the world, what [shall] the receiving [of them be], but life from the dead[G3498]? [Romans 11:15 KJV](#)

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 some [man] will say, How are the dead[G3498] raised up? and with what body do they come? [1 Corinthians 15:35 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:42](#) So also [is] the resurrection of the dead[G3498]. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: [1 Corinthians 15:42 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:52](#) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead[G3498] shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [1 Corinthians 15:52 KJV](#)

Paul tells us that at the time of the resurrection, our bodies will be changed from mortal to immortal.

[Ephesians 5:14](#) Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead[G3498], and Christ shall give thee light. [Ephesians 5:14 KJV](#)

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](#) Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead[G3498]; from whence also he received him in a figure. [Hebrews 11:19 KJV](#)

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[G3498] raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: [Hebrews 11:35 KJV](#)

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](#) And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead[G3498] which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. [Revelation 14:13 KJV](#)

The righteous dead are at rest, not in heaven.

[Revelation 20:5](#) But the rest of the dead[G3498] lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection. [Revelation 20:5 KJV](#)

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead[G3498], small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead[G3498] were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead[G3498] which were

in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead[G3498] which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. [Revelation 20:12-13 KJV](#)

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 spake the more vehemently, If I should die[[G4880](#)] with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all. [Mark 14:31 KJV](#)

The first one is Peter's boast to Jesus that he would die before denying Him.

[2 Corinthians 7:3](#) I speak not [this] to condemn [you]: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die[[G4880](#)] and live with [you]. [2 Corinthians 7:3 KJV](#)

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](#) [It is] a faithful saying: For if we be dead with[[G4880](#)] [him], we shall also live with [him]: [2 Timothy 2:11 KJV](#)

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 spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead[[G5053](#)]: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. [Matthew 9:18 KJV](#)

In the first one of interest, a synagogue official asked Jesus to bring his daughter back to life.

[Mark 9:44](#) Where their worm dieth[[G5053](#)] not, and the fire is not quenched. [Mark 9:44 KJV](#)

[Mark 9:46](#) Where their worm dieth[[G5053](#)] not, and the fire is not quenched. [Mark 9:46 KJV](#)

[Mark 9:48](#) Where their worm dieth[[G5053](#)] not, and the fire is not quenched. [Mark 9:48 KJV](#)

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 I 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 ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead [[G5053](#)], saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been [dead] four days. [John 11:39 KJV](#)

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 freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead [[G5053](#)] and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. [Acts 2:29 KJV](#)

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	gāvaʿ	<b>die</b> , give up the ghost, dead, perish, dead
<a href="#">H4191</a>	מָוַת	mûṭ	<b>die</b> , dead, slay, death, surely, kill, dead man, dead body, in no wise, misc
<a href="#">H4194</a>	מָוַת	māvet	death, <b>die</b> , dead, deadly, slay
<a href="#">H8546</a>	תְּמוּתָהּ	t <sup>o</sup> mûṭâ	<b>die</b> , death

[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	<b>die</b> , be dead, be at the point of death, perish, lie a dying, be slain, vr dead
<a href="#">G684</a>	ἀπώλεια	apōleia	perdition, destruction, waste, damnable, to <b>die</b> , perish, pernicious
<a href="#">G2348</a>	θνήσκω	thnēskō	be dead, <b>die</b> , dead man, dead
<a href="#">G4880</a>	συναποθνήσκω	synapothnēskō	<b>die</b> with, be dead with
<a href="#">G5053</a>	τελευταίω	teleutaō	<b>die</b> , 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>	מות	mûṭ	die, dead, slay, <b>death</b> , surely, kill, dead man, dead body, in no wise, misc
<a href="#">H4192</a>	מות (Ps 48:14)	mûṭ	<b>death</b> , Muthlabben
<a href="#">H4193</a>	מות (Aramaic)	môṭ	<b>death</b>
<a href="#">H4194</a>	מָוֶת	māvet	<b>death</b> , die, dead, deadly, slay
<a href="#">H4463</a>	מָמוֹת	māmōṭ	<b>death</b>
<a href="#">H6757</a>	צֶלְמָוֶת	ṣalmāvet	shadow of <b>death</b>
<a href="#">H7523</a>	רָצַח	rāṣaḥ	slayer, murderer, kill, murder, slain, manslayer, killing, slayer, slayeth, <b>death</b>
<a href="#">H8546</a>	תְּמוּתָהּ	t <sup>o</sup> mûṭâ	die, <b>death</b>

[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 of grievous deaths[[H4463](#)]; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; [but] they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. [Jeremiah 16:4 KJV](#)

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>	ἀνάρεσις	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 fear not them which kill [\[G615\]](#) the body, but are not able to kill [\[G615\]](#) the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [Matthew 10:28 KJV](#)

[Luke 12:4](#) "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill [\[G615\]](#) the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed [\[G615\]](#), 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 forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed [\[G615\]](#), and be raised again the third day. [Matthew 16:21 KJV](#)

[Matthew 17:23](#) And they shall kill [\[G615\]](#) him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry. [Matthew 17:23 KJV](#)

[Mark 8:31](#) And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and [of] the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed [\[G615\]](#), and after three days rise again. [Mark 8:31 KJV](#)

[Mark 10:34](#) And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill [\[G615\]](#) him: and the third day he shall rise again. [Mark 10:34 KJV](#)



[Luke 18:33](#) And they shall scourge [him], and put him to death[G615]: and the third day he shall rise again. [Luke 18:33 KJV](#)

[Acts 3:15](#) And killed[G615] the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. [Acts 3:15 KJV](#)

In the prior six verses, are found references to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

[Revelation 6:11](#) And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed[G615] as they [were], should be fulfilled. [Revelation 6:11 KJV](#)

One must really read the larger context of this one from Revelation 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](#) And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were 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, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? [Revelation 6:9-10 KJV](#)

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 I 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 hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. [Genesis 4:10 KJV](#)

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](#) Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death[G2288], till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. [Matthew 16:28 KJV](#)

[Mark 9:1](#) And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death[G2288], till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. [Mark 9:1 KJV](#)

[Luke 9:27](#) But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death[G2288], till they see the kingdom of God. [Luke 9:27 KJV](#)

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](#) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death[G2288] unto life. [John 5:24 KJV](#)

[John 8:51](#) Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death[G2288].<sup>52</sup> Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death[G2288]. [John 8:51-52 KJV](#)

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 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[G2288], but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." [John 11:4 NKJV](#)

[John 11:13](#) Howbeit Jesus spake of his death[G2288]: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

<sup>14</sup> Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. [John 11:13-14 KJV](#)

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 hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death[G2288]: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. [Acts 2:24 KJV](#)

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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall 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 shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death[G2288] is swallowed up in victory.<sup>55</sup> O death[G2288], where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? [1 Corinthians 15:52-55 KJV](#)

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](#) But we had the sentence of death[G2288] in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: <sup>10</sup> Who delivered us from so great a death[G2288], and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver [us]; [2 Corinthians 1:9-10 KJV](#)

[2 Timothy 1:10](#) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death[G2288], and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: [2 Timothy 1:10 KJV](#)

As I have stated before, Paul believed in the resurrection.

[Hebrews 11:5](#) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death[G2288]; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [Hebrews 11:5 KJV](#)

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 that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death[G2288] hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 KJV](#)

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.

Old Testament (Hebrew) for " <a href="#">hell</a> "			
<a href="#">H7585</a>	הַאֵשׁ	שְׁאֵל	grave, <b>hell</b> , pit

**H7585** is used interchangeably as hell or the grave in the KJV.

[1 Samuel 2:6](#) The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave[[H7585](#)], and bringeth up. [1 Samuel 2:6 KJV](#)

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 is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave[[H7585](#)] shall come up no [more]. <sup>10</sup> He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. [Job 7:9-10 KJV](#)

Job says, when someone goes down to the grave, they don't come back up.

[Psalm 16:10](#) For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell[[H7585](#)]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [Psalm 16:10 KJV](#)

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, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave[[H7585](#)]: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. [Psalm 30:3 KJV](#)

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](#) Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, [and] let them be silent in the grave[[H7585](#)]. [Psalm 31:17 KJV](#)

There is silence in the grave or hell.

[Psalm 49:15](#) But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave[[H7585](#)]: for he shall receive me. Selah. [Psalm 49:15 KJV](#)

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] thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell[[H7585](#)]. [Psalm 86:13 KJV](#)

I believe this is David who had many close shaves 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](#) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might; for [there is] no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave[[H7585](#)], whither thou goest. [Ecclesiastes 9:10 KJV](#)

Here Solomon is pretty clear that there is no consciousness in the grave.

[Isaiah 14:9](#) Hell[[H7585](#)] from beneath is moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. [Isaiah 14:9 KJV](#)

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 thou shalt be brought down to hell[[H7585](#)], to the sides of the pit. [Isaiah 14:15 KJV](#)

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 the grave[[H7585](#)] cannot praise thee, death can [not] celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. [Isaiah 38:18 KJV](#)

Here Isaiah, going along with my assertion that there is no consciousness in death, says the dead cannot praise God.

[Jonah 2:2](#) And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell[[H7585](#)] cried I, [and] thou heardest my voice. [Jonah 2:2 KJV](#)

Jonah is referring to the belly of the fish as hell as he relates his experience.

New Testament (Greek) for " <a href="#">hell</a> "			
<a href="#">G86</a>	ᾅδης	hadēs	<b>hell</b> , grave
<a href="#">G1067</a>	γέεννα	geenna	<b>hell</b> , <b>hell</b> fire
<a href="#">G5020</a>	ταρταρόω	tartaroō	cast down to <b>hell</b>

[G86](#) is used mostly as hell in the KJV.

[Luke 16:23](#) And in hell[[G86](#)] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. [Luke 16:23 KJV](#)

We already discussed this verse under [G599](#).

[Acts 2:27](#) Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell[[G86](#)], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [Acts 2:27 KJV](#)

[Acts 2:31](#) He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell[[G86](#)], neither his flesh did see corruption. [Acts 2:31 KJV](#)

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 that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell[[G86](#)] and of death. [Revelation 1:18 KJV](#)

Here, John is quoting what Jesus is saying to him.

[Revelation 20:13](#) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell[[G86](#)] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. [Revelation 20:13 KJV](#)

This was already discussed under [G3498](#) for the word “dead.”

[Revelation 20:14](#) And death and hell[[G86](#)] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [Revelation 20:14 KJV](#)

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 spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell[[G5020](#)], and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; [2 Peter 2:4 KJV](#)

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 shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

[Ecclesiastes 12:7 KJV](#)

[Luke 23:46](#) And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. [Luke 23:46 KJV](#)

[Acts 7:59](#) And they stoned Stephen, calling upon [God], and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. [Acts 7:59 KJV](#)

[Luke 8:55](#) And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. [Luke 8:55 KJV](#)

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 dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where [is] he? <sup>11</sup> [As] the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: <sup>12</sup> So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens [be] no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. <sup>13</sup> O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> If a man die, shall he live [again]? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. <sup>15</sup> Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. [Job 14:10-15 KJV](#)

[Psalm 6:5](#) For in death [there is] no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? [Psalm 6:5 KJV](#)

[Psalm 115:17](#) The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. [Psalm 115:17 KJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:3](#) This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead. <sup>4</sup> For to him that 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 shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more

a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun. [Ecclesiastes 9:3-6 KJV](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:10](#) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might; for [there is] no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. [Ecclesiastes 9:10 KJV](#)

[John 11:11](#) These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. [John 11:11 KJV](#)

[John 11:13](#) Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. [John 11:13-14 KJV](#)

[Acts 13:36](#) For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: [Acts 13:36 KJV](#)

[Revelation 14:13](#) And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. [Revelation 14:13 KJV](#)

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 them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt. [Daniel 12:2 KJV](#)

[John 5:28](#) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, <sup>29</sup> And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. [John 5:28-29 KJV](#)

[Acts 24:15](#) And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. [Acts 24:15 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:42](#) So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: [1 Corinthians 15:42 KJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:52](#) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [1 Corinthians 15:52 KJV](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13](#) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. <sup>15</sup> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: <sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 KJV](#)

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 KJV](#)

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 lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection. [Revelation 20:5 KJV](#)

[Revelation 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. <sup>14</sup> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:12-15 KJV](#)

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 saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. [Matthew 26:64 KJV](#)

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](#) And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, [there appeared] a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. [2 Kings 2:11 KJV](#)

[Matthew 17:3](#) And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. [Matthew 17:3 KJV](#)

[Mark 9:4](#) And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. [Mark 9:4 KJV](#)

[Luke 9:30](#) And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: [Luke 9:30 KJV](#)



[Jude 1:9](#) Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. [Jude 1:9 KJV](#)

[Genesis 5:24](#) And Enoch walked with God: and he [was] not; for God took him. [Genesis 5:24 KJV](#)

[Hebrews 11:5](#) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [Hebrews 11:5 KJV](#)

[Matthew 27:52](#) And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, <sup>53</sup> And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. [Matthew 27:52-53 KJV](#)

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, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: <sup>20</sup> And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, <sup>21</sup> And 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> And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; <sup>23</sup> And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> And 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 thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. <sup>26</sup> And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that [would come] from thence.

<sup>27</sup> Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: <sup>28</sup> For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. <sup>29</sup> Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. <sup>30</sup> And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. <sup>31</sup> And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. [Luke 16:19-31 KJV](#)

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 study 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>1265</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](#) And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were 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, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? <sup>11</sup> And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they [were], should be fulfilled.

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

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 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 hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

[Genesis 4:10 KJV](#)

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.

<sup>1265</sup> Crews, Dennis, [The Rich Man and Lazarus](#), Amazing Facts, Roseville CA, 2009, p11-12. [\[online pdf\]](#)

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>1266 1267 1268 1269 1270 1271</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>1272 1273 1274 1275 1276</sup>
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>1277 1278</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>1279</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>1280</sup> A couple common approaches to dating the start of Christ's ministry are:

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<sup>1266</sup> [Ezra 1:1-4](#)

<sup>1267</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>1268</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538\\_BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538_BC)

<sup>1269</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>1270</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>1271</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>1272</sup> [Ezra 7:13-28](#)

<sup>1273</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>

<sup>1274</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>1275</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>1276</sup> <http://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/prophecy/when-did-seventy-weeks-daniel-924-begin>

<sup>1277</sup> [Nehemiah 2:1-8](#)

<sup>1278</sup> Nicoll. p9. <https://books.google.com/books?id=B6cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>1279</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>1280</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>1281 1282</sup> with Augustus, or 14 when Augustus died.<sup>1283</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>1284 1285</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>1286 1287 1288 1289</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>1281</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>1282</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>1283</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>1284</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>1285</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>1286</sup> Didon. p 409. <http://books.google.com/books?id=ZHRCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA409>

<sup>1287</sup> Pressensé. p 223. <http://books.google.com/books?id=l7k0AQAAIAAJ&pg=PA223>

<sup>1288</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>1289</sup> Gilman. p 485. <http://books.google.com/books?id=eNM7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA485>

- 6-4 BC. Birth of Jesus<sup>1290 1291 1292 1293</sup>
- 27 Baptism of Jesus (Fall)<sup>1294 1295 1296 1297</sup>
- 31 Crucifixion of Jesus (Passover/Spring)<sup>1298 1299</sup>
- 34 Stoning of the deacon Stephen, and end of probation for the Jewish Nation (Fall)<sup>1300 1301 1302</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>1290</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>1291</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>1292</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>1293</sup> Bond. p12. <https://books.google.com/books?id=F3mcB6GnOtIC&pg=PR12>

<sup>1294</sup> Benson. p188. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA188>

<sup>1295</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>1296</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>1297</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>

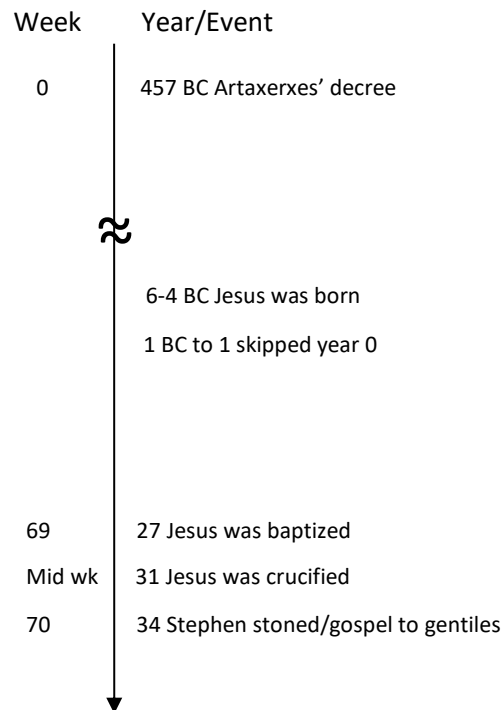
<sup>1298</sup> Pinnock. p29. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA29>

<sup>1299</sup> Hales. p 98. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA98>

<sup>1300</sup> Pinnock. p45. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA45>

<sup>1301</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>1302</sup> Hales. p 99. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA99>



## 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>1303</sup>
- The earth was formed about 4.57 billion years ago<sup>1304</sup>
- Life began somewhere between 3.5 and 2.5 billion years ago<sup>1305</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>1306</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>1307 1308</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>1303</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Big\\_Bang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Big_Bang)

<sup>1304</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Earth)

<sup>1305</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenesis>

<sup>1306</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young\\_Earth\\_creationism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Earth_creationism)

<sup>1307</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Ussher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Ussher)

<sup>1308</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>1309</sup> (see also [The divided kingdom](#))

<sup>1309</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>1310 1311 1312</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>1313</sup> a Seventh-day Adventist, missionary, archaeologist, and scholar wrote a book titled, "[The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings](#)," on this topic.<sup>1314</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>1310</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_in\\_Jerusalem#Second\\_Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem#Second_Temple)

<sup>1311</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/530s\\_BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/530s_BC)

<sup>1312</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Jewish\\_history#Biblical\\_period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Jewish_history#Biblical_period)

<sup>1313</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin\\_R.\\_Thiele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_R._Thiele)

<sup>1314</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://btlb.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>1315</sup>

English	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Meaning
one	אֶחָד	'echad	one
of the chief	רִאשׁוֹן	ri'shown	first, former, foremost, chief

<sup>1315</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>1316</sup>

English	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Meaning
your prince	שָׂר	sar	prince, ruler, leader, chief, chieftain, official, captain

- [12:1](#) - The great prince<sup>1317</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, archangelos](#).<sup>1318</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>1319</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>1316</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>1317</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>1318</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/jde/1/9/p0>

<sup>1319</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g743/nkjv/tr/0-1/>



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 E – Hands, feet, eyes and ears of God

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't do more to provide for and protect the powerless and the defenseless in this world? Have you ever wondered whether God cared? As I have been studying the Bible, I have noticed that this topic comes up quite often. So I did a word search and gathered up most of the verses that have something to do with this. I searched for the following words in the context of us or God caring for this class of people, so if a verse simply described someone with one of these key words, I didn't include it. I do not claim this is an exhaustive search, including every applicable verse.

Word	Count
Poor	44
Orphan or fatherless	23
Alien, stranger, sojourner	21
Widow	20
Oppress or mistreat	17
Justice or Judgment	16
Destitute or needy	12
Afflicted or humble	3

So, does this word search tell us if God cares about the plight of this class of people? In some of these verses, God says that He will protect and defend them, but I found that in most cases He asks us to do it, and He condemns those who do the opposite.

I think most of us have this idea that the ancient Israelites failed God because they forsook Him and worshipped idols. But what I found in many cases was that, God condemned them for the exploitation and mistreatment of this class of people and did not even mention idolatry.

So why doesn't God just step in and take care of and protect these people all the time? I think there are several reasons.

1. I think that God and Satan have some ground rules about when and where they can intervene and impose their will. If not, what would prevent Satan from just possessing or killing anyone he wanted? I think you can see that he often works by getting people to do his evil deeds. In the same way God wants to use us to do His good work.
2. We were created with free will to choose and to learn by suffering the natural consequences of our choices. In many cases, intervening would negate the consequences of choices that were made either by the oppressed or the oppressor.
3. Just as there are natural consequences of making poor choices, I believe there are laws of nature that govern the consequences of making good decisions. In other words, by choosing to care for and defend this class of people, good consequences will naturally come to us. Now I'm not trying to say that for each good deed we perform, one good thing will happen to us. I'm saying that if you live a life where your general pattern is to do good for others, to treat people as you would like to be treated, the same should come back to you.

I am also not saying that sinners and bad people will never treat you poorly, but as it says in Ecclesiastes, what you give will eventually come back to you.

[Ecclesiastes 11:1](#) Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days. [Ecclesiastes 11:1 NKJV](#)

Notice, that it doesn't say you will immediately find it. I think I should also add that I don't believe that the good that comes back will always be in the same form that you gave it.

So, if you wanted to allow yourself to become the eyes, ears, hands and feet of God, what are some things you can do?

- Can you go over to Africa and deal with the corrupt regimes who abuse their power and don't seem to care if their people are starving? [what can you do?]
- Can you spend billions of dollars on research and development as Bill Gates does to try to end malaria in third world countries? [what can you do?]
- Can you feed all the hungry people in your city, let alone your country or the world? [what can you do?]
- Can you provide shelter for homeless people in your city? [what can you do?]
- Can you prevent bad parents from abusing or neglecting their kids? [what can you do?]
- Can you adopt an orphan? [what can you do?]
- What was the plight of widows in Bible times? [how does that apply today?]
- What is an alien and how are they disadvantaged? [how can you help them?]

## Word search results:

[Exodus 22:22](#) "You shall not afflict any **widow** or **fatherless** child. [Exodus 22:22 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 22:25](#) "If you lend money to [any of] My people [who are] **poor** among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. [Exodus 22:25 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 23:6](#) "You shall not pervert the **judgment** of your **poor** in his dispute. [Exodus 23:6 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 25:35](#) 'If one of your brethren becomes **poor**, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a **stranger** or a **sojourner**, that he may live with you. [Leviticus 25:35 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 25:39](#) 'And if [one of] your brethren [who dwells] by you becomes **poor**, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. [Leviticus 25:39 NKJV](#)

[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. <sup>18</sup> "He administers **justice** for the **fatherless** and the **widow**, and loves the **stranger**, giving him food and clothing. <sup>19</sup> "Therefore love the **stranger**, for you were **strangers** in the land of Egypt. [Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 14:28](#) "At the end of [every] third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store [it] up within your gates. <sup>29</sup> "And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the **stranger** and the **fatherless** and the **widow** who [are] within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do. [Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 15:7](#) "If there is among you a **poor** man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your **poor** brother, <sup>8</sup> "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.

<sup>9</sup> "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at

hand,' and your eye be evil against your **poor** brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. <sup>10</sup> "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. <sup>11</sup> "For the **poor** will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your **poor** and your **needy**, in your land.' <sup>12</sup> "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. [Deuteronomy 15:7-12 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:10](#) "When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. <sup>11</sup> "You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. <sup>12</sup> "And if the man [is] **poor**, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. <sup>13</sup> "You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 24:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:14](#) "You shall not **oppress** a hired servant [who is] **poor** and **needy**, [whether] one of your brethren or one of the **aliens** who [is] in your land within your gates. <sup>15</sup> "Each day you shall give [him] his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he [is] **poor** and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you. [Deuteronomy 24:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:17](#) "You shall not pervert **justice** due the **stranger** or the **fatherless**, nor take a **widow's** garment as a pledge. [Deuteronomy 24:17 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:19](#) "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup> "When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**. <sup>21</sup> "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean [it] afterward; it shall be for the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**. [Deuteronomy 24:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 26:12](#) "When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year--the year of tithing--and have given [it] to the Levite, the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, <sup>13</sup> "then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy [tithe] from [my] house, and also have given them to the Levite, the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten [them]. [Deuteronomy 26:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 27:19](#) 'Cursed [is] the one who perverts the **justice** due the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and **widow**.' "And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' [Deuteronomy 27:19 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 10:12](#) Arise, O LORD!

O God, lift up Your hand!

Do not forget the **humble**.

<sup>13</sup> Why do the wicked renounce God?

He has said in his heart,

"You will not require [an account]."

<sup>14</sup> But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief,

To repay [it] by Your hand.

The helpless commits himself to You;

You are the helper of the **fatherless**.

<sup>15</sup> Break the arm of the wicked and the evil [man];

Seek out his wickedness [until] You find none. [Psalm 10:12-15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 82:3](#) Defend the **poor** and **fatherless**;

Do **justice** to the **afflicted** and **needy**. [Psalm 82:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 102:17](#) He shall regard the prayer of the **destitute**,

And shall not despise their prayer. [Psalm 102:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 140:12](#) I know that the LORD will maintain

The cause of the **afflicted**,

[And] **justice** for the **poor**. [Psalm 140:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:7](#) Who executes **justice** for the **oppressed**,

Who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners. [Psalm 146:7 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:9](#) The LORD watches over the **strangers**;

He relieves the **fatherless** and **widow**;

But the way of the wicked He turns upside down. [Psalm 146:9 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 14:31](#) He who **oppresses** the **poor** reproaches his Maker,

But he who honors Him has mercy on the **needy**. [Proverbs 14:31 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:25](#) The LORD will destroy the house of the proud,

But He will establish the boundary of the **widow**. [Proverbs 15:25 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 19:17](#) He who has pity on the **poor** lends to the LORD,

And He will pay back what he has given. [Proverbs 19:17 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 21:13](#) Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the **poor**

Will also cry himself and not be heard. [Proverbs 21:13 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 22:9](#) He who has a generous eye will be blessed,

For he gives of his bread to the **poor**. [Proverbs 22:9 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 22:16](#) He who **oppresses** the **poor** to increase his [riches],

[And] he who gives to the rich, [will] surely [come] to poverty. [Proverbs 22:16 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 28:27](#) He who gives to the **poor** will not lack,

But he who hides his eyes will have many curses. [Proverbs 28:27 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 29:7](#) The righteous considers the cause of the **poor**,

[But] the wicked does not understand [such] knowledge. [Proverbs 29:7 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 29:14](#) The king who judges the **poor** with truth,

His throne will be established forever. [Proverbs 29:14 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 31:20](#) She extends her hand to the **poor**,  
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the **needy**. [Proverbs 31:20 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 1:17](#) Learn to do good;  
Seek **justice**,  
Rebuke the **oppressor**;  
Defend the **fatherless**,  
Plead for the **widow**. [Isaiah 1:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 1:23](#) Your princes [are] rebellious,  
And companions of thieves;  
Everyone loves bribes,  
And follows after rewards.  
They do not defend the **fatherless**,  
Nor does the cause of the **widow** come before them. [Isaiah 1:23 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 3:14](#) The LORD will enter into **judgment**  
With the elders of His people  
And His princes:  
"For you have eaten up the vineyard;  
The plunder of the **poor** [is] in your houses.  
<sup>15</sup> What do you mean by crushing  
My people And grinding the faces of the **poor**?"  
Says the Lord GOD of hosts. [Isaiah 3:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 10:1](#) "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,  
Who write misfortune,  
[Which] they have prescribed  
<sup>2</sup> To rob the **needy** of **justice**,  
And to take what is right from the **poor** of My people,  
That **widows** may be their prey,  
And [that] they may rob the **fatherless**. [Isaiah 10:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 58:6](#) "[Is] this not the fast that I have chosen:  
To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the heavy burdens,  
To let the **oppressed** go free,  
And that you break every yoke?  
<sup>7</sup> [Is it] not to share your bread with the hungry,  
And that you bring to your house the **poor** who are cast out;  
When you see the naked, that you cover him,  
And not hide yourself from your own flesh? [Isaiah 58:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 5:28](#) They have grown fat, they are sleek;  
Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked;  
They do not plead the cause,  
The cause of the **fatherless**;

Yet they prosper,  
And the right of the **needy** they do not defend. [Jeremiah 5:28 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 7:5](#) "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute **judgment** between a man and his neighbor, <sup>6</sup> "[if] you do not **oppress** the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, <sup>7</sup> "then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. [Jeremiah 7:5-7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 22:3](#) 'Thus says the LORD: "Execute **judgment** and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the **oppressor**. Do no wrong and do no violence to the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, or the **widow**, nor shed innocent blood in this place. [Jeremiah 22:3 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

[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](#)

[Ezekiel 18:17](#) [Who] has withdrawn his hand from the **poor**  
[And] not received usury or increase,  
But has executed My **judgments**  
And walked in My statutes--  
He shall not die for the iniquity of his father;  
He shall surely live! [Ezekiel 18:17 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 22:6](#) "Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. <sup>7</sup> "In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have **oppressed** the **stranger**; in you they have **mistreated** the **fatherless** and the **widow**. [Ezekiel 22:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 22:29](#) "The people of the land have used **oppressions**, committed robbery, and **mistreated** the **poor** and **needy**; and they wrongfully **oppress** the **stranger**. [Ezekiel 22:29 NKJV](#)

[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](#)

[Hosea 14:3](#) Assyria shall not save us,  
We will not ride on horses,  
Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands,  
'[You are] our gods.'  
For in You the **fatherless** finds mercy." [Hosea 14:3 NKJV](#)

[Amos 4:1](#) Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who [are] on the mountain of Samaria,  
Who **oppress** the **poor**,  
Who crush the **needy**,



Who say to your husbands,  
"Bring [wine], let us drink!"

<sup>2</sup> The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:

"Behold, the days shall come upon you  
When He will take you away with fishhooks,  
And your posterity with fishhooks. [Amos 4:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Amos 5:11](#) Therefore, because you tread down the **poor**

And take grain taxes from him,  
Though you have built houses of hewn stone,  
Yet you shall not dwell in them;  
You have planted pleasant vineyards,  
But you shall not drink wine from them.

<sup>12</sup> For I know your manifold transgressions

And your mighty sins:  
Afflicting the just [and] taking bribes;  
Diverting the **poor** [from **justice**] at the gate. [Amos 5:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 7:9](#) "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Execute true **justice**,  
Show mercy and compassion  
Everyone to his brother.

<sup>10</sup> Do not **oppress** the **widow** or the **fatherless**,  
The **alien** or the **poor**.

Let none of you plan evil in his heart  
Against his brother.' [Zechariah 7:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 3:5](#) And I will come near you for **judgment**;

I will be a swift witness  
Against sorcerers,  
Against adulterers,  
Against perjurers,  
Against those who exploit wage earners and **widows** and **orphans**,  
And against those who turn away an **alien**--  
Because they do not fear Me,"  
Says the LORD of hosts. [Malachi 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:21](#) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the **poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [Matthew 19:21 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:21](#) Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the **poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." [Mark 10:21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:13](#) "But when you give a feast, invite [the] **poor**, [the] maimed, [the] lame, [the] blind. [Luke 14:13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:22](#) So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the **poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [Luke 18:22 NKJV](#)

[James 2:1](#) My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with partiality. <sup>2</sup> For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a **poor** man in filthy clothes, <sup>3</sup> and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the **poor** man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," <sup>4</sup> have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the **poor** of this world [to be] rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the **poor** man. Do not the rich **oppress** you and drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? [James 2:1-7 NKJV](#)

# Appendix F – Seventh year sabbaths and the year of Jubilee

The word sabbath is translated from the Hebrew [שַׁבָּת, śabāt](#)<sup>1320</sup> which is used 108 in the KJV Old Testament. It is primarily used in reference to the seventh day Sabbath, but is also used in the context of seventh year sabbaths, and other days associated with Israelite festivals, that are to be observed as holy days. This particular discussion aims to focus on the purpose behind the seventh year sabbaths, which are primarily described in Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15. Let's just begin by reading the relevant verses from these chapters.

[Deuteronomy 15:1](#) "At the end of [every] seven years you shall grant a release [of debts].<sup>2</sup> "And this [is] the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent [anything] to his neighbor shall release [it]; he shall not require [it] of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release.<sup>3</sup> "Of a foreigner you may require [it]; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother,<sup>4</sup> "except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess [as] an inheritance—<sup>5</sup> "only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today.<sup>6</sup> "For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.

<sup>7</sup> "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother,<sup>8</sup> "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.<sup>9</sup> "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you.<sup>10</sup> "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand.<sup>11</sup> "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'

<sup>12</sup> "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.<sup>13</sup> "And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed;<sup>14</sup> "you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. [From what] the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him.<sup>15</sup> "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.<sup>16</sup> "And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you,<sup>17</sup> "then you shall take an awl and thrust [it] through

<sup>1320</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7676/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>

his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. <sup>18</sup> "It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do. [Deuteronomy 15:1-18 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 25:1](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; <sup>4</sup> 'but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. <sup>5</sup> 'What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, [for] it is a year of rest for the land. <sup>6</sup> 'And the sabbath [produce] of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, <sup>7</sup> 'for your livestock and the beasts that [are] in your land--all its produce shall be for food.

<sup>8</sup> 'And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> 'Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth [day] of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. <sup>10</sup> 'And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. <sup>11</sup> 'That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather [the grapes] of your untended vine. <sup>12</sup> 'For it [is] the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

<sup>13</sup> 'In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. <sup>14</sup> 'And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another. <sup>15</sup> 'According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. <sup>16</sup> 'According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you [according] to the number [of the years] of the crops. <sup>17</sup> 'Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I [am] the LORD your God.

<sup>18</sup> 'So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. <sup>19</sup> 'Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

<sup>20</sup> 'And if you say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?"

<sup>21</sup> 'Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. <sup>22</sup> 'And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat [of] the old [harvest].

<sup>23</sup> 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land [is] Mine; for you [are] strangers and sojourners with Me.

<sup>24</sup> 'And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

<sup>25</sup> 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold [some] of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. <sup>26</sup> 'Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, <sup>27</sup> 'then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. <sup>28</sup> 'But if he is not able to have [it] restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

<sup>29</sup> 'If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; [within] a full year he may redeem it. <sup>30</sup> 'But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. <sup>31</sup> 'However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. <sup>32</sup> 'Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, [and] the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. <sup>33</sup> 'And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites [are] their possession among the children of Israel. <sup>34</sup> 'But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it [is] their perpetual possession.

<sup>35</sup> 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. <sup>36</sup> 'Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. <sup>37</sup> 'You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. <sup>38</sup> 'I [am] the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan [and] to be your God.

<sup>39</sup> 'And if [one of] your brethren [who dwells] by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. <sup>40</sup> 'As a hired servant [and] a sojourner he shall be with you, [and] shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. <sup>41</sup> 'And [then] he shall depart from you--he and his children with him--and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. <sup>42</sup> 'For they [are] My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. <sup>43</sup> 'You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God. <sup>44</sup> 'And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have--from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. <sup>45</sup> 'Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. <sup>46</sup> 'And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit [them as] a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

<sup>47</sup> 'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and [one of] your brethren [who dwells] by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger [or] sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, <sup>48</sup> 'after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; <sup>49</sup> 'or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or [anyone] who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. <sup>50</sup> 'Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; [it shall be] according to the time of a hired servant for him. <sup>51</sup> 'If [there are] still many years [remaining], according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. <sup>52</sup> 'And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, [and] according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. <sup>53</sup> 'He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. <sup>54</sup> 'And if he is not redeemed in these [years], then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee--he and his children with him. <sup>55</sup> 'For the children of Israel [are] servants to Me; they [are] My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I [am] the LORD your God. [Leviticus 25:1-55 NKJV](#)

Deuteronomy is all about release of debts and slaves on the sabbath year, while Leviticus is about the treatment of the land. Only Leviticus mentions the year of jubilee and the laws regarding redemption rights. I found [Leviticus 25:47](#) a little

confusing regarding who is allowed to eat the produce that grows naturally. [Verse 4](#) clearly says not to sow or prune, or harvest or gather. But [verses 6-7](#) say:

[Leviticus 25:6](#) 'And the sabbath [produce] of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, <sup>7</sup> 'for your livestock and the beasts that [are] in your land--all its produce shall be for food. [Leviticus 25:6-7 NKJV](#)

So, you are not supposed to sow, prune, harvest or gather, but “all of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food?” I found the following verses from Exodus to possibly help clear up my confusion.

[Exodus 23:10](#) "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, <sup>11</sup> "but the seventh [year] you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard [and] your olive grove. [Exodus 23:10-11 NKJV](#)

Here is an outline of what I gleaned from these chapters on sabbath years and the year of jubilee.

- Every seventh year is called a sabbath year
  - Israelites who have sold themselves as slaves must be freed, but do not send them away empty handed
    - Give them some livestock
    - Give them some food
  - Loans to Israelites are to be canceled, but you may continue to collect from foreigners
  - You shall not till the ground or plant or harvest from your fields
  - With God’s blessing, the sixth year will yield enough to live on for three years (is the extra produce the “sabbath products” in [verse 6](#)?)
  - It seems that the landowner and anyone living under his protection (including his livestock?) should not eat any of the produce of the ground in the seventh year, but the following who wouldn’t have the “sabbath products” stored up are allowed:
    - Needy in general
    - Slaves who have been set free that year
    - People who had been hired to work the land but are now unemployed
    - Foreigners
    - Beasts of the field
  - You are not allowed to take advantage of the needy in general by selling them food at a profit or loaning fellow Israelites money with interest. Perhaps that is one reason why God would bless with triple (rather than just double) produce on the sixth year.
- Seven cycles of seven years adds up to forty nine years. The fiftieth year is called the year of jubilee
  - Any land that has been sold is to be returned to the families that originally owned it
  - I believe the treatment of the land and its natural produce during that year is the same as that outlined for the seventh year’s
- The redemption laws allowed slaves to be freed and land to be returned without waiting for the sabbath and jubilee years with a payoff from a kinsman:
  - The kinsman should buy back their relative’s land that was sold. [[Leviticus 25:25-34](#)]
  - The kinsman should redeem their relative from slavery or servitude. [[Leviticus 25:47-54](#)]
  - Avenge the murder of a relative. [[Numbers 35:12,19-27](#), [Deuteronomy 19:11,12](#)]
  - To appear in a lawsuit as a helper for a relative. [[Proverbs 23:11](#), [Jeremiah 50:34](#), [Psalm 119:154](#)]
  - Produce an heir for a deceased brother. [[Deuteronomy 25:5,6](#)]

- But ultimately if there was no kinsman willing or able to fulfill the role, the sabbath and jubilee years were God's way of filling at least the first two roles. Of course, from a spiritual perspective (saving us from sin and Satan), God fulfills all five of the roles of the kinsman redeemer for us.

Rabbi Zev Farber wrote a nice article titled, *The Law of the Hebrew Slave: Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy*, where he compared and contrasted the law regarding release of slaves on sabbath years.<sup>1321</sup>

I wanted to write down some thoughts that I have had regarding the care of the poor and homeless that seem to be related to these laws. I think most would agree that every person is different and that there will always be people who are more ambitious and hardworking and those who are less. I think most would also agree that there will always be people who are not able to take care of and provide for themselves, whether it is from age, physical or mental disability or plain laziness. If everything were to be kept equal all the time, there would be little incentive for the more ambitious to produce more than they needed, then they would have nothing to share with those who were in need. By hard and smart work, they were able to produce more food than they needed, thus allowing them to sell their surplus and in turn hire people to help them produce more. Those who didn't have the ability to plan and organize to produce, could hire themselves out as laborers, thus allowing them to buy food for their families. One of the limits I spoke of were that the wealthy were not to charge interest when loaning currency to their fellow Israelites. However human nature being what it is, some borrowers would naturally not be able to repay. In that case, they could sell their land or even themselves as slaves to the lender. This was not like the slavery in the early years of America, because God said they were to be treated as hired help. As a slave, a person would be guaranteed a job, food and a place to live, and I believe they could be compelled to work. I believe God realized it was necessary to allow people to accumulate land, hired help and even slaves to work it, otherwise some who didn't have the ability to produce food on their own and would starve. But every seven years debts would be canceled, and slaves freed, and every fifty years, all land was to be returned to the original families that owned it. I believe this system still allowed people to benefit from hard and smart work and retain some wealth through these corrections, but it also prevented entire families from being born into slavery because one of lazy ancestor. I think what God gave the Israelites was a free market economy with limits and periodic corrections.

Of course, with these rules or commands from God, the Israelites had to decide whether they would obey them or not. The very next chapter of Leviticus gives a pretty detailed description of what would happen if they did and if they didn't obey these and other laws God gave them.

[Leviticus 26:1](#) 'You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a [sacred] pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I [am] the LORD your God. <sup>2</sup> You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I [am] the LORD. <sup>3</sup> 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, [Leviticus 26:1-3 NKJV](#)

There are four things God mentions specifically that He required the Israelites to do or not do:

- NOT set up and bow down to idols
- Keep His sabbaths
- Reverence His sanctuary
- Keep His commandments

<sup>1321</sup> <http://thetorah.com/hebrew-slave-exodus-leviticus-and-deuteronomy/>

This is followed in verses [4-13](#) with a detailed description of the blessings and good things God will do for them if they do as He says. Verses [14-26](#) tell of the punishments God will bring on the people if they disobey, in hopes that they will repent. Verse 27 through the end of the chapter is where the word desolate or desolation (in bold) is used:

[Leviticus 26:27](#) 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, <sup>28</sup> then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. <sup>29</sup> You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. <sup>30</sup> I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. <sup>31</sup> I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to **desolation**, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. <sup>32</sup> I will bring the land to **desolation**, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. <sup>33</sup> I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be **desolate** and your cities waste. <sup>34</sup> Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies **desolate** and you [are] in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. <sup>35</sup> As long as [it] lies **desolate** it shall rest--for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it. <sup>36</sup> 'And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. <sup>37</sup> They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no [power] to stand before your enemies. <sup>38</sup> You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. <sup>39</sup> And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away. <sup>40</sup> '[But] if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, <sup>41</sup> and [that] I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—<sup>42</sup> then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land. <sup>43</sup> The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies **desolate** without them; they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes. <sup>44</sup> Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I [am] the LORD their God. <sup>45</sup> But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I [am] the LORD.' "

<sup>46</sup> These [are] the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses. [Leviticus 26:27-46 NKJV](#)

As we know, the land of Israel was made desolate a couple times, after the destruction of the Temple and the entire city of Jerusalem. The first was in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar at the start of the seventy-year exile to Babylon.<sup>1322</sup> The second was in AD 70 by the Romans.<sup>1323</sup> I believe this warning was literally fulfilled by the seventy-year exile in Babylon.

[2 Chronicles 36:21](#) to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. [2 Chronicles 36:21 NKJV](#)

But the question is how many years of not letting the land have it's sabbath did that satisfy? I have seen many people state that it is 490 years, arrived at by multiplying 70 x 7. But that is ignoring the jubilee years. Another question that doesn't seem to have a unanimous answer among Jewish scholars is whether the jubilee year is on a

<sup>1322</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_\(587\\_BC\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC))

<sup>1323</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_\(AD\\_70\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(AD_70))



50-year cycle or 49.<sup>1324</sup> Some think that the next sabbath year following the jubilee is still on a 7-year multiple with all previous sabbath years, to keep the 7-year cycle intact. Others think that there should be a full seven-year period after the jubilee, which breaks the seven-year cycle but creates a nice 50 and 100-year cycle. So were the sabbath's in question missed in consecutive years, or not? Let's look at a couple tables arbitrarily beginning with year 1, showing sabbatical and jubilee years for both schemes.

49-year cycle of jubilee years								
						sabbath	jubilee	count
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1
8	9	10	11	12	13	14		2
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		3
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		4
29	30	31	32	33	34	35		5
36	37	38	39	40	41	42		6
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	8
	51	52	53	54	55	56		9
57	58	59	60	61	62	63		10
64	65	66	67	68	69	70		11
71	72	73	74	75	76	77		12
78	79	80	81	82	83	84		13
85	86	87	88	89	90	91		14
92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	16
	100	101	102	103	104	105		17
106	107	108	109	110	111	112		18
113	114	115	116	117	118	119		19
120	121	122	123	124	125	126		20
127	128	129	130	131	132	133		21
134	135	136	137	138	139	140		22
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	24
	149	150	151	152	153	154		25
155	156	157	158	159	160	161		26
162	163	164	165	166	167	168		27
169	170	171	172	173	174	175		28
176	177	178	179	180	181	182		29
183	184	185	186	187	188	189		30
190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	32
	198	199	200	201	202	203		33
204	205	206	207	208	209	210		34
211	212	213	214	215	216	217		35
218	219	220	221	222	223	224		36
225	226	227	228	229	230	231		37
232	233	234	235	236	237	238		38
239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	40
	247	248	249	250	251	252		41
253	254	255	256	257	258	259		42
260	261	262	263	264	265	266		43
267	268	269	270	271	272	273		44
274	275	276	277	278	279	280		45
281	282	283	284	285	286	287		46
288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	48
	296	297	298	299	300	301		49
302	303	304	305	306	307	308		50
309	310	311	312	313	314	315		51
316	317	318	319	320	321	322		52
323	324	325	326	327	328	329		53
330	331	332	333	334	335	336		54
337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	56
	345	346	347	348	349	350		57
351	352	353	354	355	356	357		58
358	359	360	361	362	363	364		59
365	366	367	368	369	370	371		60
372	373	374	375	376	377	378		61
379	380	381	382	383	384	385		62
386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	64
	394	395	396	397	398	399		65
400	401	402	403	404	405	406		66
407	408	409	410	411	412	413		67
414	415	416	417	418	419	420		68
421	422	423	424	425	426	427		69
428	429	430	431	432	433	434		70
435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	72
	443	444	445	446	447	448		73
449	450	451	452	453	454	455		74
456	457	458	459	460	461	462		75
463	464	465	466	467	468	469		76
470	471	472	473	474	475	476		77
477	478	479	480	481	482	483		78
484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	80

You can see that 490 years covers 79 sabbath years, but many people using the 490-year period do not count the jubilee year, which would bring the sabbath year count down to 70, which I think is wrong. One interesting thing to note in the 49-year cycle case is that the first cycle covers 50 years. This destroys a little bit of the symmetry over all

<sup>1324</sup> <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8943-jubilee#anchor3>

the cycles. There is an alternate proposal for the 49-year cycle by some that I do not believe is Biblical. It is to simply designate every seventh sabbatical year as a year of jubilee, and never have two consecutive sabbath years.<sup>1325</sup>

50-year cycle of jubilee years								
						sabbath	jubilee	count
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1
8	9	10	11	12	13	14		2
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		3
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		4
29	30	31	32	33	34	35		5
36	37	38	39	40	41	42		6
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	8
51	52	53	54	55	56	57		9
58	59	60	61	62	63	64		10
65	66	67	68	69	70	71		11
72	73	74	75	76	77	78		12
79	80	81	82	83	84	85		13
86	87	88	89	90	91	92		14
93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	16
101	102	103	104	105	106	107		17
108	109	110	111	112	113	114		18
115	116	117	118	119	120	121		19
122	123	124	125	126	127	128		20
129	130	131	132	133	134	135		21
136	137	138	139	140	141	142		22
143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	24
151	152	153	154	155	156	157		25
158	159	160	161	162	163	164		26
165	166	167	168	169	170	171		27
172	173	174	175	176	177	178		28
179	180	181	182	183	184	185		29
186	187	188	189	190	191	192		30
193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	32
201	202	203	204	205	206	207		33
208	209	210	211	212	213	214		34
215	216	217	218	219	220	221		35
222	223	224	225	226	227	228		36
229	230	231	232	233	234	235		37
236	237	238	239	240	241	242		38
243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	40
251	252	253	254	255	256	257		41
258	259	260	261	262	263	264		42
265	266	267	268	269	270	271		43
272	273	274	275	276	277	278		44
279	280	281	282	283	284	285		45
286	287	288	289	290	291	292		46
293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	48
301	302	303	304	305	306	307		49
308	309	310	311	312	313	314		50
315	316	317	318	319	320	321		51
322	323	324	325	326	327	328		52
329	330	331	332	333	334	335		53
336	337	338	339	340	341	342		54
343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	56
351	352	353	354	355	356	357		57
358	359	360	361	362	363	364		58
365	366	367	368	369	370	371		59
372	373	374	375	376	377	378		60
379	380	381	382	383	384	385		61
386	387	388	389	390	391	392		62
393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	64
401	402	403	404	405	406	407		65
408	409	410	411	412	413	414		66
415	416	417	418	419	420	421		67
422	423	424	425	426	427	428		68
429	430	431	432	433	434	435		69
436	437	438	439	440	441	442		70
443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	72

The second table with the 50-year cycle is completely uniform over all the cycles. Since the Bible clearly says fiftieth year, that to me seems to rule out the 49-year cycle.

[Leviticus 25:10](#) 'And you shall consecrate the **fiftieth** year, and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. <sup>11</sup> That **fiftieth** year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather [the grapes] of your untended vine. [Leviticus 25:10-11 NKJV](#)

So, that means I disagree with numerous people who have said that the 70 years the land was desolate was to make up for 490 years that the Jews failed to observe the sabbath years for the land. Looking at the table, it can be seen that the period in question could have begun anywhere from years 1-6 and ended anywhere from years 443-448 and still cover the 70 sabbath years. That makes for a period length, depending the start, of 438-448 years. Which

<sup>1325</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1518811>

can fit nicely with the number 345 that I used for the duration of the southern kingdom in my [age of the world appendix](#).

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What do you believe?

- Does the way it is written in the Bible seem almost as if the land is an animate object that needs the rest?
- Do you think that being a slave in the household of a very compassionate master is better than the poverty and hardship that some experience on their own?
- Why did God say in [Deuteronomy 15:4](#) that there would be no poor among them, then [3 verses](#) later He instructs them how to treat the poor, in fact the Bible is full of instruction regarding the treatment of the poor?

## Appendix G – Unanswered prayer

I imagine that every single person who has prayed more than once and made requests of God has had the experience of not always getting what they asked for. As a child I was told that God always answers, He just doesn't always give you what you want. There are many verses, quotes by Jesus, which have been memorized and recited as promises for answers to prayer. The problem with memory verses is that the text is usually lifted out of its context. Let's examine some of these statements, attempting to understand the context of each, then see if we can make a unifying statement about the topic.

[Matthew 7:7](#) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [Matthew 7:7-8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:9](#) "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [Luke 11:9-10 NKJV](#)

These first two seemed completely unconditional on the surface. The context surrounding these words was that the disciples approached Jesus and asked Him to teach them how to pray. He taught them what we call the Lord's Prayer, but followed that up with the teaching that these verses are a part of. Immediately surrounding these verses He spoke of being persistent in our requests, and followed it up with an illustration that even sinful human fathers like to give good things to their children, so how much more will our Heavenly Father want to give good things to those who ask. So even though the statements seem unconditional if isolated, He speaks of persistence, which doesn't imply immediate answers. He also is talking about asking for things that are good for us.

[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](#)

[Matthew 21:20](#) And when the disciples saw [it], they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" <sup>21</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. [Matthew 21:20-22 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:22](#) So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. <sup>24</sup> "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them]. [Mark 11:22-24 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:6](#) So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. [Luke 17:6 NKJV](#)

The next four, even though they sound similar did not all come from the same teaching of Jesus. The first is after the Transfiguration when Jesus came down from the mountain and cast a demon out of a boy. The disciples wanted to

know why they couldn't do it. The next two were from the day after Jesus cursed the barren fig tree and the disciples were amazed that it was already withered. The fourth, from Luke, is in response to a request from the disciples to increase their faith. The larger context is a teaching session apparently in front of disciples, possibly some Pharisees and teachers of the Laws, and probably the general public. The first thing to notice is that faith or belief is a condition of receiving the answer to our prayer. What seems strange in this case is that the example Jesus gave of requesting that a mountain or tree be move from its place into the sea, doesn't seem to be practical or beneficial for our eternal salvation. The question is, how is quantity of faith measured? Maybe most of us have never truly had the kind of Faith Jesus had when He lived here on earth. How many of us have prayed for the mountain to be cast into the sea and when it didn't happen, say to ourselves, I didn't really think it would happen. What does that say about your faith? I believe there are plenty of examples in the Bible of prophets and apostles having the faith to perform miracles. There is even an example of someone in the Bible making an outrageous, useless request just to see if God really mean what He said [[Judges 6:36-40](#)]. I guess what I could conclude here is that if we truly had the faith and belief that was required to perform miracles, we might be at a place where we wouldn't be making useless requests of God. If we had that level of faith in God, we wouldn't need signs from Him.

[Mark 9:23](#) And Jesus said to him, "'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." [Mark 9:23 NKJV](#)

[John 15:7](#) "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. [John 15:7 NKJV](#)

The next two are not from the same occasion or teaching by Jesus. The first is actually Jesus talking to the father of the demon possessed boy from the same incident of the [Matthew 17:20](#) example quoted above. Clearly belief is a requirement for receiving what we ask of God, which is essentially the same thing Jesus told His disciples. [John 15:7](#) is from the teaching Jesus gave the disciples between the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane about the vine and the branches. I wrote a chapter about this conversation [[Jesus is the vine and we are the branches](#)]. In that chapter we discussed that there were different levels of abiding, from the branch that is connected but not bearing fruit, that Jesus said would be cut off, to the branch that bears fruit. Presumably this statement is in regard to the branch that is bearing fruit. I think we have the notion of a deeper connection with Jesus, perhaps a relationship which would influence the type of request we would make of God.

[John 14:12](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father. <sup>13</sup> "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> "If you ask anything in My name, I will do [it]. [John 14:12-14 NKJV](#)

[John 15:16](#) "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. [John 15:16 NKJV](#)

[John 16:23](#) "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. <sup>24</sup> "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. [John 16:23-24 NKJV](#)

The last three statements by Jesus all have in common that the request is being made in His name. One might ask if these statements were made to the disciples, which they were between the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane, do they apply to every single human being? Would it not be taking these statements out of context to claim them without putting ourselves in the place of the disciples? What type of requests were the disciples making in Jesus name during the start of the early church? If we find ourselves having the same spirit as the Apostles, doing the same work for God, making requests in Jesus name, I believe that is where the promise might apply to us as well.

[1 John 5:14](#) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.  
<sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. [1 John 5:14-15 NKJV](#)

[James 1:5](#) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [James 1:5-6 NKJV](#)

[James 5:15](#) And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [James 5:15 NKJV](#)

[1 John 3:22](#) And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. [1 John 3:22 NKJV](#)

The next four are not statements by Jesus but by those of the Apostles and those carrying on the work of Jesus after He went back to heaven. In combination, the answer is dependent on faith, belief and compliance with God's will.

To summarize, let me start by saying that we can probably all agree that it is not in the best interest of a child to get everything they ask for. If prayer was just about saying the right words and getting what you asked for, then it would be like a magic incantation. God is not like a genie in a bottle granting a certain quantity of unconditional requests. What I am concluding is that to claim these promises of answers to prayer, one should be connected to Jesus, doing His work and have faith that He will do what is best. I am not at all saying that God will never answer prayer outside of this framework, but I think possibly this is where Jesus was coming from when He made these statements.

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What do you believe?

- Do you think faith the size of a mustard seed is a lot or just a little?
- How can you quantify faith by size?
- Have you ever sincerely prayed a prayer that you were sure was God's will but didn't get the answer you wanted?

# Appendix H – Women at the cross and tomb

There were several women named, who were at the cross when Jesus died, and who were the first at the tomb on resurrection morning. Let's tabulate the four Gospel accounts and see what bubbles to the surface.

<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:55</a> And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, <sup>56</sup> among whom were <b>Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses</b>, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. <a href="#">Matthew 27:55-56 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:40</a> There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were <b>Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses</b>, and Salome, <a href="#">Mark 15:40 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:49</a> But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. <a href="#">Luke 23:49 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 19:25</a> Now there stood by the cross of Jesus <b>His mother</b>, and His <b>mother's sister</b>, <b>Mary the [wife] of Clopas</b>, and <b>Mary Magdalene</b>. <a href="#">John 19:25 NKJV</a></p>
<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:61</a> And <b>Mary Magdalene</b> was there, and the <b>other Mary</b>, sitting opposite the tomb. <a href="#">Matthew 27:61 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:47</a> And <b>Mary Magdalene</b> and <b>Mary [the mother] of Joses</b> observed where He was laid. <a href="#">Mark 15:47 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:55</a> And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. <sup>56</sup> Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. <a href="#">Luke 23:55-56 NKJV</a></p>	

<p><a href="#">Matthew 28:1</a> Now after the Sabbath, as the first [day] of the week began to dawn, <b>Mary Magdalene</b> and the <b>other Mary</b> came to see the tomb. <a href="#">Matthew 28:1 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 16:1</a> Now when the Sabbath was past, <b>Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of James,</b> and <b>Salome</b> bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. <a href="#">Mark 16:1 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 24:1</a> Now on the first [day] of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain [other women] with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ... <sup>10</sup> It was <b>Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary [the mother] of James,</b> and the other [women] with them, who told these things to the apostles. <a href="#">Luke 24:1, 10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 20:1</a> Now on the first [day] of the week <b>Mary Magdalene</b> went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw [that] the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <a href="#">John 20:1 NKJV</a></p>
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Even though only John mentions it, I think there would be no argument that **Mary the mother of Jesus** was at the cross.

Luke only mentions names of the women who went to the tomb on resurrection morning almost as an afterthought. Now if we consider that there were three occasions that names were mentioned: who was at the cross, the burial, and the empty tomb. Multiply that by four, but Luke doesn't mention names for two and John doesn't mention who went with Joseph and Nicodemus to the tomb, so that leaves nine.

**Mary Magdalene** was mentioned in all nine, so there should also be no argument that she was there.

Next there is another **Mary, the mother of James and Joseph (or Joses)** who was mentioned five times. For the second and third incidents, Matthew refers to "**the other Mary.**" John refers to a **Mary the wife of Clopas** and **sister of His mother**. If we choose to believe that these all refer to the same Mary, some interesting relationships arise. If we assume James the less is the disciple also known as James the son of Alphaeus, then one of Jesus' disciples was His cousin, and the names Clopas and Alphaeus refer to the same person. Even though these associations cannot be proved or disproved, there have been church traditions, in support of them.<sup>1326 1327</sup> If this is true, I find it strange that there was no point made of the relationship in any of the four Gospels.

A third person named **Salome** is mentioned in Mark, and a third person who was the **mother of the sons of Zebedee** is named in Matthew. If the third woman in both of these mentions was the same, then we can assume that Salome was the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John. Even though much less was said about this person, there have also been church traditions in support of this association as well.

Finally Luke mentions **Joanna**, who was named with Mary Magdalene as one of those who financially supported Jesus [[Luke 8:3](#)]. Luke also says that there were other women with them, who presumably went to the tomb, and were then trying to convince the disciples that Jesus had risen. I would like to believe that Susanna, who was also one of the financial supporters [[Luke 8:3](#)], was there as well.

<sup>1326</sup> <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/A/alphaeus.html>

<sup>1327</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James,\\_son\\_of\\_Alphaeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James,_son_of_Alphaeus)



What do you believe?

- Why do you think Mary Magdalene was mentioned so often in the Gospels?
- In such a patriarchal culture, why were these women mentioned?
- Do you think some of these women spent as much time with Jesus as the twelve disciples?

# 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>1328</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>1329</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>1330 1331</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>1328</sup> Young. p342. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA342>

<sup>1329</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosis>

<sup>1330</sup> Young. p419. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA419>

<sup>1331</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaitans>

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?