

Revelation

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See also: *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*,
New International Greek Testament Commentary) (Beale)

The 7 Churches of Revelation in Asia Minor





Christ Coming with the Clouds (1:7-8)



Rev. 1:7a (Before Judgment)→ Dan. 7:13 (After Judgment)
(Dan. 7:14 → Rev. 1:5-6); Rev.14:14

Christ Coming with the Clouds (1:7-8)



Dan. 7:13 → Mark 13:26; 14:62 (Judgment of Jerusalem); Jn. 5:27

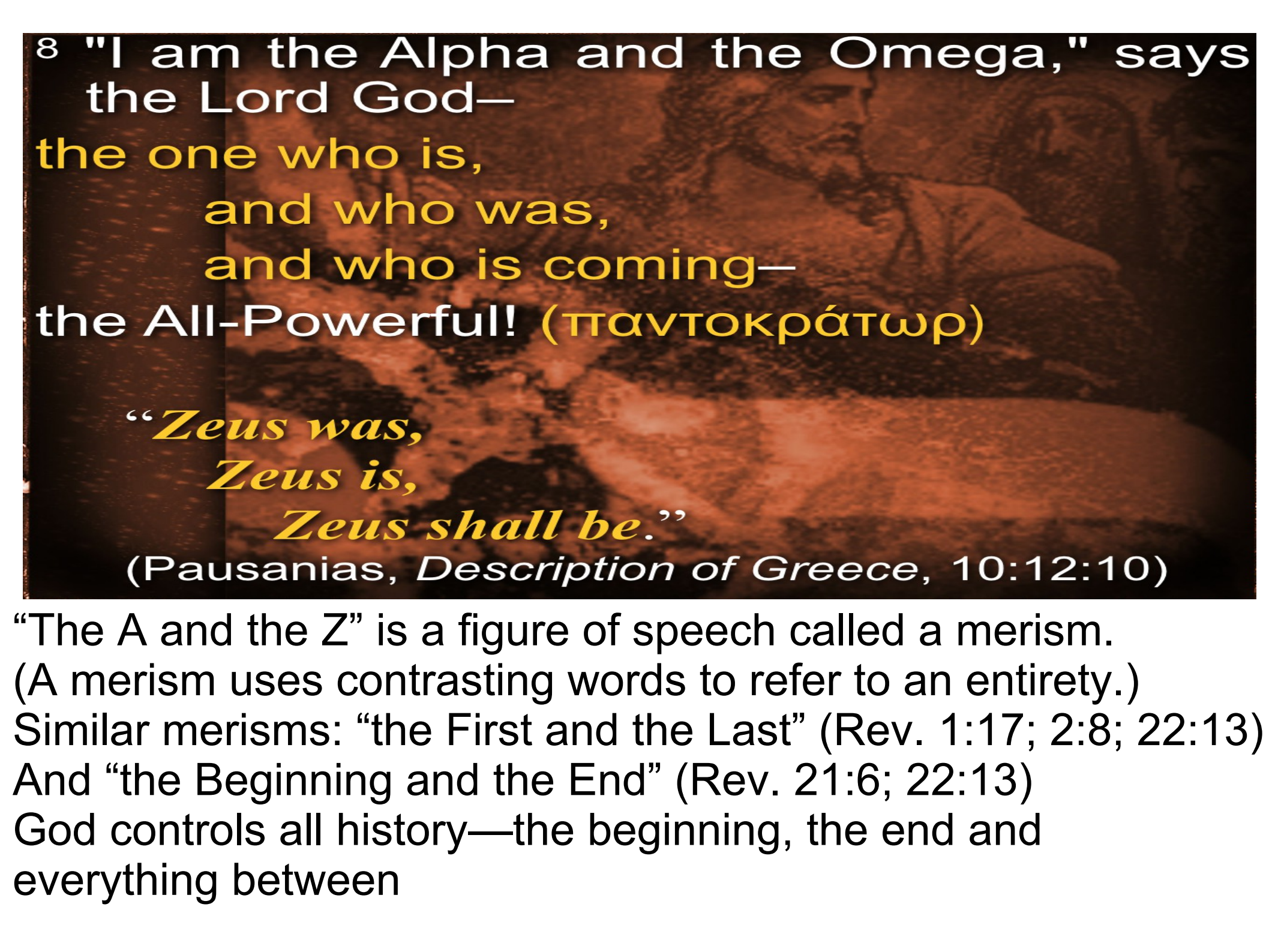
Christ Coming with the Clouds (1:7-8)



Rev. 1:7b → Zech. 12:10

The Father and the Son of Man

- 1) The A and the Z (1:8) [The Father]
- 2) The First and the Last (1:17; 2:8) [Christ]
- 3) The A and the Z, the Beginning and the End (21:6)
[The Father]
- 4) The A and the Z, the First and the Last,
the Beginning and the End (22:13) [Christ]

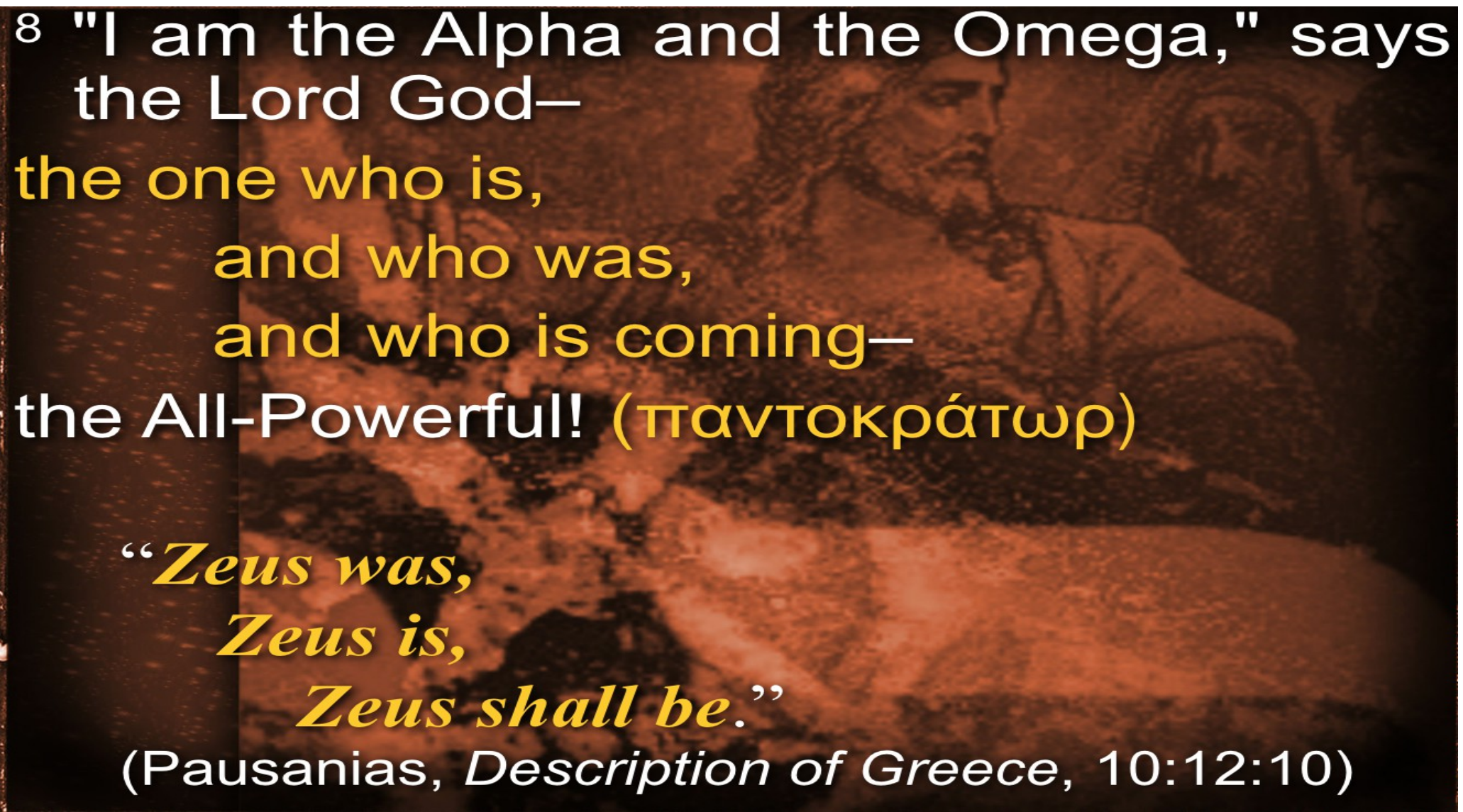


⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says
the Lord God—
the one who is,
and who was,
and who is coming—
the All-Powerful! (παντοκράτωρ)

*“Zeus was,
Zeus is,
Zeus shall be.”*

(Pausanias, Description of Greece, 10:12:10)

“The A and the Z” is a figure of speech called a merism.
(A merism uses contrasting words to refer to an entirety.)
Similar merisms: “the First and the Last” (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13)
And “the Beginning and the End” (Rev. 21:6; 22:13)
God controls all history—the beginning, the end and
everything between



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The Jews would say that the law should be kept “from aleph to taw”
“The one who is and who was and who is to come” (1:4; 4:8; 11:17)
Rev. 1:8b → Is. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12

John Was on Patmos (1:9)



8 Keys to Unlock Revelation

#1—A symbolic book

#2—Primarily about things that would happen soon

#3—Written to be understood

#4—Written to comfort persecuted Christians

#5—Identifies the 42 months (chs. 11-13)

#6—Identifies the dragon and the two beasts (chs. 12-13)

- 1st beast: Rom. Emp.; 2nd beast: enforcers of emp. Worship

#7—Identifies the prostitute, Babylon (17:1-19:5)

- City of Rome

#8—Identifies a spiritual rather than a physical kingdom

“The Tribulation” (1:9)



- 1:9—“I John, your brother and sharer in the affliction and kingdom and endurance in Christ Jesus”

(Majority Text; Translation mine)

- Not just “the tribulation/the trouble/the affliction” but “the affliction and kingdom and endurance”

“The Tribulation” (1:9)



- 1:9—“I John, your brother and sharer in the affliction and kingdom and endurance in Christ Jesus” (Majority Text; Translation mine)
 - “the affliction and kingdom and endurance”
 - “If the single article has significance, then the three nouns mutually interpret one another, and, especially, all three are to be understood as having their frame of reference 'in Jesus'” (Beale, 201)

“The Tribulation” (1:9)



- “tribulation/trouble/affliction” translates *thlipsis*, θλίψις—occurring 45 times in the Greek NT—indicating pressure, distress, trial or oppression
 - Mt. 13:21; 24:9; Jn. 16:21, 33; Acts 7:10-11; 11:19; 14:22
 - Rom. 5:3 (2x); 8:35; 1 Cor. 7:28; 2 Cor. 1:4
 - Rev. 2:9-10, 22; 7:14

“Kingdom” (1:9)

- The Book of Revelation identifies a spiritual rather than a physical kingdom
 - Other occurrences and use of “kingdom” in Revelation
 - 1:6—“and he made us a kingdom, priests to God and his Father; to him is the glory and the dominion into the infinities of the infinities. Amen” (Majority Text; Translation mine)
 - 5:10—“You have made them to be kings and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth” [MT]
 - 11:15—“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever”
 - 12:10
 - 16:10
 - 17:12, 17

“Endurance” (1:9)



- When believers “endure” in their faith, they are said to “have kept the word of my [Jesus'] endurance” (3:10)
 - Endurance is part of “overcoming”/“conquering”
 - These troublesome times require enduring faith
 - 13:10 and 14:12— endurance + faith = enduring faith in the face of trials

“Endurance” (1:9)

- Enduring faith is essential
 - To prevent false teaching in the congregations (2:2-3)
 - To protect against the temptation to compromise their loyalty to Jesus in the midst of persecution (3:10)
 - Some have said that the way Christ will protect believers from the coming tribulation (“trial/temptation”) of 3:10 is by physically “rapturing” them from Earth to Heaven
 - This is argued based on what they consider to be the force of “keep from” (τηρέω ἐκ, or “keep out of”)
 - Jn. 17:15 is the only other NT occurrence of “keep from” (τηρέω ἐκ): “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one”
 - Jesus denies a physical removal and affirms spiritual protection from the devil

“The Tribulation and Kingdom and Endurance” (1:9)

- John and his fellow Christians serve in Jesus' kingdom, a kingdom that is a present reality
- Service in the kingdom begins and continues only as one faithfully endures tribulation
- The “tribulation” is a present reality for John and the Christians of the first century (1:9; 2:9)
- The “tribulation” will continue in the near future (2:10)
- Faithful endurance through tribulation is essential for present participation in Christ's kingdom
- “Companion/partner/partaker/participant” (1:9, κοινωνός) emphasizes the saints' active involvement in enduring and reigning in the midst of tribulation (5:10, MT)

John Turned (1:12)



- “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me” → the use of metonymy = the voice represents the speaker → authoritative words
- Rev. 1:12 → Dan. 7:11 LXX: “I saw, at that time, what became of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke”

John Turned (1:12)



- Ex. 20:18 LXX—“And all the people were perceiving the sound”
- Rev. 1:10—“and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet”
—alludes to Ezek. 3:12-13 LXX (which may allude to Exodus 20):
“The Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake. And I beheld the voice of the wings of the four living creatures”

The Golden Lampstand

The golden lampstand (Ex. 25:31–40) was made of pure gold, hammered out of one solid piece. Resting on a base, the central stem had six branches, three on either side, together carrying seven lamps. The lampstand with its branches was modeled on a flowering almond tree.







Christ Among the Lampstands (1:12-16)

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The Lampstand

- The first image John sees of the Son of man is that of “seven golden lampstands” (1:12)
 - The general background of the image:
 - Exodus 25:31-40 (the golden lampstand and seven lamps)
 - Exodus 37:17-24 (Bezalel's making of the golden lampstand and seven lamps)
 - Numbers 8:1-4
 - The most specific background of the image:
 - Zechariah 4

Christ Among the Lampstands (1:12-16)

What Does Jesus Look Like?

- 
- Hair & head white like wool (v16)**
 - Face shining like the sun (v16)
& eyes like a flame of fire (v14)**
 - Sword coming from His mouth (v16)**
 - Jesus holds the seven stars (v16)**
 - Golden sash around His chest (v13)**
 - Clothed down to His feet (v13)**
 - Feet like burning brass (v15)**

(Description taken from Revelation 1:13-16)

Courage in Christ: The Priest, Judge and Ruler of the Church (1:12-20)

- The vision of the Son of man (1:12-20) follows the typical pattern of visions in Jewish apocalyptic literature and the OT:
 - (1) the vision (1:12-16) followed by
 - (2) the seer's response (1:17a) and then
 - (3) an interpretation of the vision (1:17b-20)
- The vision includes the previous themes of kingdom, suffering and priesthood seen in 1:1-9
 - Jesus is the heavenly priest, judge and ruler (1:12-16)
 - By overcoming death Jesus became priest, judge and ruler (1:17b-18)

Christ Among the Lampstands (1:12-16)

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Courage in Christ: The Priest, Judge and Ruler of the Church (1:12-20)

- 1:9-20 serves as a commission to John to write all that is revealed to him
 - Christ gives John the commission (1:10-11) presenting his divine credentials and redemptive work as a basis for:
 - his authority to issue the commission (1:12-18) and
 - the command to be courageous (1:17a)
 - Prohibition against fear: “Do not fear” (Μὴ φοβοῦ)
 - Jesus gives the commission (1:11) and again (1:19)
 - 1:19—NU, M: “Therefore, write”
 - 1:12-20 continue the idea of 1:9-11 by functioning as a visionary, prophetic commission and introduction to the book

Christ Among the Lampstands (1:12-16)



The Seven Lampstands (1:12-13, 20)

- “The seven lampstands are the seven congregations” (1:20)
- Since the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne “are the seven spirits of God” (4:5), perhaps the picture is that the lamps (=spirits) are burning on “the seven golden lampstands” (i.e., the congregations, 1:12, 20)
 - “the seven spirits that are before his throne” (Rev. 1:4), perhaps referring to the sevenfold spirit of God
 - The sevenfold spirit of God empowers the church to be a light to the world (Mt. 5:14-16)
 - Zech. 4:2-7, 10
 - ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ (4:6)
 - “They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth” (4:10)

Primarily Priestly Attire (1:13)

- Jesus is “in the midst of the seven lampstands” and “clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band” (see Rev. 15:5-8)



Primarily Priestly Attire (1:13)

- Jesus takes care of the lampstands—the OT priest would trim the lamps, remove the wick and old oil, refill the lamps with fresh oil and relight those that had gone out



Primarily Priestly Attire (1:13)

- Jesus tends to the lampstands, the congregations, by correcting, warning, urging and commending to ensure each congregation shines as a light in a dark place (Mt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:19)



The Priestly Judge (1:14-16)

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His Head, Hair, Eyes, Feet, Voice, Mouth and Face (1:14-16)

- Attributes of the judicial figure of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9-12) are transferred to Jesus
 - The image pictures Jesus as divine judge
 - Other metaphors of judgment:
 - Rev. 2:18-23
 - Rev. 19:11-16
 - Jesus' constant presence among his congregations shows that he always knows their spiritual condition which brings either blessing or judgment
 - Rev. 2:18, 23
 - Further background: Daniel 10
 - The primary purpose of the vision is to reveal the divine decree that Israel's persecutors would be judged (Dan. 10:21-12:13)
 - Dan. 10:6

Feet Like Copper/Bronze/Brass (1:15; 2:18)



His Head, Hair, Eyes, Feet and Voice (1:14-15)

- Background for his head, hair, eyes and feet
 - His head and hair (1:14)→Dan. 7:9
 - His eyes and feet (1:14-15)→Dan. 10:6 LXX:
 - “And his body was like precious stone, and his face like the appearance of lightning and his eyes like flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like dazzling bronze, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude”
 - “Furnace” (1:15)→Dan. 3:25
 - His voice (1:15)→outline of Dan. 10:6 but the same wording as Ezek. 1:24 and 43:2→both in temple contexts
- “His feet were like bronze, as having been fired in a furnace” (1:15)
 - Suggests his moral purity, which provides the foundation for his demand that those among whom he walks must reflect purity in a world of immorality (Rev. 9:21)→Rev. 3:18

The Seven Stars (1:16, 20)



The Stars & Lampstands (Rev. 1:16, 20)

- The 7 stars = the messengers of the 7 churches (1:20)
- Beale says, “In Jewish writings the Zech. 4:2 lampstand is said to symbolize the righteous in Israel and is equated with the wise who will shine like the stars in Dan. 12:3” (p. 211)
 - “The Zechariah lampstand and the stars of Dan. 12:3 were thus equated in Jewish writings, so that their combination in Rev. 1:20 is natural . . .” (Ibid.)
- He points out, “the picture could be a polemic [attack] against the imperial myth of an emperor's son who dies and becomes a divine ruler over the stars of heaven, since the title “ruler of the kings of the earth” in 1:5 likely also has such a polemical connotation. If so, Christ's universal sovereignty is also accented” (Ibid.)

Sword Out of His Mouth (1:16)

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His Mouth and Face (1:16)

- Background for the “sharp two-edged sword”
 - Is. 11:4; 49:2→The Messianic Judge
 - Rev. 2:16; 19:15
 - Many, if not most commentators believe that the sword alludes to that of the Roman soldier, used in battle
- The message is that Jesus will go to battle not only against evil nations (19:15) but also against all among whom he walks (the congregations) who compromise their faith (2:16)
- Background for his face “like the sun shining in its strength”
 - Follows the Dan. 10:6 outline: “his face like the appearance of lightning” but same terminology as Judg. 5:31
 - The background of Judg. 5:20, 31 and the bright appearance of the victorious Israelite warrior Dan. 10:6, 20 seems to picture Jesus as the ideal messianic warrior

John Fell As Dead (1:17)



John Fell As Dead (1:17)

- John's response to the vision follows the fourfold pattern found in Daniel 8 and 10:
 - (1) The prophet observes a vision
 - (2) Falls on his face in fear
 - (3) Is strengthened by a heavenly being
 - (4) Then receives further revelation from that being
- The fourfold pattern is found in both Dan. 10:5-11 & 10:12-20
 - While Daniel 8 is included in the allusion, the word order and ideas of Rev. 1:17 are closer to Dan. 10:8-20, showing that it is the primary background
 - The fourfold pattern is also recognizable in Ezekiel 1-3, 8-11 and 43-44 but the pattern is much more vague
 - In the LXX the phrase “do not fear” occurs twice in Dan. 10:12, 19 but not in Daniel 8 or Ezekiel, further indicating Daniel 10 is the primary background

“Do Not Be Afraid” (1:17-18)

- The “Son of Man” (1:13) laid his right hand on John, saying “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last” (1:17)
 - Is. 41:4, 10; 44:2, 6, 8; 48:12-13
 - Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13—God's rule over history
 - Especially in fulfillment of prophecy and in bringing world affairs to a climax in salvation and judgment
 - God governs the way history proceeds because he is in control of its inception and conclusion
 - What was said of God in Isaiah and in Rev. 1:8 is now applied to Christ (1:17)
 - On the basis of his death and resurrection (1:18), the Father exalted him as High Priest

“Do Not Be Afraid” (1:17-18)

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 - Rev. 1:17-18→Rev. 2:8, 10
 - In the immediate context, “do not fear” (1:17) seems to refer only to Jesus' encouragement not to be afraid of his exalted appearance
 - Rev. 2:8-11 shows that the encouragement includes not being afraid to suffer
 - You can and must trust in Jesus' victory over death and his rule over history
 - Such confidence in Christ will guard the hearers against despair and compromise with the world
 - e.g., idolatry (2:14-15, 20-22)

“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:18)



Possible connection with Mt. 16:18-19?

“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:18)

- Jesus has the keys of death and of Hades
 - Translation possibilities:
 - “Keys to death and Hades” (objective genitive)?
 - “Keys possessed by death . . .” (possessive genitive)?
 - Both options may be included:
 - (1) Jesus has authority over death and Hades
 - (2) This realm is in his possession
 - Interpretation possibilities
 - Could be understood through the use of “key” imagery in the Targums or rabbinic literature
 - The Palestinian Targum of Deut. 28:11-12
 - Asserts that God and no one else holds “the key of life and of the tombs”

“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:18)

- Interpretation possibilities
 - Could be understood through the use of “key” imagery in the Targums or rabbinic literature
 - The Palestinian Targum of Deut. 28:11-12
 - Asserts that God and no one else holds “the key of life and of the tombs”
 - This would not be inconsistent with the imagery presented of Christ as a divine being
 - 2 En. 42:1 refers to demonic “guardians of the keys of hell”
 - Apocalypse of Zephaniah 6:11-15 pictures a heavenly figure like that seen in Rev. 1:13-15, who “is over the abyss and Hades,” where “all the souls are imprisoned”

“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:18)

- Interpretation possibilities
 - Is. 22:22 may be the more probable background as Rev. 3:7 seems to indicate
 - If Isaiah 22 is the background, the connection would be that Eliakim was seen as a type of the priestly and kingly messianic servant who would reign (vv. 20-23)
 - Eliakim the son of Hilkiah was one of King Hezekiah’s government officials
 - His job was to be “over the household” (2 Kings 18:18), “in charge of the palace” (NRSV)
 - It seems Shebna had his job taken from him because he had done something (what we don't know) that had brought disgrace onto the royal household (Is. 22:18)
 - Eliakim would bring “honor to his father’s house” (Is. 22:23)

“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:18)

- Interpretation possibilities
 - Is. 22:22 may be the more probable background as Rev. 3:7 seems to indicate
 - If Isaiah 22 is the background, the connection would be that Eliakim was seen as a type of the priestly and kingly messianic servant who would reign (vv. 20-23)
 - It would have been easy to make the association with the preceding priest-king images and the Isaiah reference (“I am the First and the Last,” 1:17b)
 - Through the victory of the resurrection Jesus became king even over the realm of the dead in which he was formerly imprisoned
 - Now, not only will he never again be held in death's bonds but he also controls who is released and retained in that realm (Rev. 3:7; 9:1-2; 20:1-3, 7)

“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:18)

- Rev. 1:18 reiterates the point about Christ's death and resurrection in v. 5 (“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead . . .”)
 - Those who fear death (or suffering) can trust that their endurance in Jesus will be rewarded with victory over the grave on the basis that Jesus also entered this world, died and conquered death
 - Rev. 1:18a is repeated in the letter to Smyrna (2:8-11), also making this same point

Stars and Sword (2:1, 12, 16)



Walking Among the Lampstands (2:1)



Walking Among the Lampstands (2:1)



Walking Among the Lampstands (2:1)



***“I will come to you quickly and remove your
lampstand from its place” (2:5)***



“I Will Give You the Crown of Life (2:10)”



“I will give some of the hidden manna” (2:17b)



***I will give him a white stone and . . .
a new name (2:17c)***



“I Will Give Him the Morning Star” (2:28)



Revelation Chapters 2-3

- Summary of the letters to the seven congregations:
 - Encourages the congregations to be faithful
 - Warns them against compromise
 - Urges them to overcome compromise in order to inherit eternal life
- The letters serve as part of an extended introduction (chs. 1-3) to the visions (chs. 4-20)
 - The visions fit within the framework of the standard structure of a first century letter:
The introduction (chs. 1-3), concluding warnings (22:6ff) and benediction (22:20-21)

Revelation Chapters 2-3

- Structure of the seven letters:
 - The letters do not fit the standard form of an ancient letter
 - The letters are better referred to as “prophetic messages”
- 5 general sections (w/minor alterations) of each letter:
 - 1) Command to write to a messenger of a congregation
 - 2) The phrase “these things” introducing Jesus' self-description based on the description in chapter 1
 - 3) The phrase “I know your works” introducing commendation or accusation and exhortation to repent with warning or encouragement
 - 4) Exhortation to understand and obey (“ear to hear”)
 - 5) Promise to the conquerors

Revelation Chapters 2-3

- The general pattern of thought in each letter:
 - Jesus presents himself with characteristics suitable to each congregation's situation, providing the basis for faith to overcome the specific issue facing the congregation
 - Jesus introduces the situation or the particular problem with “I know” and addresses them accordingly
 - Jesus gives either encouragement to persevere in the face of trial (to the faithful) or exhortation to repent in order to avoid judgment (to the unfaithful)
 - Jesus invites the congregations to respond by obeying (“must hear”) the encouragement/exhortation
 - On the basis of a positive response (“hearing” followed by “overcoming”), Jesus promises eternal life with him

Stars and Sword (2:1, 12, 16)



Walking Among the Lampstands (2:1)



Walking Among the Lampstands (2:1)



Congregation in Ephesus (2:1-7)

- Jesus commends them for their stance against false teachers (vv. 2-3)
 - Their alertness to doctrinal error may reflect Paul's previous warnings to the Christians at Ephesus
 - Acts 20:28-32
 - 1 Tim. 1:3-11
 - 1 Tim. 4:1-8
 - 1 Tim. 6:2-7, 20-21
 - 2 Tim. 3:1-17
- Jesus condemns them for their lack of evangelism (v. 4)
 - Losing their “first love” indicated their lack of zeal in teaching the lost (Mt. 24:12-14)

***“I will come to you quickly and remove your
lampstand from its place” (2:5)***



Congregation in Ephesus (2:1-7)

- Jesus encourages them to overcome their lack of evangelism so their lampstand will not be removed and in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 5-7)
 - If they will not be a light to the world, their lampstand will be removed
 - Mt. 5:14-16
 - Mk. 4:21 [Mk. 4:23→Rev. 2:7]
 - Lk. 8:16 [Lk. 8:8→Rev. 2:7]
 - The primary meaning of “lampstand” is evangelism
 - Confirmed by the evangelism of the two witnesses [“the two lampstands,” Rev. 11:4] (Rev. 11:3-10)

Revelation Chapters 2-3

- The condition of the congregations is presented in the literary form of a chiasm: a b c c c b' a'
 - [(1) a = Ephesus, (7) a' = Laodicea]
 - [(3) c = Pergamos, (4) c = Thyatira, (5) c = Sardis]
 - [(2) b = Smyrna, (6) b' = Philadelphia]
 - 1 & 7 = the worst; in danger of losing their identity w/Christ
 - 3, 4 & 5 = some faithful, some compromisers
 - 2 & 6 = the best; the healthy congregations are in a minority
- As a whole, the worst form the literary boundaries of the letters and the central congregations with serious problems form the core of the message
 - 4 is the middle congregation and in the center of the middle letter is a warning to “all the congregations” (2:23)

“I Will Give You the Crown of Life (2:10)”



“I will give some of the hidden manna” (2:17b)



***I will give him a white stone and . . .
a new name (2:17c)***



“I Will Give Him the Morning Star” (2:28)



Congregation in Smyrna (2:8-11)

- Jesus commends them for enduring tribulation (v. 9)
 - They were already undergoing “tribulation”
- Jesus encourages their continued faithfulness—anticipating imminent, more severe persecution—in order to inherit eternal life (v. 10)
 - The mention of persecution (v. 10) immediately following that of Jewish slander conforms to historical reports of Jews allying with and encouraging Romans and Gentiles to oppress Christians
 - Acts 13:45, 50; 14:2-7, 19; 17:5-9
 - 1 Thess. 2:14-16
 - *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 12:1-2; 13:1

“Do Not Fear” (2:10a)



***“The Keys of Death and of Hades” (1:17-18)
[see also 1:8]***

“Do Not Fear” (2:10a)



“Be Faithful” (2:10c)

“I Will Give You the Crown of Life” (2:10c)



Congregation in Smyrna (2:8-11)

- Jesus encourages their continued faithfulness—anticipating imminent, more severe persecution—in order to inherit eternal life (v. 10)
 - Imprisonment is not the primary trial/test threatening the faithful at Smyrna
 - Usually, in the Roman world, imprisonment was a prelude to trial and execution
 - Sometimes prison was a place of temporary detention
 - Acts 16:23-40
 - 2 Cor. 11:23—“in prisons more frequently”
 - “Become faithful to death” indicates that the trial/test is mainly execution

Congregation in Smyrna (2:8-11)

- “You will have tribulation 10 days” (v. 10b)
 - Alludes to Dan. 1:11-15
 - The testing/trial of Daniel and his friends for 10 days is stated twice
 - Same root (“test,” πειράζω) in LXX of Dan. 1:12, 14
 - During the test they did not eat “the king's choice food” (NASB) (had only vegetables and water)
 - The purpose of the test was to determine if they could be as healthy as the youths who ate “the king's choice food”
 - They were tempted to compromise with pagan religion by being pressured to eat from the king's table

Congregation in Smyrna (2:8-11)

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 - Alludes to Dan. 1:11-15
 - The testing/trial of Daniel and his friends for 10 days is stated twice
 - They refused to eat from the king's table because the food was dedicated to idols (Dan. 1:2; 5:3-4)
 - Christians must run away from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14, 18-21, 28-29; 1 Jn. 5:21)
 - To eat at table with a king was symbolic in the ancient Near East of giving complete loyalty to him above all else
 - They could not; the king appears to have considered himself divine (Dan. 3:2, 12)

Congregation in Smyrna (2:8-11)

- “You will have tribulation 10 days (v. 10b)
 - Alludes to Dan. 1:11-15
 - The testing/trial of Daniel and his friends for 10 days is stated twice
 - For both Jews and early Christians, Daniel and his friends were the model for those who would rather be persecuted for their faith than worship idols
 - The account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, a leader of the congregation at Smyrna in the mid-second century, gives us a glimpse of the kind of threats that may have challenged the congregation in the first century

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- “You will have tribulation 10 days (v. 10b)
 - The account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, a leader of the congregation at Smyrna in the mid-second century, gives us a glimpse of the kind of threats that may have challenged the congregation in the first century
 - The Roman governor told Polycarp that he would be executed if he did not give a public, token acknowledgment to Caesar as Lord
 - Polycarp died because of his faith in Jesus
 - It seems almost certain that Polycarp was one of the readers of Revelation, before the close of the first century

Congregation in Smyrna (2:8-11)

- It seems almost certain that Polycarp was one of the readers of Revelation, even before the close of the first century
 - Irenaeus (c. 140 – c. 202 AD) said that Polycarp was converted by apostles
 - Irenaeus says, “I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ, the words he (Polycarp) had heard from their mouths”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycarp>

Martyrdom of Polycarp

- The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* or *The Letter of the Smyrnaeans* is one of the very few writings from the actual age of the persecutions
- Polycarp lived ~AD 69–155 (86 years)

(9:2) When then he was brought before him, the proconsul asked whether he were the man. And on his confessing that he was, he tried to persuade him to a denial saying, "Have respect to your age," and other things in accordance therewith, as it is their habit to say, "Swear by the genius of Caesar; repent and say, 'Away with the atheists.'" Then Polycarp with solemn countenance looked upon the whole multitude of lawless heathen that were in the stadium, and waved his hand to them; and groaning and looking up to heaven he said, "Away with the atheists."

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(9:3) But when the magistrate pressed him hard and said, "Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile the Christ," Polycarp said, "Eighty-six years have I been His servant, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

(10:1) But on his persisting again and saying, "Swear by the genius of Caesar," he answered, "If you suppose vainly that I will swear by the genius of Caesar, as you say, and feign that you are ignorant who I am, hear you plainly: I am a Christian. But if you would learn the doctrine of Christianity, assign a day and give me a hearing."

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(10:2) The proconsul said, "Prevail upon the people." But Polycarp said, "As for yourself, I should have held you worthy of discourse; for we have been taught to render, as is proper, to princes and authorities appointed by God such honor as does us no harm; but as for these, I do not hold them worthy, that I should defend myself before them."

(11:1) Whereupon the proconsul said: "I have wild beasts here and I will throw you to them, except you repent." But he said, "Call for them, for the repentance from better to worse is a change not permitted to us; but it is a noble thing to change from that which is improper to righteousness."

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(11:2) Then he said to him again, "If you despise the wild beasts, I will cause you to be consumed by fire, unless you repent." But Polycarp said: "You threaten that fire which burns for a season and after a little while is quenched: for you are ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay? Come, do what you will."

(12:1) Saying these things and more besides, he was inspired with courage and joy, and his countenance was filled with grace, so that not only did it not drop in dismay at the things which were said to him, but on the contrary the proconsul was astounded and sent his own herald to proclaim three times in the midst of the stadium, "Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian."

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(12:2) When this was proclaimed by the herald, the whole multitude both of Gentiles and of Jews who dwelt in Smyrna cried out with ungovernable wrath and with a loud shout, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the puller down of our gods, who teaches multitudes not to sacrifice nor worship." Saying these things, they shouted aloud and asked the Asiarch Philip to let a lion loose upon Polycarp. But he said that it was not lawful for him, since he had brought the sports to a close.

(12:3) Then they thought fit to shout out with one accord that Polycarp should be burned alive. . .

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(13:1) These things then happened with so great speed, quicker than words could tell, the crowds immediately collected timber and sticks from the workshops and baths, and the Jews more especially assisted in this with zeal, as is their custom.

(13:2) But when the pile was made ready, divesting himself of all his upper garments and loosing his belt, he endeavored also to take off his shoes, though not in the habit of doing this before, because all the faithful at all times vied eagerly who should soonest touch his flesh. For he had been treated with all honor for his holy life even before his gray hairs came.

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(13:3) Immediately then the instruments that were prepared for the pile were placed about him. As they were going likewise to nail him to the stake, he said: "Leave me as I am; for He that has granted me to endure the fire will grant me also to remain at the pyre unmoved, even without the security which you seek from the nails."

(14:1) So they did not nail him, but tied him. Then he, placing his hands behind him and being bound to the stake, like a noble ram out of a great flock for an offering, a burnt sacrifice made ready and acceptable to God, looking up to heaven said: "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of You, the God of angels and powers and of all creation and of the whole race of the righteous, who live in Your presence;

Martyrdom of Polycarp

(14:2) I bless You because You have granted me this day and hour, that I might receive a portion amongst the number of martyrs in the cup of Your Christ unto resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and of body, in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. May I be received among these in Your presence this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as You did prepare and reveal it beforehand, and have accomplished it, You that art the faithful and true God.

(14:3) For this cause, yea and for all things, I praise You, I bless You, I glorify You, through the eternal and heavenly High-priest, Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, through Whom, with Him and the Holy Spirit, be glory both now and ever and for the ages to come. Amen."

(15:1) When he had offered up the Amen and finished his prayer, the firemen lighted the fire.

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Jesus addresses them as their Judge (2:12)
 - Christ as a threatening Judge (because of the congregation's sin) dominates the message to Pergamos
 - 1:16
- Jesus commends them for enduring persecution (v. 13)
 - “I know where you dwell” vs. “where Satan dwells”
 - Their light (as a lampstand) cannot dwell in the darkness of compromising through idolatrous worship
 - The city of Pergamos is “where Satan’s throne is”
 - Pergamos was a center of Roman government and pagan religion in Asia Minor
 - It was the first city in Asia Minor to build a temple to a Roman emperor (Augustus)
 - It was the capital of Asia Minor for the cult of the emperor

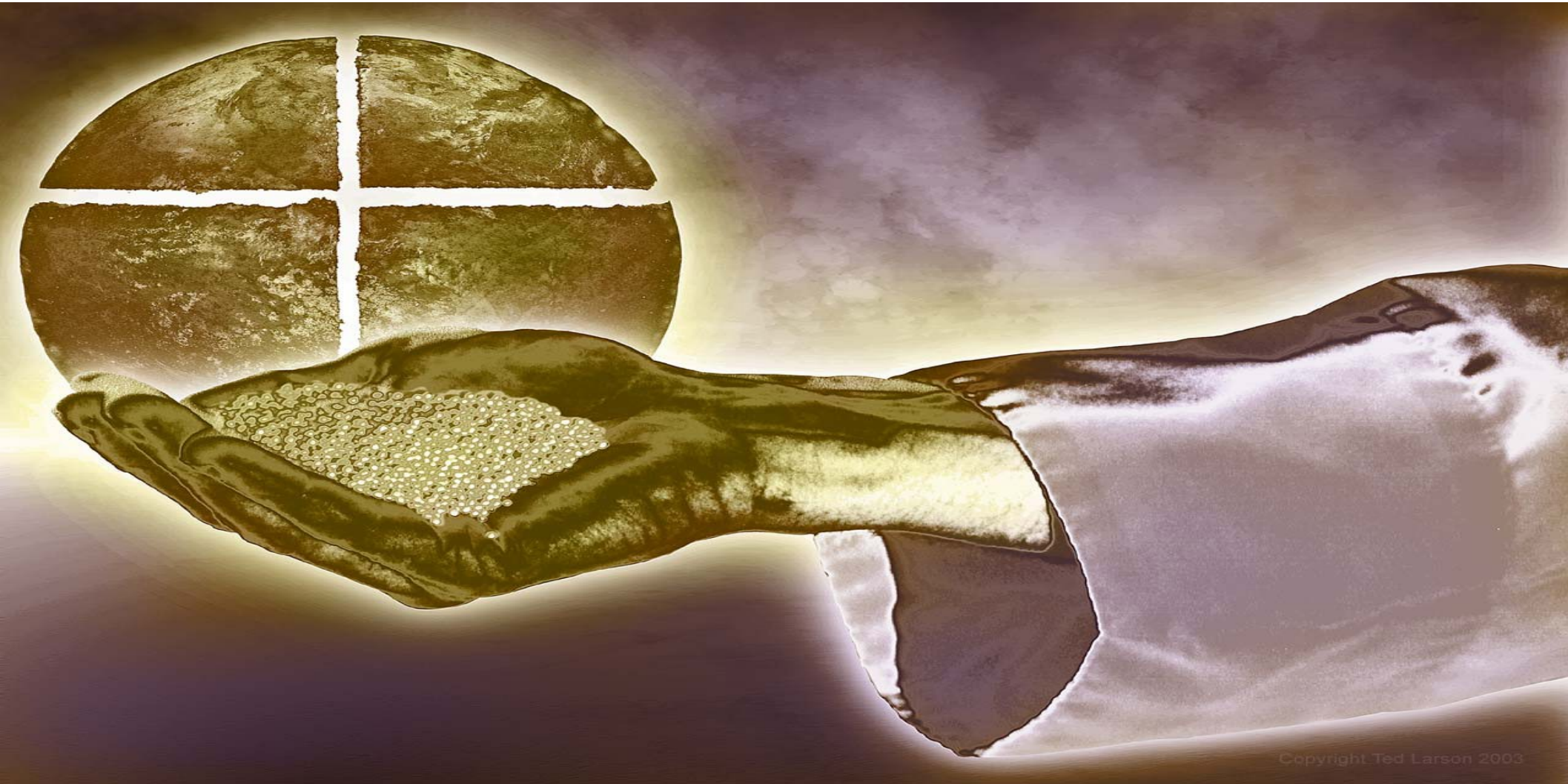
Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Jesus addresses them as their Judge (2:12)
- Jesus commends them for enduring persecution (v. 13)
- Jesus condemns them for their permissive spirit of idolatrous compromise (vv. 14-15)
 - “The teaching of Balaam” (v. 14)
 - Balaam was a pagan prophet hired by Balak, king of Moab, to curse the invading Israelites (Num. 22:5-24:25)
 - Later, through the counsel of Balaam, Moabite women seduced Israelite men into fornication and idolatrous worship (Num. 25:1-3; 31:16)
 - Balaam became proverbial for the false teacher who for money influences believers to enter into compromising relationships, is warned by God to stop and is ultimately punished for disobedience (2 Pet. 2:14-16; Jude 1:11)

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Jesus addresses them as their Judge (2:12)
- Jesus commends them for enduring persecution (v. 13)
- Jesus condemns them for their permissive spirit of idolatrous compromise (vv. 14-15)
 - The imagery of the sword (vv. 12, 16) is appropriate since “the angel of the Lord” stood against Balaam with his sword drawn (Num. 22:23, 31)
 - When Balaam did not heed God's warning, he was “killed with the sword” (Num. 31:8; Josh. 13:22)
 - Spiritually, Jesus will deal with the congregation in Pergamos and the compromisers will suffer the same judgment if they do not repent (v. 16)
- Jesus urges them to repent to avoid judgment (v. 16) and overcome to inherit eternal life (v. 17)

“I will give some of the hidden manna” (2:17b)



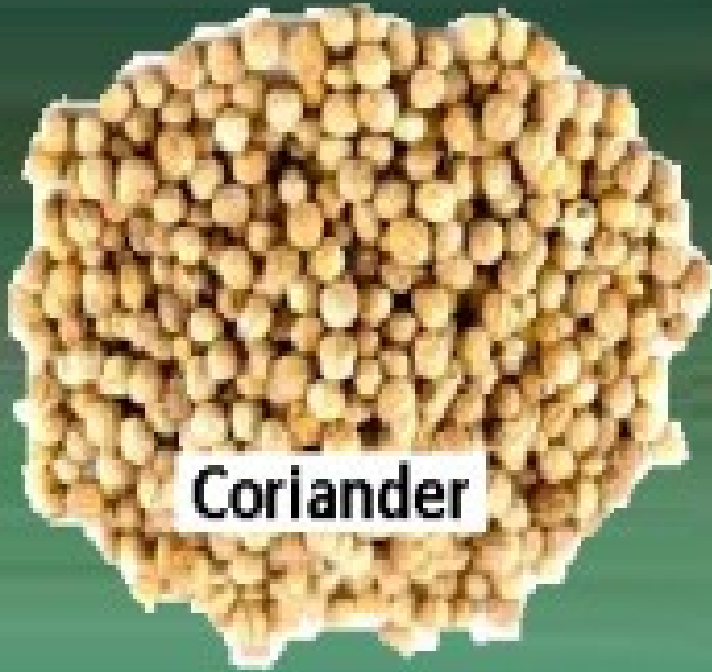
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- Ex. 16:31-36; Num. 11:7; Heb. 9:4
 - Jn. 6:31-35; 17:3
- Fellowship/communion with Jesus (Rev. 2:7) vs. participation in pagan feasts (Rev. 2:14)

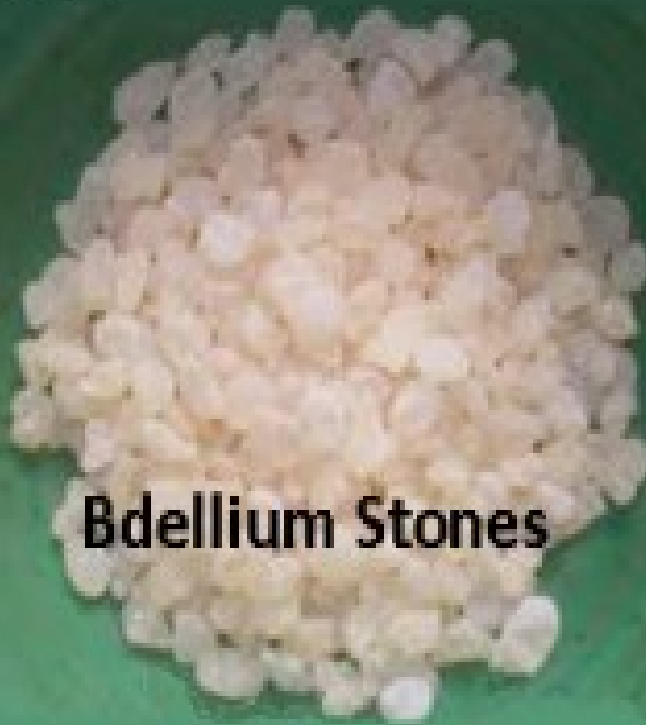
“I will give some of the hidden manna” (2:17b)

BAMIDBAR/NUMBERS 11

TSIYON.ORG



Coriander



Bdellium Stones



Manna

*"The manna was like coriander seed,
and its appearance like the appearance of bdellium."*

- Ex. 16:31-36; Num. 11:7; Heb. 9:4
 - Jn. 6:31-35; 17:3
- Fellowship/communion with Jesus (Rev. 2:7) vs. participation in pagan feasts (Rev. 2:14)

***I will give him a white stone and . . .
a new name (2:17c)***



- 3:12; 19:12-16
- 14:1, 3
- 21:3; 22:3-4—God's presence with his people

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Jesus will give “the hidden manna,” “a white stone” and “a new name” to those who “overcome”
 - Those who “overcome” in this life inherit eternal life
 - Previous imagery alluding to eternal life
 - To Ephesus: “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (2:7b)
 - To Smyrna: “Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life” (2:10c)
 - White indicates righteousness in not compromising and “soiling” themselves with idolatry and immorality
 - Rev. 3:4—“have not soiled . . . will walk . . . in white”

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- White indicates righteousness in not compromising and “soiling” themselves with idolatry and immorality
 - Rev. 3:4—“have not soiled . . . will walk . . . in white”
 - Rev. 19:8-9
 - Same root “to give” (Rev. 2:17; 19:8a)
 - Rev. 3:5a→19:8a
 - The white stone anticipates the invitation to have fellowship with Jesus, sharing in his supper (19:9)
 - White is symbolic for righteousness [at least twice for victory through faithfulness and righteousness (6:2; 19:14)]
 - At least 12 other times in Revelation
 - 1:14; 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 6:2, 11; 7:9, 13-14; 14:14; 19:11, 14; 20:11

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Jesus will give “the hidden manna,” “a white stone” and “a new name” to those who “overcome”
 - Those who “overcome” in this life inherit eternal life
 - The most profound study in life:
 - The study of eternal life (Rom. 6:23)
 - How do we study eternal life?
 - By knowing & following Jesus (Mt. 28:19)
 - Be disciples/followers/students/learners
 - μαθητής, *mathētēs* (from *math-*, the “mental effort needed to think something through”) – properly, a learner; a disciple, a follower of Christ who learns the doctrines of Scripture and the lifestyle they require

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Those who “overcome” in this life inherit eternal life
- The most profound study in life:
 - The study of eternal life (Rom. 6:23)
 - How do we study eternal life?
 - By knowing & following Jesus (Mt. 28:19)
 - Eph. 4:14-32
 - v. 15 (ἀληθεύοντες, *alētheuontes*) Usage: I say (speak) truth, do truth, maintain truth (the truth)
 - "truthing" – speaking reality (truth) into a person's life, making a record of what God deems is truth
 - *alētheúō* ("to truth") includes confrontation using God's Word where it is vital to tell the truth so others can live in God's reality rather than personal illusion

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Those who “overcome” in this life inherit eternal life
- The most profound study in life:
 - The study of eternal life (Rom. 6:23)
 - How do we study eternal life?
 - By knowing & following Jesus (Mt. 28:19)
 - Eph. 4:14-32
 - v. 20: from the root *math-*
 - “Eternal life” is used about 46x in the Greek NT
 - The concept of “eternal life” is found many more times, primarily by the word “life” (and its forms), the word “salvation” (and its forms) and the word “kingdom”

Congregation in Pergamos (2:12-17)

- Jesus will give “the hidden manna,” “a white stone” and “a new name” to those who “overcome”
 - Those who “overcome” in this life inherit eternal life
 - The most profound study in life:
 - The study of eternal life (Rom. 6:23)
 - How do we study eternal life?
 - By knowing & following Jesus (Mt. 28:19)
 - Eph. 4:14-32
 - This life is all about eternal life through Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:5, 21)
 - Jn. 10:10, 17:3
 - Phil. 3:7-11
 - 1 Jn. 5:11-13

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- The message to Thyatira is similar to that of Pergamos
- Jesus addresses them as their Judge (2:18) [see next slides]
 - The hearers are to recall the previous imagery (1:13-16)
 - “The Son of God” (2:18 [only occurrence in Revelation]; Dan. 3:24-25)
 - Similar to God's protection of Daniel's faithful friends, Jesus spiritually will protect the faithful in Thyatira during persecution
 - “The Son of man” (1:13) is “the Son of God” (2:18)
 - His eyes and feet (Rev. 1:14-15; Dan. 3:25 [in the furnace]; 10:6)
 - That these descriptions are sometimes interchangeable also comes from a tradition among Jews and Christians recognizing the Son of God in Daniel 3 as identical to the Son of man in Daniel 7 (4 Ezra 13:1-3, 32, 37, 52; Mt. 16:13-17; Mk. 8:38; 14:61-62; Jn. 1:49-51; 3:13-18; 5:25-27)
 - Ps. 2:5, 7-12→Rev. 2:26-27→The theme of judgment

Feet Like Copper/Bronze/Brass (2:18) [1:15]



Eyes Like a Flame of Fire (2:18) [1:14]

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Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- “The Son of God” (2:18; Dan. 3:24-25)
 - In the depiction of the coin below, the god stands on the right, shaking hands with the emperor. The god holds a battle ax to show his power in war. Here the Emperor and the god of Thyatira support the Imperial Trimnean Pythian Games with their hands joined together

(http://www.generationword.com/notes_for_notesbooks_pg/rev_2_thyatira.htm)



Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- “The Son of God” (2:18; Dan. 3:24-25)
 - “The principal deity of the city was Apollo, worshiped as the sun-god under the surname Tyrimnas” (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - Tyrimnas was represented with flaming rays and feet of burnished brass (Fausset's Bible Dictionary)



Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- “The Son of God” (2:18; Dan. 3:24-25)
 - “The emperor (left) and the deity of Thyatira (Apollo Tyrimnos) were both called the sons of Zeus”
(http://www.generationword.com/notes_for_notesbooks_pg/rev_2_thyatira.htm)
 - Jesus is the only true Son of God—trust him for your economic and spiritual welfare



Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus commends them for their works (2:19)
 - “as for your works, the last are more than the first”
 - Contrast Ephesus (2:4-5): “you have left your first love . . . repent and do the first works or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place”
- Jesus condemns them for their tolerant spirit of idolatrous compromise (2:20-23)
 - Thyatira “suffered that woman JEZEBEL, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.’ Some self-styled prophetess, or collection of prophets (the feminine in Hebrew idiom expressing a multitude), closely attached to and influencing the Thyatira church . . . as Jezebel did her weak husband Ahab” (Fausset's Bible Dictionary)

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus condemns them for their tolerant spirit of idolatrous compromise (vv. 20-23)
 - Their sin—toleration—is the very thing our postmodern culture commends as one of the greatest virtues!
 - The phrases “your woman Jezebel” (v. 20) and “her children” (v. 23) together form a collective thought as does the phrase “the chosen lady and her children (2 Jn. 1:1)”
 - In 2 John, the phrase seems to refer to the community as a whole and to the individuals who compose the community
 - Note also 1 Pet. 5:13 as well as the female personifications of Israel in the OT and of the church in the NT
 - Jezebel incited King Ahab and Israel to compromise and “fornicate” by worshiping Baal and Asherah (1 Kings 16:31-32; 18:19—notice the 850 false prophets!; 21:25-26; 2 Kings 9:22)
 - The teaching of Jezebel is similar to that of the teaching of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans in Pergamos (2:14-15)

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus condemns them for their tolerant spirit of idolatrous compromise (vv. 20-23)
 - The phrases “to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality” (v. 14) and “to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” (v. 20) show that the element of compromise with idolatry existed in the congregations of Pergamos and Thyatira
 - It may have been worse in Thyatira since it was the economic hub of a large number of prosperous trade guilds
 - Thyatira had a guild for almost every trade
 - Most people involved in any economic activity belonged to one or more trade guilds
 - Since all the guilds had patron deities, Christians who were guild members would be expected to pay honor to pagan gods at official guild meetings

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus condemns them for their tolerant spirit of idolatrous compromise (vv. 20-23)
 - The phrases “to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality” (v. 14) and “to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” (v. 20) show that the element of compromise with idolatry existed in the congregations of Pergamos and Thyatira
 - The guild meetings usually included eating things sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality
 - Nonparticipation would lead to economic ostracism
 - According to Moulton's Greek grammar the phrase “throw into a bed” (v. 22) is a Hebraism—metonymic for illness/suffering
 - May also be an attack against the idolatrous and immoral banqueting bed of the guild feasts

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus condemns them for their tolerant spirit of idolatrous compromise (vv. 20-23)
- Jesus urges the compromisers to repent in order to avoid judgment (vv. 22-23)
 - “I will kill her children with death” (v. 23) appears to be similar to what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 5 (in a similar context also dealing with idolatry and immorality) when he spoke of delivering a man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved (1 Cor. 5:5)
 - This man was to be put out of the church (1 Cor. 5:2) and into the realm of the kingdom of darkness
 - This is also Jesus' strategy to cleanse the temple (the congregation) in Thyatira by the removal of sin from its midst

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - The faithful were not deceived by the Jezebel teaching (v. 24)
 - “The deep things of Satan” (v. 24)
 - Possibly it is Jesus’ description of what the false teachers may have called the “deep things of God”
 - The expression implies their false view that it was possible to participate to some extent in idolatry and to have experience with the demonic realm—yet not be harmed spiritually by such participation

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - The faithful were not deceived by the Jezebel teaching (v. 24)
 - The Jezebel “revelation” seems similar to that of:
 - a) the Israelites who made the golden calf (Ex. 32:1-6) or
 - b) that of the Corinthians who went into idol temples (1 Cor. 10:14-22)
 - Possibly the false teachers were misapplying Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 8:4 by saying that since an idol has no real existence in the world, then participation at a feast honoring an idol could not harm one spiritually
 - This teaching also may have emphasized that the physical world did not matter, so that one’s presence in an idolatrous temple or at an idol’s table had no effect on one’s faith

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - The faithful were not deceived by the Jezebel teaching (v. 24)
 - The faithful are to “be strong to what you hold/possess” (v. 25)
 - Jesus stresses to those who had not been persuaded by the Jezebel teaching that their main concern should be to continue their uncompromising stand until he comes
 - Jesus is placing on them no other burden (v. 24) than that placed on Gentiles (Acts 15:28-29)
 - Those who overcome compromise and who discipline the false teachers will spiritually reign with Jesus (v. 26)
 - They must be faithful to the end in order to receive the promise

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - Those who overcome compromise and who discipline the false teachers will spiritually reign with Jesus (v. 26)
 - Followers of Christ abundantly overcome in the midst of the trials (Rom. 8:35-37)
 - Overcoming in Christ is based on Jesus' overcoming, who overcame by remaining faithful to God throughout his life until his death on the cross (Jn. 16:33)
 - Later, the vision John sees of the overcoming Christ pictures him as a Lamb that has been slain (Rev. 5:5-6)
 - Whereas Paul describes overcoming believers as sheep to be slaughtered (Rom. 8:36-37)

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - Those who overcome compromise and who discipline the false teachers will spiritually reign with Jesus (v. 26)
 - All the congregations are faced with the temptation to compromise and some are yielding to temptation (Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea)
 - The encouragement to overcome is either to continue standing strong against compromise or to stop compromising
 - The beast “overcomes” believers by causing them to suffer (11:7; 13:7), but believers overcome the beast by remaining faithful even while suffering ([5:5-6]; 12:11; 15:2)
 - Those who overcome are not just those who die for their faith—the promise is made to all the faithful

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - Those who overcome compromise and who discipline the false teachers will spiritually reign with Jesus (v. 26)
 - Those who overcome are not just those who die for their faith—the promise is made to all the faithful
 - Overcoming is defined by the parallel phrase “keeps my works” (2:26) which shows that overcoming involves obedience/faithfulness up to and including death
 - Contrast “repent of her works” (2:22)
 - Christians overcome by their faithful living, not just dying
 - Specifically by their refusal to yield to the temptation of participating in any form of idolatry
 - They refuse to seek anyone or anything before “the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Mt. 6:33)

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - Those who overcome compromise and who discipline the false teachers will spiritually reign with Jesus (v. 26)
 - Those who overcome are not just those who die for their faith—the promise is made to all the faithful
 - Christians overcome by their faithful living, not just dying
 - All the promises made to overcomers in the letters are described in the final section of Revelation which speaks of God's kingdom—in which believers:
 - Are protected from judgment (2:10; 3:5; 21:1-8)
 - Receive an inheritance in God's city (3:12; 21:7, 27)
 - Share in Christ's reign (2:26-28; 3:21; 22:5)
 - Have eternal life (2:7; 3:5; 21:27; 22:1-5)

Congregation in Thyatira (2:18-29)

- Jesus encourages overcoming the pressures to compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 24-29)
 - The faithful were not deceived by the Jezebel teaching (v. 24)
 - The faithful are to “be strong to what you hold/possess” (v. 25)
 - Those who overcome compromise and who discipline the false teachers will spiritually reign with Jesus (v. 26)
 - Jesus promises the faithful he will grant them a share in the messianic kingdom prophesied in Psalm 2 (v. 27)
 - Jesus quotes Ps. 2:8-9, which completes the message that Jesus is God's Son
 - Ps. 2:7 refers to Jesus as God's Son, the same phrase with which he introduced himself to the congregation in Thyatira (v. 18)

“I Will Give Him the Morning Star” (2:28)



Is. 11:1; Rev. 22:16; Num. 24:17→Messianic Reign

“I Will Give Him the Morning Star” (2:28)

- The morning star is a reference to Jesus himself
 - Jesus reveals himself as the “bright morning star” (22:16)
 - Jesus is prophetically a star and scepter (or rod) (Num. 24:17)
 - Jesus will break his enemies with a rod or scepter (Ps. 2:9)
 - Therefore, the morning star is a symbol of the messianic reign which began with Christ’s resurrection
 - The application of this emblem to believers indicates that they will participate in this reign if they overcome
 - Since Roman emperors claimed to be descended from Venus, whom they considered the morning star, Jesus reveals himself as the true ruler of the world

Congregation in Sardis (3:1-6)

- Jesus condemns them for their failure to evangelize and for their compromise with idolatry (vv. 1-3)
 - Jesus introduces himself similarly to Ephesus (2:1; 3:1)
 - Like the Ephesians, those at Sardis have lost their evangelistic zeal
 - Sardis was a city which had known fame (had a name) in the past but whose glory had faded
 - The congregation is in a similar predicament
 - The attitude of the city had infected the congregation
 - The congregation had a reputation (a name) for being spiritually alive, but actually were nearly dead (clarified in v. 2, “the things that remain, which were about to die”)
 - Notice the similarly contrasting statements concerning the Jews' claim (2:9; 3:9)

“He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars” (3:1)



Congregation in Sardis (3:1-6)

- Jesus condemns them for their failure to evangelize and for their compromise with idolatry (vv. 1-3)
 - In 3:1, there is more emphasis on Jesus as their supernatural source to strengthen the congregation's evangelistic zeal than in 2:1
 - This is particularly appropriate since the congregation in Sardis is the only one among the seven that is so lazy and inactive in fulfilling their role that they are on the verge of being completely spiritually dead
 - In order to carry out their call from the risen Lord to proclaim the gospel they need God's life-giving power to revive them from their spiritual laziness and inactivity

Congregation in Sardis (3:1-6)

- Jesus condemns them for their failure to evangelize and for their compromise with idolatry (vv. 1-3)
 - Being almost dead, they are to wake up (3:2)
 - Same root word as in Eph. 5:14 (ἐγείρω, *egeiró*)
 - They are to “strengthen” the things that remain (3:2)
 - Same root word as in some truly encouraging verses:
 - Lk. 22:32
 - Rom. 1:11; 16:25
 - 1 Thess. 3:2, 13
 - 2 Thess. 2:17; 3:3
 - Jas. 5:8
 - 1 Pet. 5:10
 - 2 Pet. 1:12

Congregation in Sardis (3:1-6)

- Jesus condemns them for their failure to evangelize and for their compromise with idolatry (vv. 1-3)
 - They are to strengthen the things that remain (3:2)
 - The congregation had become unconcerned about the radical demands of their faith in the midst of a pagan culture
 - The mention of things that remain implies they had begun a life of faithful service, but something had happened that impeded further progress
 - What is in question is their name
 - This is significant based on the use of “name” in 2:17
 - Do they truly bear the name of Christ?
 - This is what is now in doubt
 - Are they more like those who say they are (true) Jews but are not, who are alluded to in 2:9?

Congregation in Sardis (3:1-6)

- Jesus condemns them for their failure to evangelize and for their compromise with idolatry (vv. 1-3)
 - What is in question is their name
 - There certainly had been life here, but their genuine works/deeds were in the past, not the present (3:1-2)
 - “Works/deeds” refers to being faithful lightbearers as a lampstand of Christ (see 2:1-2)
 - Like the Ephesians (2:5), they are called to return to their former works/deeds (3:2-3)
 - Jesus appears to them holding the seven stars (as to the Ephesians) and now also the seven spirits
- Representing the power of God's Spirit (see 1:4 and Zech. 4:2, 6, 10)—means Jesus has spiritual strength available to boost them to life in renewed obedience

Congregation in Sardis (3:1-6)

- Jesus condemns them for their failure to evangelize and for their compromise with idolatry (vv. 1-3)
- There is a faithful remnant among the spiritually dead (v. 4)
 - Only a few had not “soiled their garments” (v. 4), a phrase which refers to compromise with pagan or idolatrous practices
 - The word “soiled” occurs also in 14:4, where it refers to those “not defiled with women,” which, in context (see 14:8 for the concept of idolatrous fornication with Babylon) refers not so much to literal sexual immorality (though that might be involved) as to involvement with pagan or idolatrous activity
 - The congregation in Sardis had for the most part fallen into compromise and were in fear of the consequences of boldly telling an idolatrous world about Jesus
- Jesus encourages overcoming their failure to evangelize and their compromise in order to inherit eternal life (vv. 5-6)

Applying Sardis' Situation to Ourselves (3:1-6)

- Their compromise with idolatry, their failure to evangelize, their inactivity and their failure to participate in the work of the Lord was killing them spiritually (vv. 1-3)
 - What may be killing us spiritually?
 - Individually?
 - Collectively?
 - In what way(s) are we possibly compromising with the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Mt. 6:33)?
 - Is our failure to evangelize spiritually killing us?
 - Concerning our evangelism, in what ways are we actively working together to spread God's Word beyond the borders of this building?

Applying Sardis' Situation to Ourselves (3:1-6)

- Their compromise with idolatry, their failure to evangelize, their inactivity and their failure to participate in the work of the Lord was killing them spiritually (vv. 1-3)
 - One of our members has posted a question for us to address, asking, “What is expected of new Christians, and what is expected of the members?”
 - We are all members of the body and God requires us to use our abilities to his glory
 - We must learn to identify our strengths and abilities and work to improve our weaknesses in order to become more useful to God and to the body of Christ
 - Rom. 12:1-13
 - 1 Cor. 12:12-31
 - To what extent are we individually and collectively willing to say, “Here I am, send me!” (Is. 6:8)?

Applying Sardis' Situation to Ourselves (3:1-6)

- Their compromise with idolatry, their failure to evangelize, their inactivity and their failure to participate in the work of the Lord was killing them spiritually (vv. 1-3)
 - What steps should we take as a congregation to motivate more of us to actively participate in our worship and in our work?
 - Sardis needed to make some serious changes—
What steps do we need to take to make drastic improvements?
- God's love and God's Word give us the ultimate motivation:
 - To live for Jesus as part of his body (2 Cor. 5:14-15)
 - To engage actively in evangelism (2 Cor. 5:17-19)
 - To help build up the body (1 Cor. 14:26)
 - To function more effectively
 - To energize and enliven our congregation

Applying Sardis' Situation to Ourselves (3:1-6)

- Questions for consideration
 - How are we carefully looking for warning signs that our congregation could be losing its life?
 - What are such signs?
 - How can we determine whether a congregation is on the brink of death—like Sardis—even if its outward form remains?
 - Is it possible for God to restore it to life?
 - What drastic steps should be taken immediately to motivate a congregation to enthusiastic evangelism?
 - Rather than simply asking questions for consideration, we should also ask some additional questions and then investigate the Scriptures concerning evangelism

Evangelism: What Is It?

- We talk about evangelism, but it may mean different things to different people—so we should see what God says it is and how we should respond to God's Word
- Individually:
 - (1) What does evangelism mean to you?
 - (2) How have you been engaging in evangelism individually?
In other words, what are you doing by yourself to evangelize?
- Collectively:
 - How have we been evangelizing collectively? In other words, what are we doing together to evangelize?

Evangelism: What Is It?

- Definitions of “evangelize” (εὐαγγελίζω, *euangelizō*):
 - *“to announce good news”*
 - Usage: *“I bring good news, preach good tidings”*
(<https://biblehub.com/greek/2097.htm>)
 - *“to preach, (bring) the good news (gospel), often with a focus on the content of the message which is brought”*
(<https://www.billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/euangelizo>)
- Usage (54 times in the New Testament)
 - Never once in 54 occurrences does it ever mean “to bring people to a place of worship” or “to invite the lost to sit in a building to hear the gospel”
 - Every time “evangelize” is used, it always means to bring/take the gospel whether to unbelievers or to believers

Evangelism: What Is It?

- Usage (54 times in the New Testament)
 - Lk. 1:19; 4:43; 8:1; 9:6; 20:1
 - Acts 5:42; 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40
 - Rom. 1:15 (to Christians); 1 Cor. 15:1-2 (to Christians)
 - There is no model/pattern in the New Testament to bring the lost into the Christians' place of worship
 - There is no New Testament pattern to invite the lost into the assembly of the saints
 - The New Testament pattern consistently is about taking the gospel to the lost
 - There is no command or example of Christians bringing/inviting the lost to a building—the command and example is to take the gospel to the lost (outside the confines of a church building)

Evangelism: What Is It?

- Usage (54 times in the New Testament)
 - There is no model/pattern in the New Testament to bring the lost into the Christians' place of worship
 - There is no command or example of Christians bringing/inviting the lost to a building—the command and example is to take the gospel to the lost (outside the confines of a church building)
 - While there is no such command or example, we nevertheless have somehow necessarily inferred that God authorizes Christians to try to get people into a building so they can hear the gospel
 - God did not authorize Christians of the first century to evangelize by bringing the lost into a building, yet many seem to believe that God authorizes us to do so today

Evangelism: What Is It?

- Collectively:
 - How have we been evangelizing collectively? In other words, what are we doing together to evangelize?
 - Do we believe as many do that holding gospel meetings is collective evangelism?
 - Some would say rather that gospel meetings fit into the category of edification (building up) and that holding gospel meetings is one of the primary ways we collectively build up a congregation (among ourselves)
 - Based on Jesus' messages to Ephesus and Sardis, their collective evangelism—teaching the gospel to the outside world—was essential to building up the body
 - If we want to build up the body (edify), we have to evangelize

Evangelism: How Do We Measure It?

- Effectiveness
 - How would you define “effective”?
 - By the number of baptisms or numerical growth?
 - Or by doing God's will in initiating discussion of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 3:6)?
 - What are we doing collectively that you consider to be effective evangelism?

Evangelism: How Do We Measure It?

- Effectiveness
 - There is an old saying, “If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got”
 - If we are not evangelistically productive according to the Scriptures, are we willing to make the necessary changes to our efforts (or to our inactivity)?
 - Remember Ephesus and Sardis

Evangelism: How Do We Measure It?

- Effectiveness
 - An activity is not necessarily effective just because we think it is a good thing or because we enjoy doing that activity
 - We must not immediately identify an activity as being “effective evangelism” just because it involves teaching or preaching
 - It may simply be an activity we've traditionally called “evangelism”

Evangelism: How Do We Measure It?

- Measuring Effectiveness
 - Good use of resources?
 - Time, money, effort/energy, etc.
 - Door knocking?
 - Going to a mall and setting up a booth to study the Bible with people?
 - Going to an assembly of unbelievers who are actually studying the Bible?

Evangelism: What Should We Do?

- Find patterns of evangelism in Scripture
 - See how we might effectively imitate those patterns
- In order to participate in collective evangelism, we must be armed with enough knowledge that we can engage the lost in a discussion of Scripture
- Pray for boldness that we might imitate the evangelism of first century Christians (Acts 4:29)
- We need to devote time to discussions motivating us to engage in collective evangelism

Evangelism: How Did Jesus Evangelize?

- “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom . . .” (Mt. 4:23)
- “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Mt. 9:35)
- “Now when he had departed from there, he went into their synagogue” (Mt. 12:9)
- “When he had come to his own country, he taught them in their synagogue . . .” (Mt. 13:54)
- “I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple” (Mt. 26:55)

Evangelism: How Did Jesus Evangelize?

- “Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught” (Mk. 1:21)
- “And he was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee . . .” (Mk. 1:39)
- “And he entered the synagogue again” (Mk. 3:1)
- “And when the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue” (Mk. 6:2)
- “I was daily with you in the temple teaching . . .” (Mk. 14:49)

Evangelism: How Did Jesus Evangelize?

- “And he taught in their synagogues . . .” (Lk. 4:15)
- “. . . . And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day . . .” (Lk. 4:16)
- “And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee” (Lk. 4:44)
- “Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that he entered the synagogue and taught” (Lk. 6:6)
- “Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath” (Lk. 13:10)

Evangelism: How Did Jesus Evangelize?

- “And He was teaching daily in the temple” (Lk. 19:47)
- “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” (Lk. 22:53)
- “These things he said in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum” (Jn. 6:59)
- “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’” (Jn. 18:20)

Evangelism: How Did They Evangelize?

- “And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two” (Mark 6:7)
- “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues” (Mk. 13:9)
- “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Lk. 10:1-3)

Evangelism: How Did They Evangelize?

- “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house...” (Acts 2:46)
- “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42)
- “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4)
- “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues . . .” (Acts 9:20)

Evangelism: How Did They Evangelize?

- “And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant” (Acts 13:5)
- “But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, 'Men and brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on'" (Acts 13:14-15)

Evangelism: How Did They Evangelize?

- “Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed” (Acts 14:1)
- Acts 17:1-17
- Acts 18:24-28
- Acts 19:8-10
- 1 Thess. 1:8

Evangelism: What Should We Do?

- Again, pray for boldness that we might imitate the evangelism of first century Christians (Acts 4:29)
- And again, we need to devote time to discussions motivating us to engage in collective evangelism
- Just as we see in the New Testament a pattern of collectively worshiping together, we also see a pattern of collectively working together evangelistically
 - In other words, just as we see a New Testament pattern of collectively singing together, we also see a New Testament pattern of collectively engaging in evangelism

Evangelism: What Should We Do?

- Just as we see in the New Testament a pattern of collectively worshiping together, we also see a pattern of collectively working together evangelistically
 - The congregation of Jerusalem prayed together (Acts 4:29) and evangelistically worked together (Acts 2:46-47; 4:31)
 - The congregations of Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:8) and Philadelphia (Rev. 3:8) clearly worked together, accomplishing collective evangelism
 - Just as we plan our collective worship in order to worship together, so we must also plan our collective evangelistic work—if we are to work together

Congregation in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9) then commends them for persevering, urging them to continue faithfully in evangelism and in their resilient stand against idolatry (vv. 10-13)
 - Jesus introduces himself as “The holy one, the true one” (3:7)
 - In contrast to the idolatry surrounding the faithful
 - Philadelphia was a temple warden and gave to the emperor the title “The Son of the Holy One”
 - A reference to Jesus' deity (as in 6:10)
 - Of the occurrences of “holy one” in the OT (~52x), more than half of the occurrences appear in Isaiah (~29x)
 - “Holy one” refers to Yahweh almost exclusively in Isaiah as part of the title “the Holy One of Israel”
 - “The Holy One of God” is also a messianic title: Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34; Jn. 6:69

Congregation in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9) . . .
 - Jesus introduces himself as “The holy one, the true one” (3:7a)
 - The idea of “true” indicates Jesus is the true Messiah, though he is rejected by the Jews as a false messianic pretender
 - The Isaiah background anticipates the immediately following Is. 22:22 quotation and the Isaiah allusions in Rev. 3:9, where Jesus assumes the role of Yahweh and his followers represent the true Israel (see next slide)

“He who has the key of David” (3:7a) [Is. 22:20-23]



Congregation in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9)
 - Jesus further introduces himself as “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens” (3:7b)
 - Jesus' introduction is based on having the keys in 1:18
 - The keys in 1:18 were those of Death and Hades
 - There Jesus' authority is over salvation and judgment
 - Here (3:7b), Jesus has the key of David
 - The reference is to Is. 22:22—Eliakim holds the key of David; he opens and no one shuts and he shuts and no one opens
 - Here Jesus also determines who enters the kingdom

Congregation in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

- The reference is to Is. 22:22—Eliakim holds the key of David; he opens and no one shuts and he shuts and no one opens
 - Eliakim is understood as a type of Messiah
 - Isaiah's declarations concerning him take on a prophetic form, as is evident from the following details about Eliakim, compared with the famous messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9:
 - The key (the government of the house of Judah) is set on Eliakim's shoulder (Isa. 22:22)
 - Compare "The government will rest upon His shoulders" (9:6)
 - Eliakim will become a father to those in Jerusalem and Judah (22:21)
 - Compare "His name will be called ... 'Eternal Father'" (9:6)

Congregation in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

- The reference is to Is. 22:22—Eliakim holds the key of David; he opens and no one shuts and he shuts and no one opens
 - Eliakim is understood as a type of Messiah
 - Isaiah's declarations concerning him take on a prophetic form, as is evident from the following details about Eliakim, compared with the famous messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9 (continued):
 - Eliakim will become a throne of glory to his father's house (22:23)
 - Compare "There will be no end to the increase of His government ... on the throne of David" (9:7)
 - Eliakim was appointed to his royal position by God (22:21), as would be the coming Messiah (9:6-7)

Congregation in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

- The reference is to Is. 22:22—Eliakim holds the key of David; he opens and no one shuts and he shuts and no one opens
 - Eliakim is understood as a type of Messiah
 - Isaiah's declarations concerning him take on a prophetic form, as is evident from the following details about Eliakim, compared with the famous messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9 (continued):
 - The point is that, whereas once Eliakim ruled over Israel, now Jesus (of whom Eliakim is a prophetic type) rules over the church, the true Israel
 - Jesus alone determines who will and will not enter God's kingdom

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Philadelphia: “church of the open door”
 - “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it” (3:8)
 - In the New Testament, “open door” refers to evangelistic opportunities
 - Acts 14:27
 - 1 Cor. 16:9: “a great and effective door has opened to me”
 - 2 Cor. 2:12-17
 - Col. 4:3 (Col. 4:2-6; see also Eph. 6:17-20)

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Philadelphia: “church of the open door”
 - Barclay points out an important historical feature about this city:

Philadelphia was founded for a special purpose and with a special intention. It was situated where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met. It was a border town. But it was not as a garrison town that Philadelphia was founded, for there was little danger there.

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

It was founded with the deliberated intention that it might be a missionary of Greek culture and the Greek language to Lydia and Phrygia; and so well did it to its work that by A.D. 19 the Lydians had forgotten their own Lydian language and were all but Greeks ... That is what the Risen Christ means when he speaks of the open door that is set before Philadelphia. Three centuries before Philadelphia had been given an open door to spread Greek ideas in the lands beyond; and now there has come to it another great missionary opportunity, an open door to carry to men who never knew it the message of the love of Jesus Christ.

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9)
 - “I will make them come and worship before your feet” (3:9)
 - Refers to repentance
 - Background: Is. 45:14 and 60:14
 - Isaiah prophesies that the Gentiles will come and bow down before Israel in the last days and that this will represent a genuine turning to and worship of the true God (made clear by the whole context in Isa. 60:1-14)

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Note the reverse form of the prophetic fulfillment
 - The Gentiles of Isaiah—referring to unbelievers—are now considered to be the ethnic unbelieving Jews, whereas Isaiah’s “Israel”—referring to God’s faithful covenant people—is now the church
 - In Isaiah, it was God who was said to bring all this about, now it is revealed that it is Jesus—another indication of his divinity
 - The Jews will come to “worship” Jesus—or as other versions render it, “to bow down”

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9)
 - “I will make them come and worship before your feet” (3:9b)
 - “I will make them . . . to know that I have loved you” (3:9c)
 - The prophecy that God will demonstrate his love for persecuted Israel before the nations is also fulfilled in a reverse manner: “I will make them . . . to know that I have loved you” is applied to the church instead of to ethnic Israel, as in Is. 43:4, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you . . .”

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- “I will make them . . . to know that I have loved you” (3:9c)
 - The prophecy that God will demonstrate his love for persecuted Israel before the nations is also fulfilled in a reverse manner:
 - Notice the LXX of Is. 48:14—“And all of them will be gathered and hear. Who has declared these things to them? Because I love you I have performed your will on Babylon, to do away with the offspring of the Chaldeans”
 - Also the LXX of Is. 63:9—“Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you”

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9)
 - “I will make them come and worship before your feet” (3:9b)
 - “I will make them . . . to know that I have loved you” (3:9c)
 - Isaiah’s prophecies that Israel's salvation would also lead to the salvation of the Gentiles has been fulfilled in an ironic way—and the Gentiles now will lead some of the Jewish community to the Messiah

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Jesus encourages them to continue their evangelistic works (vv. 7-9)
 - “I will make them come and worship before your feet” (3:9b)
 - “I will make them . . . to know that I have loved you” (3:9c)
 - The church assumes the role of Israel in these fulfilled prophecies
 - Jesus performs the role that Isaiah foretold of Yahweh
 - Jesus is the one who causes the unbelieving Jewish community to recognize that the Gentile church is his beloved people

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Jesus commends them for persevering, urging them to continue faithfully in evangelism and in their resilient stand against idolatry (vv. 10-13)
 - Due to their faithfulness—particularly in evangelism—during testing/trial, Jesus will protect the Philadelphians spiritually (see also Jn. 16:33)
 - Only other occurrence of “keep out”: Jn. 17:15
 - The testing/trial would come on “the whole world” (3:10)
 - The phrase “the whole world” is not necessarily to be taken literally

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- The phrase “the whole world” has a more localized sense elsewhere
 - Refers to Palestine (Lk. 2:1)
 - The Roman world (Acts 11:28)
 - Therefore the testing/trial could refer to a localized trial either in Asia Minor or more generally in the Roman Empire
- That the phrase “keep you from” means spiritual protection of Christians as they go through tribulation is clear also from the likely allusion in Rev. 3:10 to Dan. 12:1, 10 (LXX)

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- “And at that hour Michael, the great angel who stands over the sons of your people, will pass by. That is a day of affliction, which will be such as has not occurred since they were born until that day” (Dan. 12:1)
- “Run along, Daniel, for the ordinances have been hidden and sealed until many are tested and sanctified and the sinners sin” (Rev. 12:9-10)

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/40-daniel-nets.pdf>

- “That hour” is described as “that day of tribulation” and “many are tested and sanctified and sinners sin”
- The “testing” (Rev. 3:10) both purifies and strengthens believers and at the same time is a divine judgment of the wicked

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- This conclusion is confirmed by Rev. 7:14, where saints are pictured as coming “out of the great tribulation” and wearing white robes, in allusion to Dan. 12:1 and 12:10
 - Jezebel and her followers will suffer “great tribulation” (2:22)—the same phrase as in 7:14 (except for the omission of the definite article)—if they do not repent
- God’s purpose is to test “those who dwell on the earth” (3:10)
 - The purpose of this testing is a judgment on unbelievers
 - The phrase “who dwell on the earth” (or earth-dwellers) in Revelation refers to the lost, especially idol worshipers (6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8)

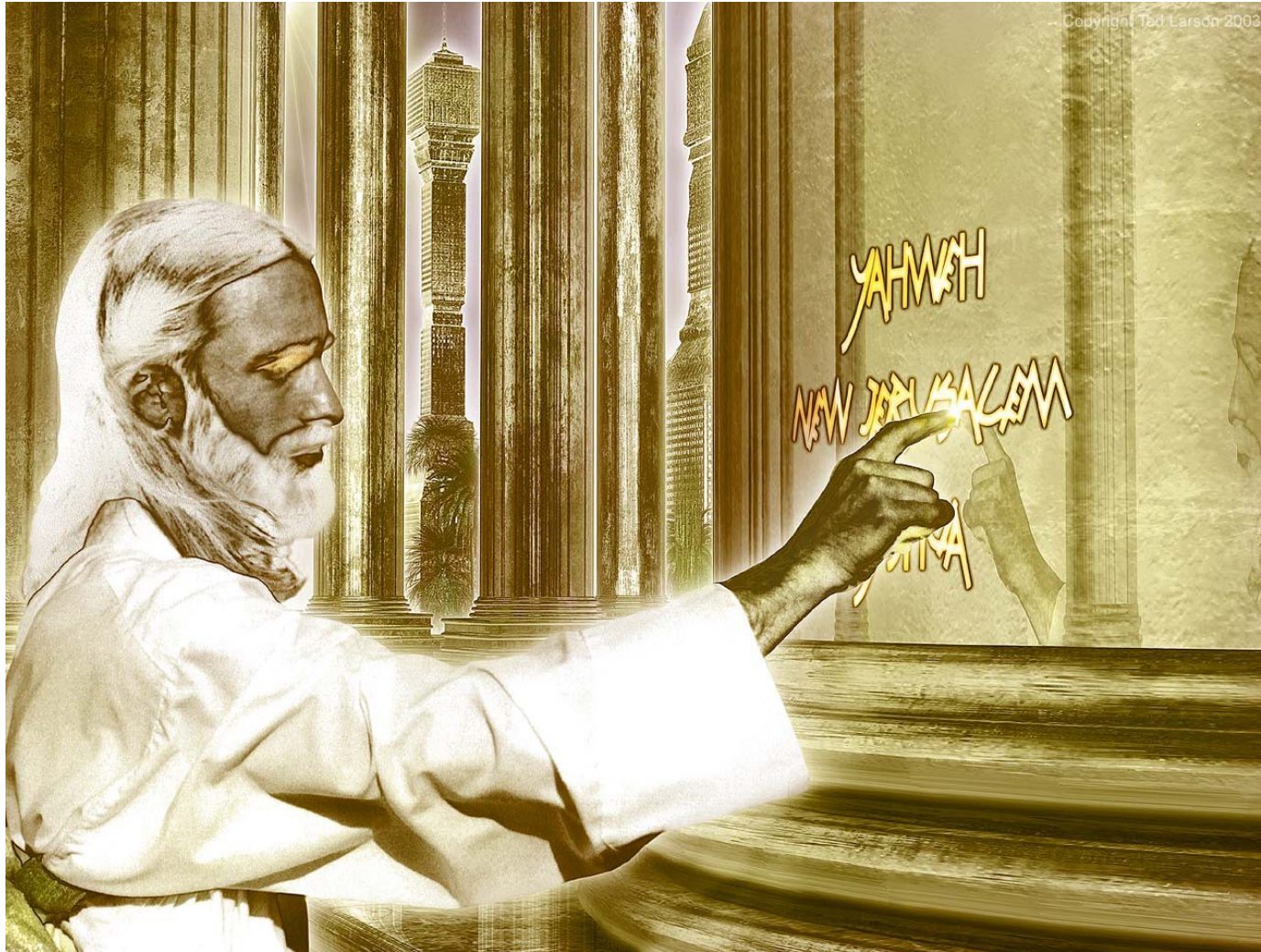
Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Rev. 3:10—Believers will be kept from the spiritual harm of testing, that is, from the negative effects of this judgment
 - They will be kept spiritually safe and even strengthened in their faith
 - Unbelievers will be further hardened against God by the very same trials
 - The truth of this interpretation will become clear as the visions unfold and we see the effects of God's various judgments—hardening unbelievers while keeping believers spiritually safe by refining their faith

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- If our understanding is correct, Jesus then tells the Philadelphians they are to persevere in the midst of trial (3:11)
 - His coming quickly does not refer to Jesus' final return, as almost 2,000 years have passed since his promise
 - It must refer to the fact Jesus will shortly come to aid the Philadelphians in the trial that is about to come upon them (v. 10)
 - The promise is not that they will escape this tribulation, but that Jesus will strengthen them so that they will be kept spiritually safe through it

“ . . . a pillar in the temple of My God . . . the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem . . . ” (3:12)



“The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35)

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- Four promises to the overcomer (3:12)
 - (1) I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God
 - (2) He shall go out no more
 - (3) 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
 - (4) And I will write on him My new name
- The four promises are really four aspects of the one promise (see similarly 2:17)
- Writing on him the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, and my new name express fellowship with God

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- In 3:7-8, Jesus unlocks and opens the door of the kingdom for the Philadelphians
- Here in v. 12 he holds before them the completion of the imagery—opening the door of the temple (Jesus' kingdom) and entering into his temple (the kingdom, the church)
 - God's temple is contrasted in the same letter with the synagogue of Satan (v. 9)
 - See also 7:13-17 where Jesus' followers persevere through tribulation and are rewarded with the presence of God and Jesus in the temple

Philadelphia: An Evangelistic Congregation

- The linking of present tribulation and future reward is noticeable in the closest parallels to 3:8, 12
 - Rev. 3:8→21:24-26
 - Rev. 3:12→21:2, 10
 - Further background linking Rev. 3:12 and ch. 21
 - Ezek. 48:30-35→Rev. 21:12-13
- Jesus opens the door of the heavenly Jerusalem for the faithful, which no one can shut (3:8), and this leads to people being saved, entering through the gates of the new Jerusalem (the church) which “will never be closed” (21:25)

Is Revelation 21-22 a Description of the Church in Heaven?

- If it is, does Jesus banish the ungodly to Gehenna before he welcomes the righteous into Heaven (cf. Mt. 25:31ff)?
- If it is, when and where does the church go into Heaven?
 - The holy city (the church) comes “down out of Heaven” (21:2, 10) but does not return to Heaven by the end of Revelation
 - The holy city that was previously trampled (11:2) descends out of Heaven victoriously (21:2, 10)
 - Once the church goes to Heaven, there is no coming down out of Heaven (“we will always be with the Lord” 1 Thess. 4:17b)
 - The church comes “from God” (21:2, 10)
 - The church does not go “to God”

Does Rev. 20:11-15 Describe Judgment at the End of Time?

- Which does Rev. 20:11-15 describe:
 - (1) Judgment at the end of time? OR
 - (2) Judgment pertaining to the book (6:10-11)?
- If Rev. 20:11-15 describes Judgment at the end of time, we must assume one of the following:
 - (A) The events of Revelation 20-22 are not chronological
 - (B) The events of Mt. 25:31ff are not chronological
 - (C) Mt. 25:31ff does not describe Judgment at the end of time
- If Rev. 20:11-15 describes judgment pertaining to the book, there is no contradiction with Mt. 25:31ff

Does Rev. 20:11-15 Describe Judgment at the End of Time?

- Is there more than one judgment of beings and people being “cast into the lake of fire”?
 - First Judgment? Rev. 19:20
 - Second Judgment? Rev. 20:14
 - Or, is there only one final judge
 - 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6

Is Revelation 21-22 a Description of the Church in Heaven?

- If it is, when and where does the church go into Heaven?
 - God comes down to tabernacle “with” the church (3x in 21:3)
 - The tabernacle is not permanent (2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:13-14; cf. “Father's house,” Jn. 14:2)
 - Previously, God tabernacled “over” those who came out of the great tribulation (7:13-15)
- “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” (21:4)
 - Restoration language (Is. 25:8→1 Cor. 15:54, victory; Is. 65:17-19; 66:22)

Tree of Life (Rev. 22:2)



Tree of Life (Rev. 22:2; Ezekiel 47)



Tree of Life (Rev. 22:2; Ezekiel 47)



Is Revelation 21-22 a Description of the Church in Heaven?

- The tree of life is in the middle of the city's street (22:2)
 - The city is God's church, the bride of Christ (21:2, 9, 17)
 - The tree of life (eternal life) is accessible to those in the church (2:7→Paradise of God→the Eden-like paradisal city of God)
 - 22:14, 19
 - Outside the church “are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie”
- “There will be no more curse” (22:3)
 - κατάθεμα, *katathema* – “properly, an anathema; an oath-curse which 'devotes something to destruction' (literally, to take it down)” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/2652.htm>)
 - Background: Zech. 14:11

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- The garden of Eden that God planted (Gen. 2:8) was a type of temple, and humanity was commissioned to expand the temple to fill the earth
 - Adam (the first son of God in the new creation) failed
 - God destroyed Eden and started over
- Perhaps Noah's ark was a type of temple
 - Humanity failed
 - God destroyed the world and started over
- Noah planted a garden (vineyard) (Gen. 9:20)
 - Noah failed (Gen. 9:21)

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- The united earth decided to live in Shinar (Gen. 11:2) and build for themselves a city, Babel (Babylon)
 - The people failed
 - God started over
- The Son of God—who is son of man (Adam), who would not fail (1 Cor. 15:22, 45)—would come through Abraham (Gen. 22:18)
 - The Hebrew word *adam* is translated either as “man” or “Adam” depending on context and the definite article (“the” in English, *ha* in Hebrew)
 - *Ha-adam* usually is translated as “the man” (referring to either an unspecified man or to humanity as a whole, depending on context)
 - *Adam* (without *ha*) is translated as “Adam”

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- The patriarchs built little temples in the land
- Israel's tabernacle, and later their temple, was a model of heaven and earth, pointing ahead to the new heaven and earth, which would be filled with God's presence
- The temple in the new creation is God, Jesus and the righteous
- As priests in this new temple, the church mediates between God and humanity, and is called to expand this temple to fill the world with the presence of God

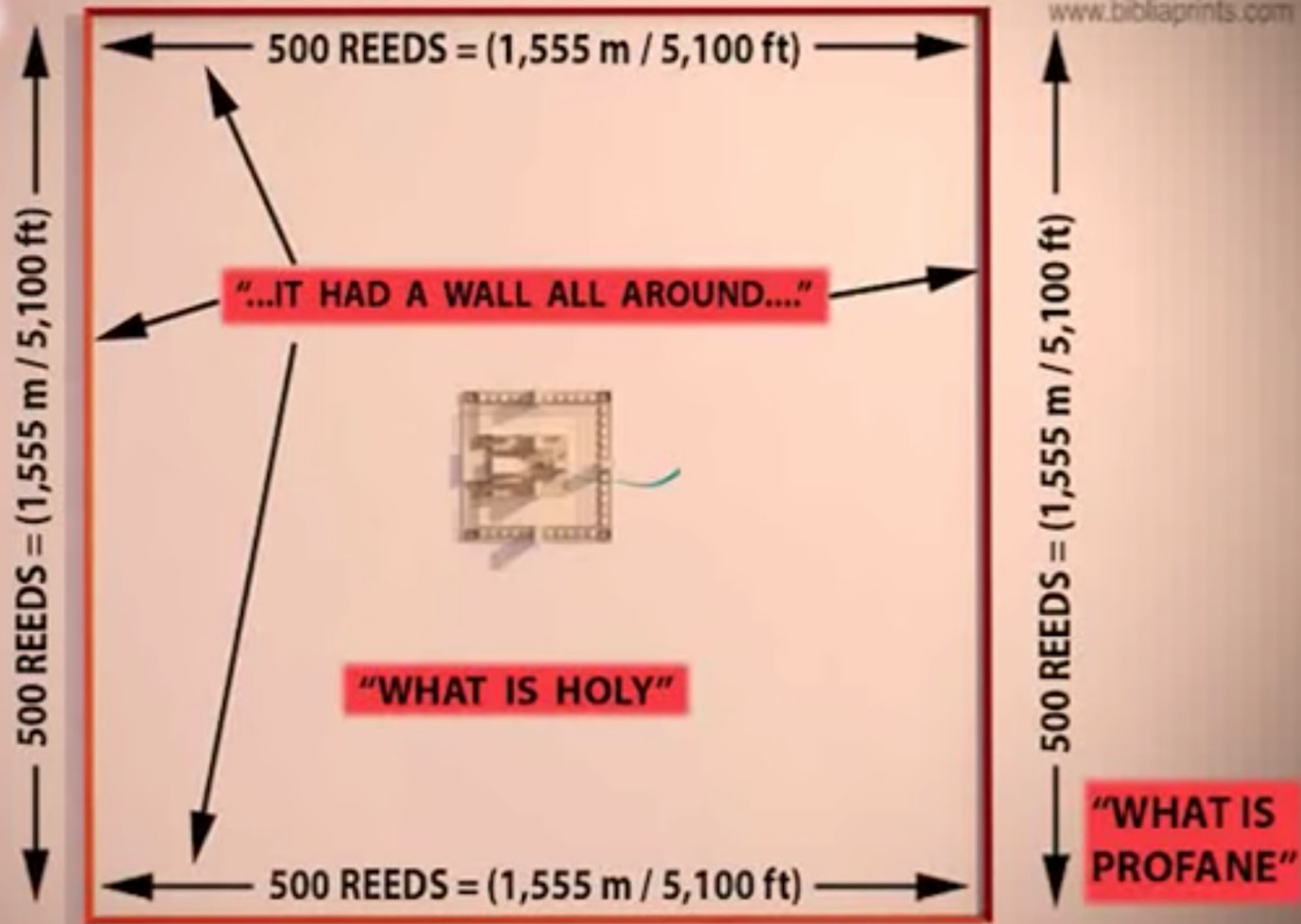
<https://www.anthonysmith.me.uk/2018/05/04/greg-beale-on-the-temple-and-the-churchs-mission>

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- After John sees a new heaven and earth (21:1), he sees a city (21:2) in the shape of a temple (21:10, 16-17) that has garden-like features (22:1-3; cf. Gen. 3:17)
 - “He took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:10, NABRE)
 - “In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city” (Ezek. 40:2, NKJV)
 - “Now there was a wall all around the outside of the temple” (Ezek. 40:5, NKJV)

The Dimensions of the Wall Surrounding the Temple in Ezekiel

EZEK 42:15-20



The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- After John sees a new heaven and earth (21:1), he sees a city (21:2) in the shape of a temple (21:10, 16) that has garden-like features (22:1-3; cf. Gen. 3:17)
 - “The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal” (Rev. 21:16)
 - “He measured the length, twenty cubits; and the width, twenty cubits, beyond the sanctuary; and he said to me, 'This is the Most Holy Place'” (Ezek. 41:4)
 - “He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad . . .” (Ezek. 42:20)

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- After John sees a new heaven and earth (21:1), he sees a city (21:2) in the shape of a temple (21:10, 16-17) that has garden-like features (22:1-3; cf. Gen. 3:17)
- “And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has established forever” (Ps. 78:69)
- “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 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” (Ex. 25:8-9)
- “And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain” (Ex. 25:40)
- Is 66:1

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- Ps. 19:1-5 (NASB)

1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

2 Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.

3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.

4 Their line [or sound] has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world.

In them He has placed a tent for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- Ps. 19:4 is quoted in Rom. 10:14-18:

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? 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!”

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

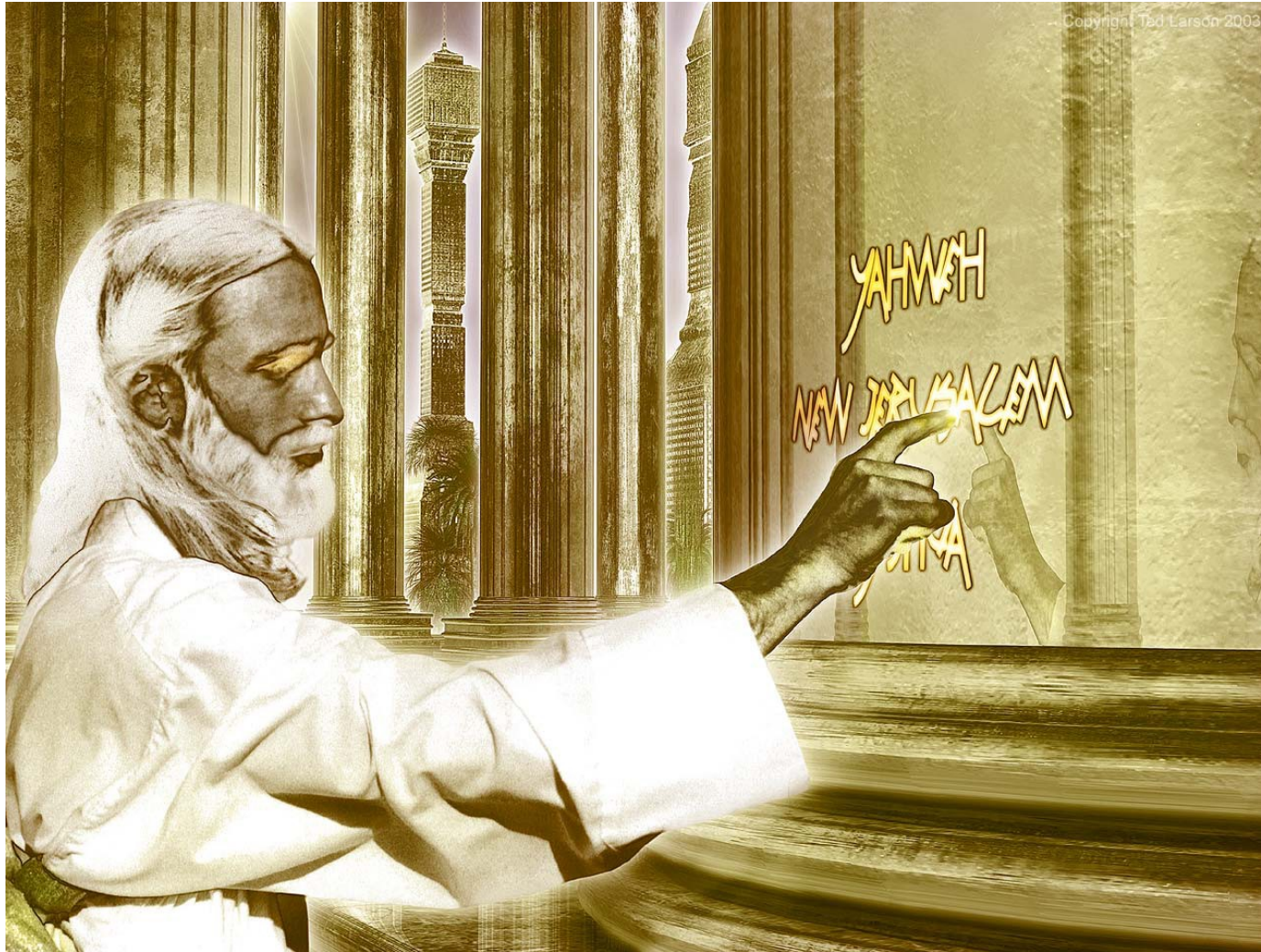
18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

“Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world”

The New Heaven and the New Earth: What Is the Temple of God?

- Ezekiel 40-48: The End-Time Temple
- Gen. 1:28→28:14→Is. 54:2-3
 - Expanding God's presence, just as the imagery of temple building communicates
- Conclusion:
 - The church (God's people) is the temple
 - 1 Cor. 3:16-17
 - 1 Cor. 6:19
 - 2 Cor. 6:16

“ . . . a pillar in the temple of My God . . . the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem . . . ” (3:12)



“The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35)

***“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more”
(Rev. 3:12a)***

- Geographical background

- Strabo (63 BC—AD 23) states:

- “. . . the city Philadelphia, ever subject to earthquakes. Incessantly the walls of the houses are cracked, different parts of the city being thus affected at different times. For this reason but few people live in the city, and most of them spend their lives as farmers in the country, since they have a fertile soil. Yet one may be surprised at the few, that they are so fond of the place when their dwellings are so insecure; and one might marvel still more at those who founded the city”
(The Geography of Strabo, 6:181)

***“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more”
(Rev. 3:12a)***

- Contrast to Philadelphia's geographical background
 - “But you have come (1) to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of messengers, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, (2) to God the Judge of all, (3) to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, (4) to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant . . . Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:22-24, 28)
 - Mount Zion is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem—an unshakeable, heavenly kingdom—a spiritual reality where God and his people meet

***“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more”
(Rev. 3:12a)***

- Contrast to Philadelphia's geographical background
 - “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken . . .” (Heb. 12:28)
 - The promise to the faithful of being a permanent part of God's temple was undoubtedly very meaningful to the Philadelphians, especially since their city suffered from earthquakes more than any of the other six congregations
 - While God's temple is invincible, it suffers physically
 - “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” (Rev. 11:2)

***“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more”
(Rev. 3:12a)***

- Background

- “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King. God, in her palaces, has made Himself known as a stronghold . . . As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish her forever. Selah” (Ps. 48:1-3, 8 NASB)

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more” (Rev. 3:12a)

- Background

- “We have thought on Your lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Your temple. As is Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness. Let Mount Zion be glad, let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments. Walk about Zion and go around her; count her towers; consider her ramparts; go through her palaces, that you may tell it to the next generation. For such is God, our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death (Ps. 48:9-14 NASB)
- 2 Kings 19:21, 31; Ps. 132:13; Is. 52:1
 - Rev. 14:1-4
 - Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1)→Ezek. 40:2; Mic. 4:1; Is. 2:2; Rev. 21:10

Laodicea

- Founded by the Seleucid king Antiochus II and named in honor of his wife Laodice
 - (At some point between becoming king in 261 BC and divorcing her eight years later)
 - Like Colossae it was located on the south bank of the Lycus, ~10 miles downstream
- It was the center of a judicial circuit
- It was a center of banking and finance
 - “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’” (Rev. 3:17a)

Laodicea

- Its economic prosperity is attested by Strabo at the beginning of the first century AD
- It suffered repeatedly from earthquakes
 - An earthquake destroyed Laodicea about the time Paul wrote Colossians (AD 60)
 - The Laodiceans rebuilt from their own resources with no assistance from Rome
 - “One of the most famous cities of Asia, Laodicea, was in the same year overthrown by an earthquake and without any relief from us recovered itself by its own resources” (Tacitus, Annals 14:27)

Laodicea

- Laodicea was a center for the manufacturing of clothing—known for the quality of glossy black wool from the sheep grown in the area



- “you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17b)

Main Road in Laodicea



“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (3:16)



“Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (3:20a)



Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- Jesus condemns them for their lack of evangelistic works (vv. 15-16) and for their pitiful spiritual condition (v. 17) urging them to humble themselves, depend on him and become zealous in evangelism (vv. 17-19) in order to renew their fellowship with him that they may overcome and then reign eternally with him (vv. 20-21)
 - Jesus describes himself as the “Amen” (v. 14)
 - A Hebrew equivalent of faithful and true
 - Deut. 32:4
 - Ps. 31:5-6
 - Is. 65:16—“He who is blessed in the earth shall be blessed by the God of Amen” (GKB; translated as “God of truth” in other translations)

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

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 - What is the blessing of the God of Amen?
 - The creation of a new heavens and a new earth (Is. 65:17)
 - A new creation, of which Jesus in his resurrection is the Beginning
 - Jesus identifies himself to the Laodiceans as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

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 - A new creation, of which Jesus in his resurrection is the Beginning
 - Jesus identifies himself to the Laodiceans as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness
 - Why?
 - Because he is the beginning fulfillment of Isaiah's new creation prophecy (Is. 65:16-17)
 - The quality of their faithfulness (with the focus on their evangelism) repulses Jesus
 - They are not following Jesus

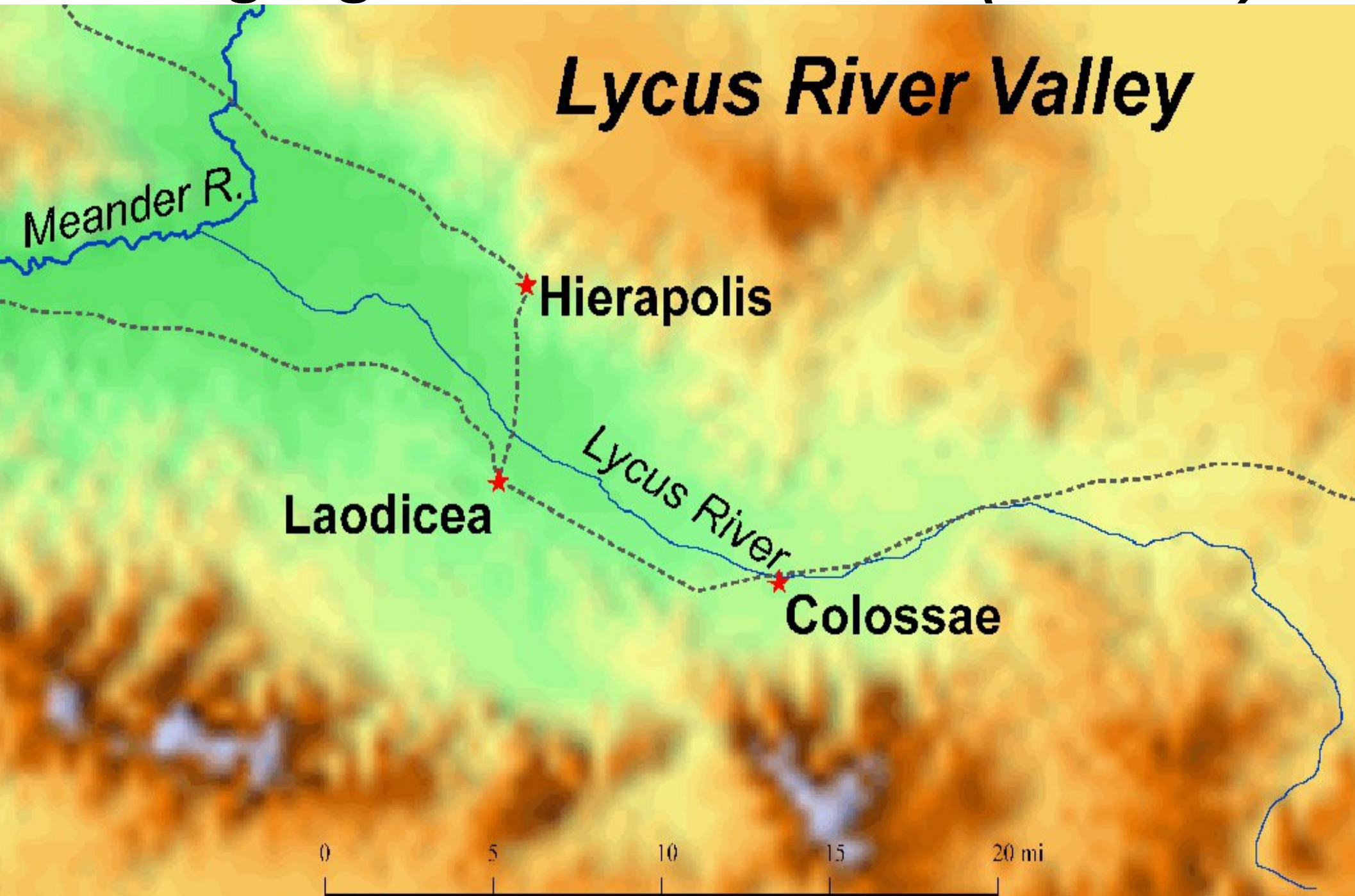
Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- They need his resurrection power as the firstborn of the new creation
 - They are spiritually dead and need enlivening
 - Jesus can give them spiritual life leading them to effective evangelism in the pagan culture
 - Even at Sardis, a faithful remnant remained in a mostly dead congregation, but no such remnant is identified in Laodicea
 - There is no commendation of any sort for the congregation in Laodicea

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- Jesus condemns them for their lack of evangelistic works (vv. 15-16) and for their pitiful spiritual condition (v. 17) urging them to humble themselves, depend on him and become zealous in evangelism (vv. 17-19) in order to renew their fellowship with him that they may overcome and then reign eternally with him (vv. 20-21)
 - Jesus' self-description as the faithful and true witness and beginning of God's creation (v. 14) echos the description of Jesus as the faithful witness and firstborn of the dead (1:5) and that Jesus was dead and is now alive forever (1:18)
- Jesus is the beginning of God's creation
 - Does not refer to the Genesis account of creation but to the resurrection (see Col. 1:18) and the new creation of those "born again" (see also Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3, 5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 3:5)

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)



Water in the Lycus Valley

- Laodicea depended on external water supplies
- The lukewarmness for which Laodicea is known reflects the condition of the city's water supply (Rev. 3:15-16)
 - The water supplied by the hot springs of Denizli, [in modern Turkey] (~5 miles away) was tepid and nauseous by the time it was piped to Laodicea, unlike the therapeutic hot water of Hierapolis or the refreshing cold water of Colossae which came from snow-and-rain-fed streams from the peak of nearby Mount Cadmus

Hierapolis

- The name Hierapolis means “holy city”
- The modern Turkish name is Pamukkale, meaning “Cotton Castle” or “Cotton Fortress”
 - The city is famous for the hot springs and the limestone formations that cascade down the hillside below the city

Limestone Formations at Hierapolis



Calcium Deposits (Travertines) at Hierapolis



Hot Springs at Hierapolis



Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- Jesus condemns them for their lack of evangelistic works (vv. 15-16) and for their pitiful spiritual condition (v. 17) urging them to humble themselves, depend on him and become zealous in evangelism (vv. 17-19)
 - “Because you say, ‘I am rich . . . I counsel you to buy from Me . . .’ (vv. 17-18)”
 - Possibly means:
 - 1) Allusion to Laodicea's material prosperity by association with the idolatrous world system
 - Poverty/gold → Laodicea as a banking center
 - Blindness/salve → Laodicea as a medical center (perhaps more could be made of the irony that the hot springs of Hierapolis were used to treat eye diseases)
 - Nakedness/clothing → Laodicea as a center of the wool industry

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- “Because you say, ‘I am rich . . . I counsel you to buy from Me . . .’ (vv. 17-18)”
 - Possibly means:
 - 2) Allusion to Laodicea's dependence for their distasteful water
 - Translations of ταλαίπωρος (*talaipōros*, often “wretched”) and ἑλεεινός (*eleeinos*, often “miserable”) usually do not bring out the emotional sense of these words, choosing to render them along economic lines ('wretched and miserable' [KJV, NKJV, NASB, etc.]
 - In view of the false sense of security and even pride the Laodiceans apparently displayed, the two words could be translated “deceived and pitiable”
 - Their delusion in affairs of the world is mirrored in their spiritual condition

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- “Because you say, ‘I am rich . . . I counsel you to buy from Me . . .’ (vv. 17-18)”
 - Possibly means:
 - 3) Both 1) Allusion to Laodicea's material prosperity by association with the idolatrous world system and 2) Allusion to Laodicea's dependence for their distasteful water
 - They think they are so independent due to their material prosperity, yet they are so dependent they drink distasteful, inferior water
 - Xenophon (431-354 BC) indicates that not only is cold water for drinking and hot water for washing, but lukewarm water is only for the servants, that is, it is not suitable for washing or drinking by the citizens

Congregation in Laodicea (3:14-22)

- Jesus condemns them for their lack of evangelistic works (vv. 15-16) and for their wretched spiritual condition (v. 17) urging them to humble themselves, depend on him and become zealous in evangelism (vv. 17-19) in order to renew their fellowship with him that they may overcome and then reign eternally with him (vv. 20-21)

Christ Among the Lampstands (1:12-16)

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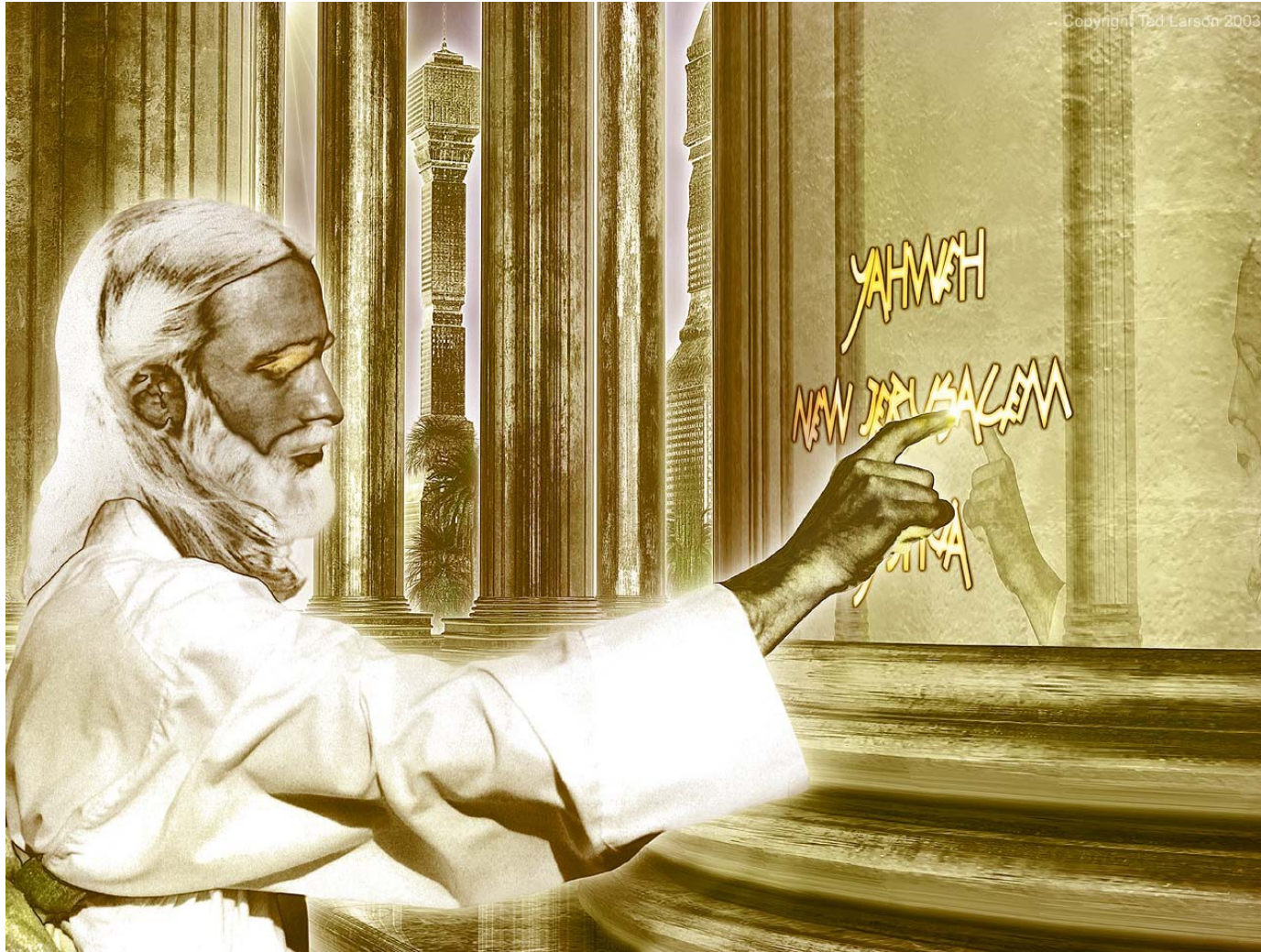
“He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars” (3:1)



“He who has the key of David” (3:7a) [Is. 22:20-23]



“ . . . a pillar in the temple of My God . . . the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem . . . ” (3:12)

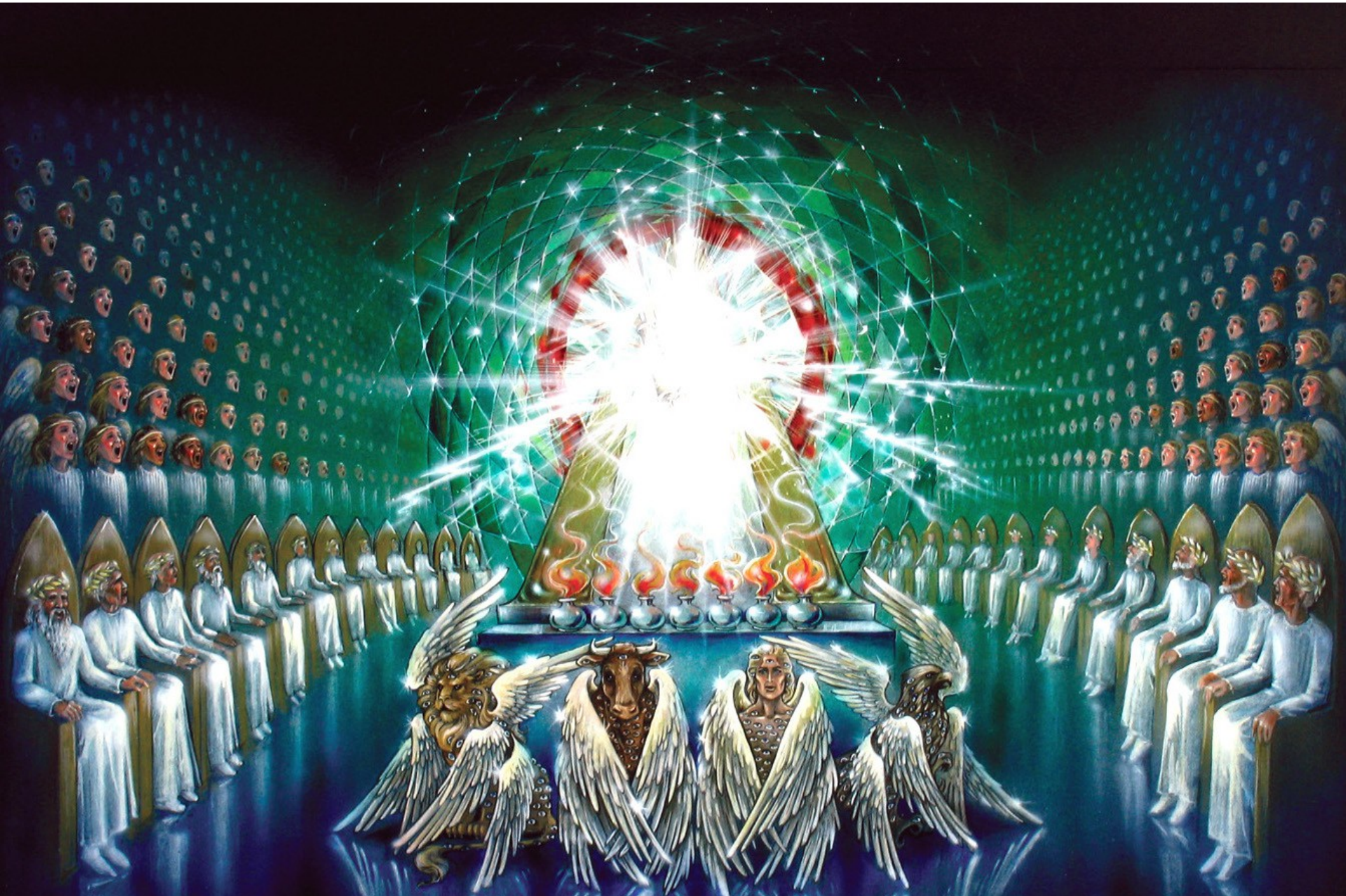


“The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35)

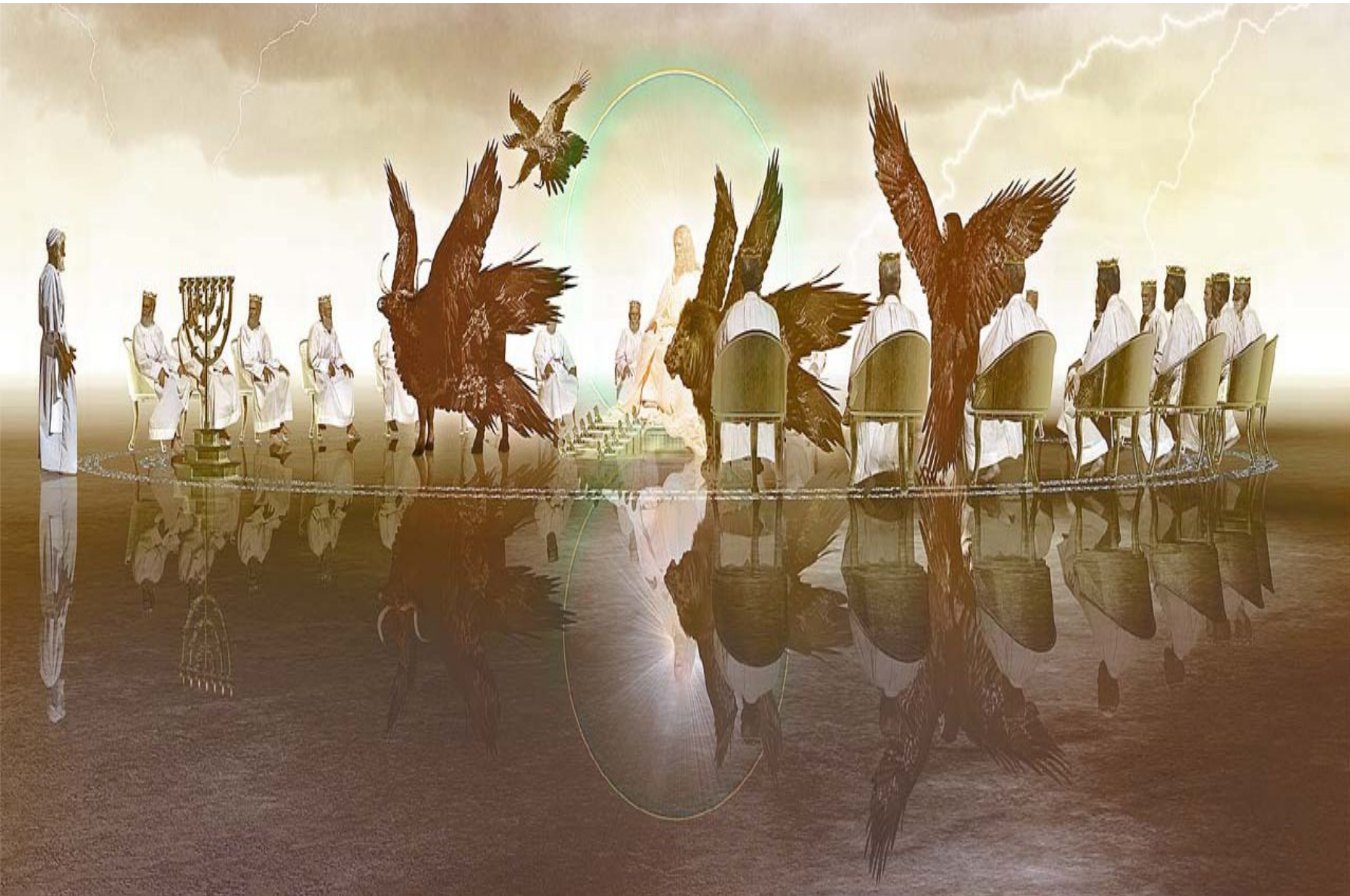
Open Door in Heaven (Rev. 4:1→3:8)



Throne Room in Heaven (Rev. 4:2ff)



Throne Room in Heaven (Rev. 4:2ff)



Throne Room in Heaven (Rev. 4:2ff)



Throne Room in Heaven (Rev. 4:2ff)



Throne Room in Heaven (Rev. 4:2ff)



Four Living Creatures (Rev. 4:7)



Elders Casting Crowns (Rev. 4:10)



Scroll with Seven Seals (Rev. 5:1)

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The Lion of Judah, the Root of David (Rev. 5:5)



Jesus: The Lion & the Lamb (Rev. 5:5-7)



Jesus: The Lamb (Rev. 5:6)

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“Then He Came and Took the Scroll” (Rev. 5:7)

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Elders Falling Down with Harps & Bowls (Rev. 5:8)



“And They Sang a New Song” (Rev. 5:8-10)

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All of Heaven & Earth Praise God (Rev. 5:11-13)



Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- God and Christ are glorified because Christ's resurrection demonstrates that they are sovereign over creation to judge and to redeem (4:1–5:14)
 - The picture of Jesus in 3:21 presently sitting on his Father's throne leads into the vision of chs. 4–5
 - There is now more imagery of Jesus' exaltation to his throne as ruler over the church and the universe
 - This was accomplished through his death and resurrection
 - John is taken up to the throne room of God, where he sees Jesus enthroned along with the Father (ch. 5)
 - The vision shows how Jesus' encouragement to each of the congregations to overcome is based on the fact that Christ himself has already overcome (5:5)

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- The first time their overcoming is compared to Jesus' is in 3:21, where his act serves as the basis for their overcoming and consequent reign
 - 5:5-6 explains that Jesus also overcame by persevering in the midst of suffering and, as a result, was granted kingship (cf. 5:7-13)
 - This kingship is not simply a future reality, but something which began at the resurrection
 - The fact that chs. 4–5 perceive his kingship as a reality is evident from 5:9-10, where his death and resurrection have resulted in the redemption of believers and their present participation in a priestly kingdom
 - Notice the allusion to Exod. 19:6, which also appears in 1:6 and is applied to the church

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Since Jesus' kingship is a reality, it means that Jesus also has begun to reign
 - The contents of this vision, therefore, are closely linked to what has gone before—both the introduction (ch. 1) and the letters (chs. 2-3)
 - Support for the concept of the present reign of believers and of Jesus also comes from:
 - the descriptions of the saints' white clothing (3:5, 18; 4:4)
 - the saints seated on thrones (3:21; 4:4)
 - the saints' crowns (2:10; 3:11; 4:4)
 - the image of an “open door” (3:8, 20; 4:1)

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Support for the concept of the present reign of believers and of Jesus also comes from:
 - the fact that Jesus is said in the letters (3:1) to have the “seven spirits of God” and in the visions his reign from the throne is closely linked to the same “seven spirits” (4:5; 5:6), which appear to be part of the means by which he rules
 - Jesus appears to the congregation of Sardis holding the seven spirits
 - Representing the power of God's Spirit (see 1:4 and Zech. 4:2, 6, 10)—means Jesus has spiritual strength available to boost them to life in renewed obedience
 - The imagery in chs. 4-5 suggests the power of God and Jesus' to rule

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Believers are motivated to faithfulness by their present possession of part of their eternal reward
 - Through their faithfulness they are assured of their full possession with God in eternity
- Part of the purpose of chs. 4–5 is that suffering Christians are assured that God and Jesus reign supreme
 - Suffering Christians were such as those previously mentioned in Smyrna and Antipas at Pergamos (2:8-11, 13)
 - The events they are facing are part of God's ultimate plan
 - God's plan is for their redemption and the vindication of their faith through the punishment of their persecutors

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- John's vision is so closely related to that of Daniel's vision of the Ancient of Days and Son of man (Dan. 7:9-14) that we must conclude he saw much the same thing
 - Notice the following points of comparison:
 - The prophet “looks” (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:1)
 - He sees a throne in heaven with God sitting on it (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:2)
 - God's appearance is described (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:3)
 - There is fire before the throne (Dan. 7:9-10; Rev. 4:5)
 - “Myriads of myriads” of heavenly beings surround the throne (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 5:11)
 - Opening of scroll/scrolls (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 5:1-5)

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Notice the following points of comparison:
 - A divine figure approaches the throne and receives a kingdom which will last forever (Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 5:5-13)
 - This kingdom consists of all peoples, nations, and tongues (Dan. 7:14; Rev. 5:9)
 - The prophet experiences distress on account of the vision (Dan. 7:15; Rev. 5:4)
 - The prophet receives wisdom concerning the vision from one of the heavenly beings (Dan. 7:16; Rev. 5:5)
 - The saints are given authority to reign over a kingdom (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Rev. 5:10)
 - The vision concludes with mention of God's eternal reign (Dan. 7:27; Rev. 5:13-14)

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- There are also significant similarities to things Ezekiel saw in his initial vision:
 - Four living creatures (Ezek. 1:5; Rev. 4:6)
 - A sea of crystal (Ezek. 1:22; Rev. 4:6)
 - A throne surrounded by a rainbow on which God is seated (Ezek. 1:26-28; Rev. 4:2-3)
 - Some believe that Ezekiel 1 is the primary background for Revelation 4–5
 - On the whole Revelation 4-5 should be interpreted primarily within the conceptual framework of Daniel 7
 - The allusions to Ezekiel 1 become less dominant in the Revelation 5 vision, but Daniel 7 continues to be present

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Revelation 4–5 paint the picture of a throne room in a heavenly temple
 - John’s entry through a “door standing open in heaven” (4:1) is probably linked to the same language about the opening of the heavenly temple in Rev. 11:19 and 15:5
 - Rev. 11:19 and 15:5ff develop the picture in ch. 4 with explicit reference to a “sanctuary” or “temple” (“the ark of the covenant” also appears in 11:19)
 - The link between 4:1 and 11:19 and 15:5ff is confirmed further by the repetition of “flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder” (4:5) three times later in the book (8:5; 11:19; 16:18)

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Revelation 4–5 paint the picture of a throne room in a heavenly temple
 - The elders (4:4) are heavenly beings who serve in a priestly role by presenting the prayers of the saints to God (5:8) and by interpreting heavenly visions (5:5; 7:13)
 - The seven lamps (4:5) allude to the lamps of the lampstand in the temple
 - The golden altar of incense appears in passages (8:3; 9:13; 16:7) which allude to the altar of 6:9-10, which is rooted in the vision of chs. 4–5
 - Rev. 4:8 alludes to the heavenly temple vision of Is. 6:1-4
 - The visions of Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6 (both alluded to throughout chs. 4–5) are set within a heavenly temple

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- Revelation 4–5 paint the picture of a throne room in a heavenly temple
 - Rev. 4:4 is a development of the ideas in Revelation 1-3
 - Revelation 1-3 pictures the saints' participation in a heavenly temple (1:13, 20; 3:12), possessing crowns, white clothing and dominion, which in their fullness will be granted if they persevere (2:10, 26-27; 3:4-5, 11, 18, 21)
 - As in chs. 1–3, the church is pictured in heavenly symbolism to remind its members that already a dimension of their existence is heavenly
 - Their real home is not with the unbelieving “earth-dwellers” (cf. Phil. 3:20)

Summary of Rev. 4:1-5:14

- They have heavenly help and protection in their struggle to obtain their reward and not be conformed to their pagan environment
- One of the purposes of the church meeting on earth in its weekly gatherings (as in 1:3) is to be reminded of its heavenly identity
 - This is to occur in part apparently as it models its worship on the heavenly worship of the exalted Lamb, as exquisitely portrayed in chs. 4–5
- Since the vision of Revelation 4–5 is modeled on Daniel 7, the temple setting is enhanced further if Dan. 7:9-14 can be understood as a vision of a temple throne room in heaven

Points to Apply from Revelation 4-5

- God is glorified because he is supreme ruler, judge and redeemer over creation from beginning to end (4:1-11)
 - One of the ways Revelation emphasizes God's sovereignty (supreme rule) is through its frequent use of the word “throne”
 - The great majority of NT references to God's throne occur in Revelation
 - Of the 52x “throne” occurs in the NT, 37 occur in Revelation—of those 37 about 30 refer to God's throne
 - The entire universe is pictured as having its center in God's throne, with heavenly and human creatures subject to God, who is sitting on his throne
 - All the judgments that follow come from the throne

Points to Apply from Revelation 4-5

- God and the Lamb are glorified because they have begun to execute their supreme rule over creation through Jesus' death and resurrection, resulting in judgment and redemption (5:1-14)
 - The message of both Daniel 4 and Revelation 5 proclaim from Heaven that God alone has power over history and is the King worthy of praise
 - Dan. 4:17, 25-26, 32, 34, 37
 - Rev. 5:12-13
 - The Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation show how God demonstrates his supreme rule over unrighteous governments and calls his servants to obey him, even when it may cost them their lives

Considerations in Applying Revelation 4-5

- How do we express our understanding of God's supreme rule (sovereignty) in our daily lives?
 - Do our words and our actions give God the glory in a similar way to the vision John saw?
 - Or do the decisions we make and the actions we take pale in comparison to the glory God receives in Revelation 4-5?
- Revelation 4-5 should seriously cause us to reflect upon our view of God's supreme rule
 - Many of us may realize we live with a rather weak view of God's sovereignty?
 - If so, we would do very well to study and memorize more of Revelation 4-5

Considerations in Applying Revelation 4-5

- How can a strong scriptural view of God's sovereignty bring both comfort and biblical perspective to those who are suffering?
- How can a weak view lead us into confusion and despair?
- Heavenly beings do exist
 - John witnesses a scene of worship involving the 24 elders and the four living creatures
 - Although they are symbolic rather than literal, it is nonetheless real, in that real beings are portrayed with real functions
 - As following chapters reveal, in addition to their role in heavenly worship, the heavenly beings present the prayers of the righteous

Considerations in Applying Revelation 4-5

- How often have we taken seriously the existence of heavenly beings and that their primary function is to worship God?
 - It could be quite literal that there are in fact heavenly beings that “do not rest day or night” (Rev. 4:8b) in their endless praise to God
 - The importance of our worshipping God is stressed in the fact that heavenly beings:
 - “give glory and honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever” (Rev. 4:9) and
 - “fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever” (Rev. 4:10)
 - May we remember that similarly God created us for his glory (Is. 43:7)

Considerations in Applying Revelation 4-5

- We, like they, profess:
 “You are worthy, our Lord and God,
 To receive glory and honor and power;
 For you created all things,
 And by your will they existed and were created” (4:11)

Throne Room in Heaven (Rev. 4:2ff)

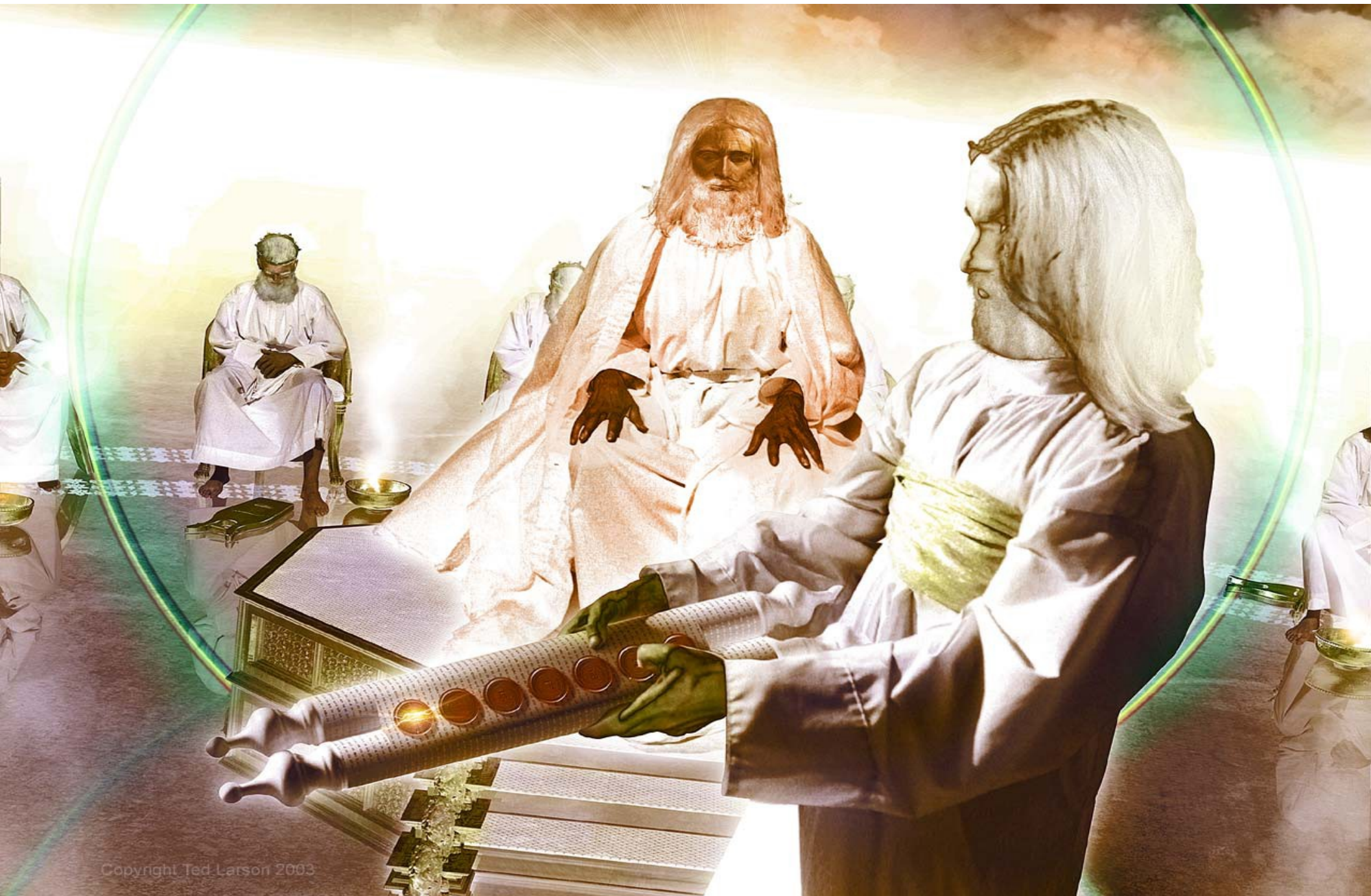


“Then He Came and Took the Scroll” (Rev. 5:7)

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Breaking the 1st Seal: (Rev. 6:1)



1st Seal: White Horse, Bow Rider (Rev. 6:2)



Breaking the 2nd Seal: (Rev. 6:3)

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2nd Seal: Fiery Horse, Sword Rider (Rev. 6:4)

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3rd Seal: Black Horse, Rider w/Scales (Rev. 6:5)

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Breaking the 4th Seal: (Rev. 6:7)



4th Seal: Pale Horse, Death Rider (Rev. 6:8)

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Four Horsemen (Rev. 6:1-8)



Four Horsemen (Rev. 6:1-8)



5th Seal: Cry of the Slain Martyrs (Rev. 6:9-11 [5:6])



Souls Under the Altar (Rev. 6:9-11 [5:6])



Souls of the Slain Martyrs Under the Altar ***(Rev. 6:9-11 [5:6])***



Breaking the 6th Seal (Rev. 6:12)

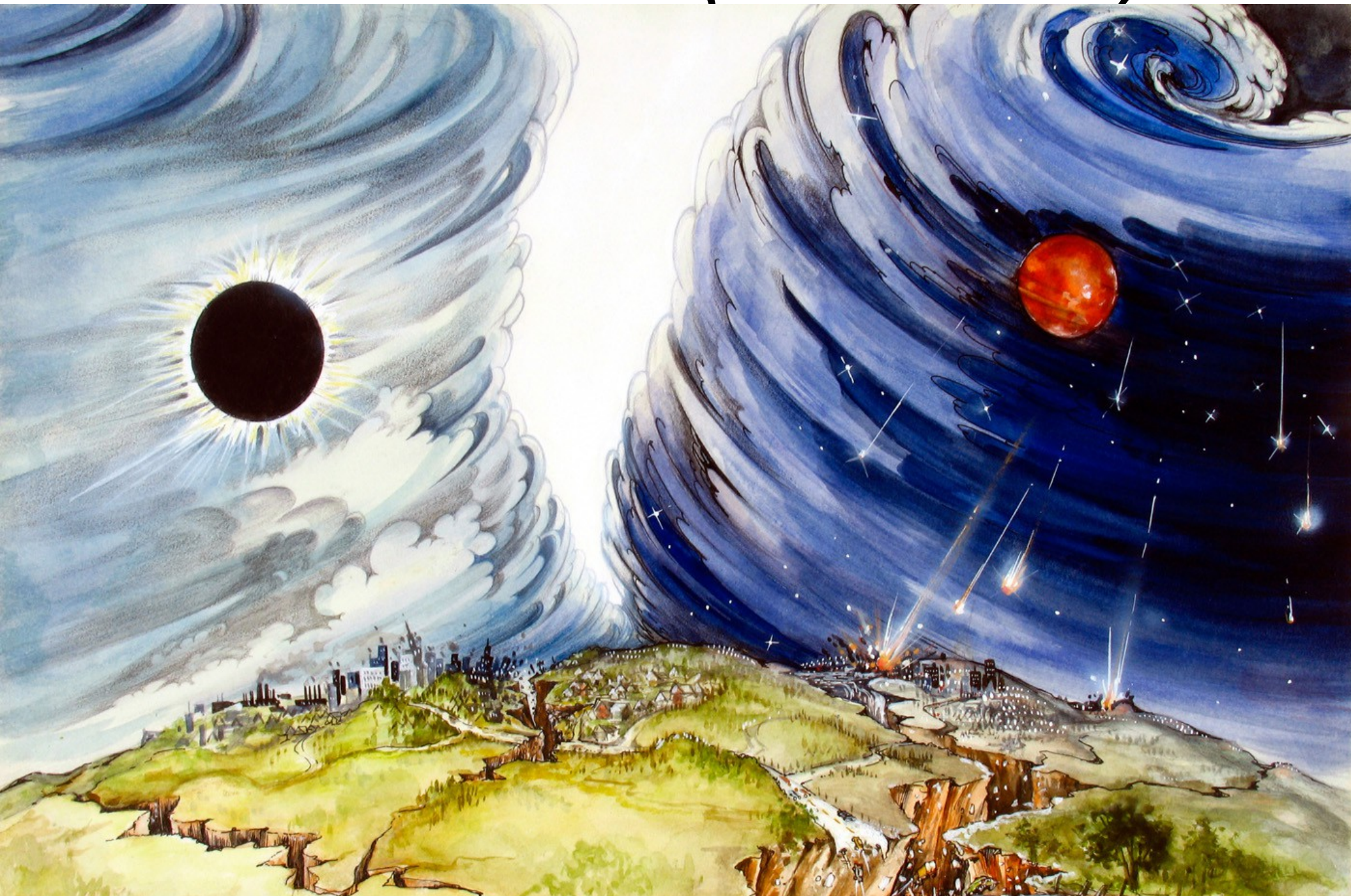
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Cosmic Chaos: Black Sun, Red Moon ***(Rev. 6:12)***



Cosmic Chaos (Rev. 6:12-14)



Every Mountain and Island Removed (Rev. 6:14b)

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The Idolaters Trying to Hide (Rev. 6:15)



Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- Jesus opens each seal in the throne room of the heavenly temple and issues the command for the contents of each to be executed on the earth
 - The disasters that unfold (Rev. 6:8) are the same as the four judgments prophesied by Ezekiel (14:12-23)
 - Sword (Ezek. 14:17)
 - Famine (Ezek. 14:13)
 - Wild beasts (Ezek. 14:15)
 - Plague/Death (Ezek. 14:19)
 - Ezek. 14:21 is explicitly quoted in Rev. 6:8b, where it functions as a general summary of the preceding trials, being conquered, the sword, and famine—including death

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- The quotation functions the same way in Rev. 6:8b
 - In Ezekiel 14, it clearly sums up the four preceding statements about trials as God's “four evil judgments” (Ezek. 14:21)
 - These punishments come upon nations in general when they are unfaithful to God
 - The trials are listed as lack of bread and “famine” (14:13), “wild beasts” (14:15), “sword” (14:17) and “plague” or “death” (14:19)
 - The point of Ezek. 14:21 is that all Israelites will suffer trials of persecution because of rampant idolatry (cf. 14:3-11)
 - The purpose of the trials in Ezekiel is to punish the unbelieving majority in Israel while purifying the righteous remnant

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- In Revelation 6 the trials have the same dual purpose of either punishment or purification
 - However, now spiritual Israel is the focus rather than physical Israel
 - The faithful will be purified, but those who compromise through idolatry will be judged by the same tribulations
 - These disasters extend beyond the borders of the church to the whole world
 - Rev. 3:10
 - Rev. 6:12-17

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- While Ezekiel 14 is the primary background of the four judgments in Revelation 6, Lev. 26:18-30 may be secondary
 - God warned the Israelites in the desert how he would punish them for idolatry:
 - He gave four sets of judgments, each consisting of seven punishments, each set of punishments being worse than the previous
 - The four punishments of Revelation—conquest, war, famine and death—are all present
 - Could Leviticus 26 be the model for the four sets of seven punishments in Revelation?
 - Seven seals (6:1–8:5)
 - Seven trumpets (8:6–11:19)
 - Seven signs (12:1–15:4)
 - Seven bowls (15:5–16:21)

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- In Ezekiel 14, the disasters occur side by side, suggesting the trials contained in the four seals of Revelation 6 also occur at the same time rather than in any particular order
 - In addition, the slain martyrs in Rev. 6:9-11 appear to have suffered under all four trials in the seals, pointing to the trials having taken place during the same general time period
 - Therefore, following on from ch. 5, Rev. 6:1-8 describes the destructive forces which were unleashed on the world after Jesus' victorious suffering at the cross, his resurrection and his ascension to rule in Heaven
 - This analysis is in line with the OT prophecies about God's kingdom which are alluded to in chs. 1–3 as beginning to be fulfilled with Jesus' death and resurrection
 - 1:5, 1:13-14, 2:26-28 and 3:21 clearly refer to the fact that Jesus has begun his messianic kingship

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- While Ezekiel 14 is the primary background and Leviticus 26 likely secondary background, Zech. 6:1-8 is the most obvious and memorable background of the four judgments in Rev. 6:1-8
 - In Zech. 6:1-8 there are four groups of horses of different colors (almost identical to the colors in Revelation)
 - They are commissioned by God to patrol the earth and to punish those nations on earth whom they find have oppressed God's people (Zech. 6:5-8)
 - These nations were raised up by God to punish his people, but they inflicted more retribution on Israel than they should have
 - God intended to punish the pagan nations for their transgression as a vindication of his jealous love for Israel (Zech. 1:8-15)

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- The horses in Rev. 6:1-8 signify that God and Jesus initiate the natural and political disasters throughout the world in order to judge unbelievers who persecute Christians and in order to vindicate his people
 - Such vindication demonstrates his love for them and his justice and may already be an anticipatory answer to the cry for vengeance in 6:9-11
- Notice the relationship between Revelation 4–5 and 6:1-8
 - In chs. 4 and 5, the vision of Dan. 7:9-14 concerning the Ancient of Days and the Son of man has been fulfilled in Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension
 - Daniel 7:2-8 has the vision of the four evil beasts that depict evil kingdoms that wage war on the saints
 - The vision of the four horsemen fulfills Daniel's prophecy of the four evil kingdoms

Background of the Four Judgments (6:1–8)

- Rev. 6:1-8 describes an effect of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension
 - He turned the trial of the cross into a triumph
 - The four horsemen are equivalent to the four evil kingdoms of Daniel 7
 - This identification may also be understood through recognizing that both Daniel's four kingdoms and Zechariah's four sets of horses are directly associated with "the four winds of heaven" (Dan. 7:2; Zech. 6:5; also Rev. 7:1)
 - Jesus has begun to fulfill Daniel's prophecy of the Son of man's exaltation over the evil, beastly kingdoms, which are explicitly alluded to in Rev. 12:3 and 13:1-2

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The first four seals (6:1-8)
 - God and Jesus use evil forces to inflict trials on people for either punishment or purification
 - Jesus has received all authority from the Father and rules over the kingdoms of the earth (1:5; 2:26-27; 5:1-14)
 - The first four seals show how Jesus' authority extends even over situations of suffering sent from God's right hand to punish unbelievers or purify the faithful
 - Examples of such suffering have been alluded to in the letters of chs. 2–3
 - 2:10; 3:10

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The first four seals (6:1-8)
 - God and Jesus use evil forces to inflict trials on people for either punishment or purification
 - God and Jesus rule over an apparently chaotic world
 - The suffering occurs with order and purpose
 - God and Jesus bring about the destructive events for both judicial and redemptive purposes
 - The opening of the seals begins the actual revelation and execution of the contents of the scroll of ch. 5
 - This makes sense of the message in the seven letters to be faithful through suffering
 - The suffering unleashed by the seals had already begun to take place in the life of the congregations

Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:1-8

- How do we view God's supreme rule/sovereignty in relation to the activities of the devil?
 - This passage presents a picture of God sending trials on the earth through the workings of the satanic enemy
 - This could leave us with a need for wisdom as to what around us represents the work of God and what represents the work of the devil
 - How can a holy God can “use” the enemy as an agent?
 - Is it that the enemy is busy wreaking destruction, but, unaware to him, God is using this destruction ultimately for God's own purposes?
 - How can God's role in the death of Jesus serve as a model to help us toward answering these questions?

Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:1-8

- How do we respond to a natural or economic calamity?
 - Has God planned to send it and turn something the enemy does to his glory?
- Can you think of redemptive results of a tragic event whether it be persecution or some other calamity?
 - How could Gen. 50:20, Rom. 8:28 and Rev. 2:10 give us a better perspective on such events?
 - Do we view God's deliverance of Lot's family as being intended for purification when he punished Sodom with fire and brimstone?
 - Additionally, can we see that Lot's wife, after having been delivered, brought punishment (rather than the intended purification) upon herself when she turned back (at least in her heart) to Sodom (Gen. 19:15-26; Lk. 17:28-32)?

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The fifth seal (6:9-11)
 - The judgments of the horsemen (6:2-8) function as an anticipatory answer to the martyrs' cry (6:10)
 - The horsemen represent partial punishments on unbelievers
 - White robes and rest serve as a preliminary answer to their cry (6:11)
- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summarizes the final answer to the martyr's cry
 - The seventh seal continues the final answer of judgment on idolatrous unbelievers (8:1-16:21)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The fifth seal (6:9-11)
 - Persecuted and glorified saints plead with God to demonstrate his justice by judging their persecutors
 - Their request will be answered when all God's people complete the suffering he has determined for them
 - While the first four seals show the world's sufferings from the heavenly perspective of God's command, the fifth seal describes the response of slain and glorified saints to these sufferings
 - Although the trials of 6:1-8 affect people generally throughout the earth, here the reaction is specifically to those trials of the four horsemen which afflict Christians in the form of persecution

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The fifth seal (6:9-11)
 - The altar (6:9) is the altar of incense before which prayers were offered
 - Ex. 30:1-10; Ps. 141:2
 - Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7
 - “How long” (6:10)
 - Ps. 6:3; 74:10; 79:5, 10
 - Zech. 1:12 is answered by God's sending the four horse-drawn chariots of judgment (Zech. 6:1-8)
 - A clear prophetic foreshadowing of the four horsemen of Revelation 6

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The loosing of the fifth seal does not reveal literal suffering from the throne room but a human response to such suffering
- Those who are “slain” (6:9) are figurative and represent those believers who suffer for their faith
 - The “slain” includes all forms of suffering and persecution and are now underneath the altar
 - In God's presence and under God's protection
 - Spiritual, not physical protection (Jn. 17:15)
- Once the martyrs' appeal to God's justice (6:10), for the unbelievers/idolaters there is “a kind of fearful expectation of judgment and fiery fury, which will devour the adversaries” (cf. Heb. 10:27)
 - Rev. 8:13; 11:10-14; 17:1-2

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The white robes (6:11) represent holiness, which has resulted from enduring faith through the affliction
 - Rev. 3:4-5
- What does “a little while” (or “time,” χρόνον) mean?
 - From God’s perspective what may be but a few moments could be a long period for humans
 - This is evident from Rev. 12:12 and 20:3
 - Time from God's patient perspective (2 Pet. 3:8-13)
 - From a heavenly viewpoint, “time” referred to in 6:11, seems to be counted differently than time on earth
- The assurance that God will right the wrongs provides rest in peace until God executes his punishment
 - Rev. 14:9-13

Souls Under the Altar (Rev. 6:9-11 [5:6])



Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:9-11

- If believers absolutely will be pursued/persecuted for their faithfulness to Jesus (2 Tim. 3:12), how do we measure our faithfulness and our fruitfulness?
 - Do we look only for positive results (people favorably affected by our evangelism)?
 - If we negatively react to suffering (or a negative response to our evangelism) is that a godly reaction?
 - Positive response to suffering (Acts 5:41)
 - Have we really understood that God calls us to suffering?
 - 1 Pet. 2:21

Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:9-11

- Justice vs. Revenge
 - In our anger against others, are our thoughts and even our prayers motivated by a desire for their punishment or by a desire that God is glorified through executing his justice?
 - What happens to us when we give our anger over to God and allow him to be the judge?
 - Perhaps something like rest and peace?
 - Do we come before God with the awareness that he is the judge our own attitudes and actions?
 - When we are holding bitterness against others, how can we pray for God's justice or his glory, when we are not reflecting his merciful character ourselves?
 - Is our greatest desire that God's reputation and name be honored and not our reputation and name?

Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:9-11

- Being patient
 - The martyrs repeat the Psalmist's frequent cry, "How long?"
 - God says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:8-9)
 - Both God's thoughts and actions surpass human understanding
 - People find it hard to forgive those who offend them
 - God can forgive—and "forgive abundantly" (Is. 55:7)
 - In God's patience, he is willing to allow his righteous people to suffer in order to give evil people time to hear the gospel and repent so that they may be forgiven (saved)
 - 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9

Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:9-11

- Being patient
 - How do we cope with the pressures of living in a society accustomed to instant gratification?
 - What steps can we take so God can transform our thinking to his thinking and in line with God's eternal gratification?
 - How long are we prepared to wait for a return on our spiritual investment?
 - Do some congregations buy into "programs" designed to produce instant results?
 - Do we give up on trying to evangelize after a few attempts?
 - Do we express patience by resting in God's understanding, which surpasses ours?

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The fifth seal (6:9-11)
 - The judgments of the horsemen (6:2-8) function as an anticipatory answer to the martyrs' cry (6:10)
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Breaking the 6th Seal (Rev. 6:12)

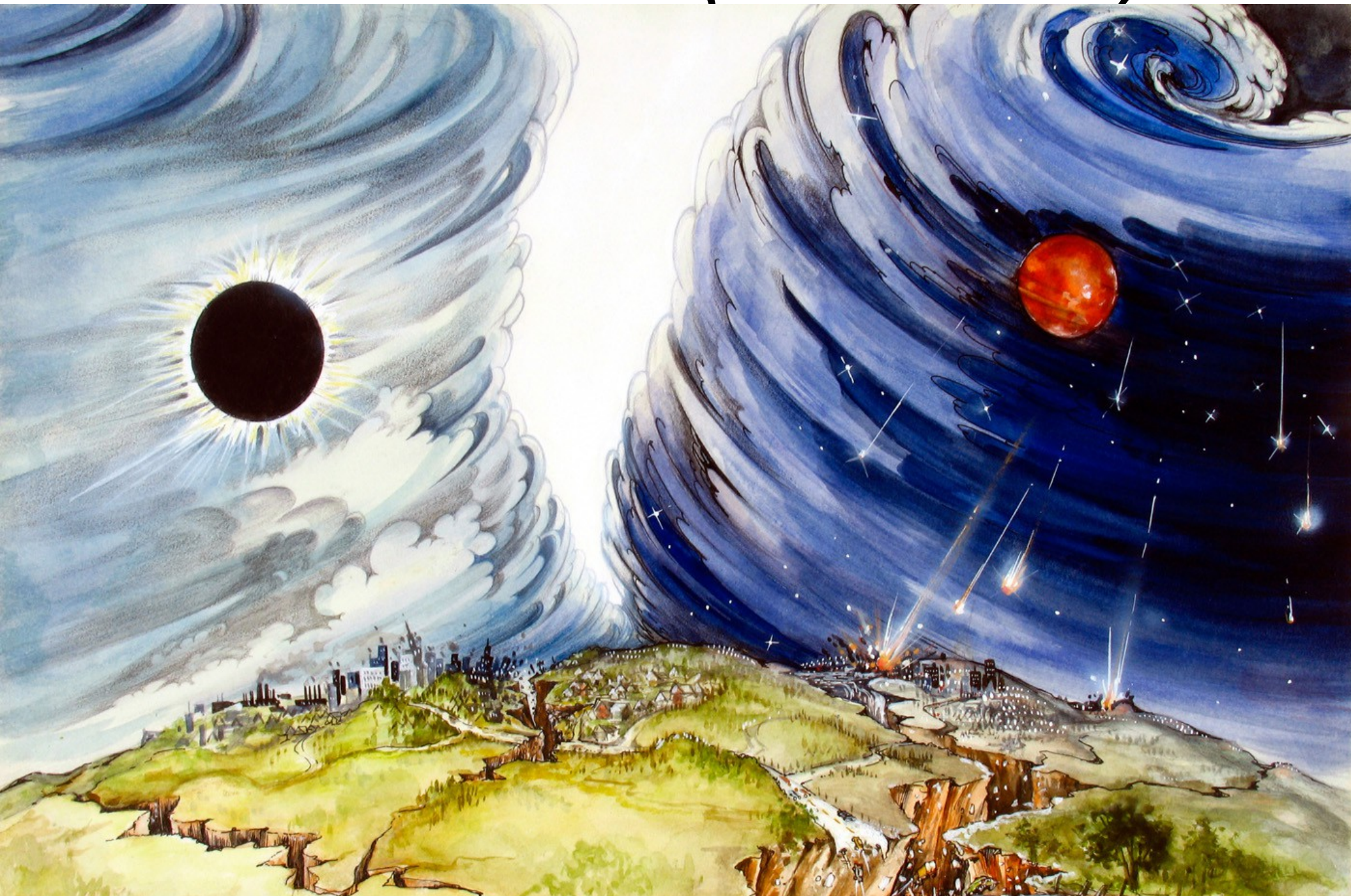
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Cosmic Chaos: Black Sun, Red Moon ***(Rev. 6:12)***



Cosmic Chaos (Rev. 6:12-14)



Every Mountain and Island Removed (Rev. 6:14b)

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The Idolaters Trying to Hide (Rev. 6:15; Hos. 10:5-8)

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The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summarizes the final answer to the martyr's cry
 - The seventh seal continues the final answer of judgment on idolatrous unbelievers (8:1-16:21)
 - A great earthquake (6:12) appears two more times (11:13; 16:18)
 - Mountains and islands are removed (6:14; 16:20)
 - Similarly, the earth and heaven flee from the throne and him who sits upon it (20:11)
 - Background of the judgment and catastrophe
 - Is. 24:1-6; 34:2-6, 12
 - Ezek. 32:6-8; Joel 3:15-16

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summarizes the final answer to the martyr's cry
 - Background of the judgment and catastrophe
 - In Is. 34:3-4, “blood” is directly linked with the host of heaven wearing away or rotting
 - Is. 34:5-6 refers to God’s sword being drunk or filled with blood “in heaven,” which may be related to the moon becoming like blood in Rev. 6:12
 - In Is. 34:12 judgment will fall on the princes, kings and great men (LXX, Brenton) which is very similar to the first three groups in Rev. 6:15 of those under judgment: “the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders”

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summarizes the final answer to the martyr's cry
 - Background of the judgment and catastrophe
 - “The sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the whole moon became like blood” (6:12)
 - “I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering” (Is. 50:3)
 - “The sun and moon grow dark” (Joel 2:10)
 - “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood” (Joel 2:31)
 - As in Is. 33:1–35:4, they are judged due to persecuting God’s people (Rev. 6:10, 15-17)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summarizes the final answer to the martyr's cry
 - Background of the judgment and catastrophe
 - They are also judged for idolatry (Rev. 6:15; Is. 2:18-21)
 - The same groups are mentioned as giving allegiance to the beast (Rev. 19:18-19) as are “both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave” who receive the mark of the beast (13:16-17)
 - They have committed their lives to the worship of the beast and partake of the benefits and consequences of idolatry

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Background of the judgment and catastrophe
 - Is. 2:10, 19-21—“hide . . . from the terror of the Lord”
 - Joel 2:11—the great day of the Lord that no one can resist
 - Nah. 1:5-8—the mountains quaking at God’s anger
 - “Your wrath came” (Rev. 11:18)
 - “Great day” (16:14)
 - The “great supper of God” (19:17-18)—
 - Virtually the same groups of people listed in 6:15 are mentioned as being destroyed by Christ’s judgment

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summary of 6:12-17
 - Their idolatry is focused on the things to be removed
 - That is, the dimensions of their physical world
 - Those judged in 6:15-17 are “those who dwell on the earth” in 6:10—the ungodly deserving judgment
 - Christians have their citizenship in Heaven (Phil. 3:20), not on earth, “nor have hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God” (1 Tim. 6:17)
 - In contrast, the earth-dwellers are at home in this world and trust in their gods of material wealth, false religion and moral pollution

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summary of 6:12-17
 - The significance of the Old Testament allusions (Isaiah 2, Joel 2 and Nahum 1) is to emphasize:
 - The fact of judgment
 - The apparently secure home of the earth-dwellers will be shaken and will not last
 - In the remainder of the book the phrase “earth-dwellers” or “ones who dwell upon the earth” continues to refer to those who rebel against God and are thus defined as idol worshipers
 - They refuse to repent and worship the true God
 - 8:13 [cf. 9:20]; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6-11; 17:2
 - “worshiped the creation rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:18-25; Rev. 9:20)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summary of 6:12-17
 - The unbelievers' idolatrous refuge on earth must be removed because it is tainted by the pollution of their sin
 - Therefore, creation itself—sun, moon, stars, trees, animals, etc.—has become an idol that must be removed
 - The heavenly bodies are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible as representing false deities whom Israel and the nations worshiped
 - Deut. 4:19; 17:1-4; 2 Kgs. 23:4-5
 - Jer. 8:2; Ezek. 8:16; Amos 5:25-27
 - Acts 7:41-43
 - However, the eternal home of believers with their God will remain (cf. Heb. 12:26-28)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The sixth seal (6:12-17)
 - Summary of 6:12-17
 - Six parts of the cosmos are destroyed in vv. 12-14
 - Earth, sun, moon, stars, heaven and “every mountain and island”
 - Six groups of humanity in vv. 15-17 are about to be judged
 - Kings, great ones, rulers of thousands, the rich, the powerful and “every slave and free man”
 - These two lists point further to an intended identification of the idolaters
 - Six is the number of unredeemed humanity—with the earth as their ultimate idol

Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:12-17

- Idolatry: expression of human rebellion against God
 - It is always expressed by attachment to created things rather than the Creator
 - Some forms of idolatry are obvious—worship of other gods and various forms of addiction
 - Some forms of idolatry are not obvious
 - Is it possible to practice idolatry without knowing it?
 - Satan's best deceptions can be his least noticeable
 - Is it possible for something to be idolatrous to one person and not to another, depending on the attitude with which it is approached?
 - A focus on staying healthy can be a good thing for one person yet idolatrous for another

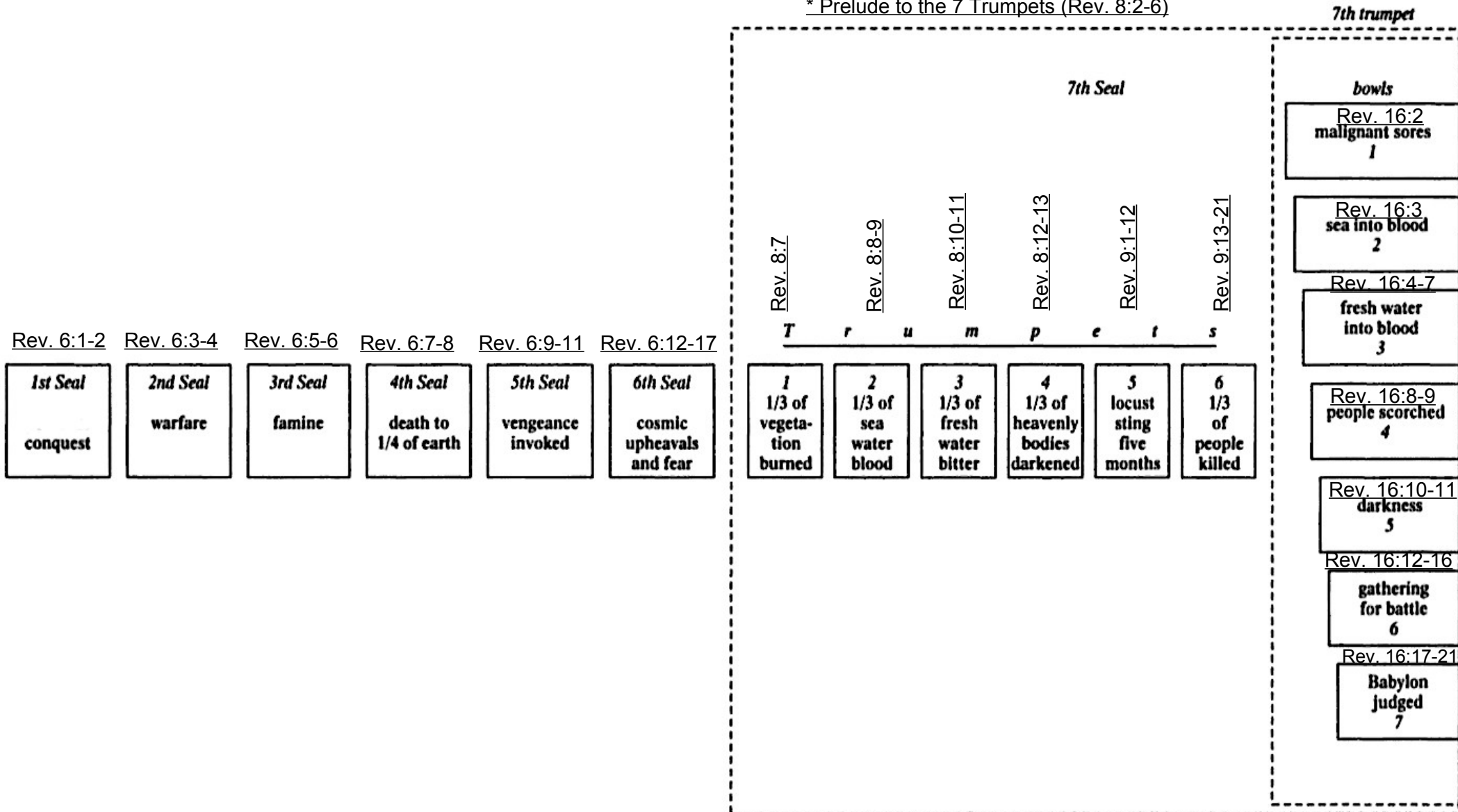
Considerations in Applying Rev. 6:12-17

- Idolatry: expression of human rebellion against God
 - Is it possible for something to be idolatrous to one person and not to another, depending on the attitude with which it is approached?
 - Traveling on vacation could be an innocent way of recharging our batteries—or could be idolatrous
 - Devotion to our family, greatly commended in the Bible, can become idolatrous
 - If anything comes between us and God, or becomes a greater object of affection than God, it will become idolatrous for us

The Seven Seals

*** 7th Seal: Silence in Heaven (8:1)

* Prelude to the 7 Trumpets (Rev. 8:2-6)



The 12 Tribes Sealed

★ JUDAH 12,000

★ REUBEN 12,000

★ GAD 12,000

★ ASHER 12,000

★ NAFTALI 12,000

★ MANASSEH 12,000

★ SIMEON 12,000

★ LEVI 12,000

★ ISSACHAR 12,000

★ ZEBULUN 12,000

★ JOSEPH 12,000

★ BENJAMIN 12,000

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- Just as receiving a “name” (2:17; 3:12) indicates eternal life, to receive God's seal symbolizes salvation/redemption
- God's “sealing” of his people indicates God will protect them spiritually through their faith for their salvation (1 Pet. 1:5)
 - #1 Background for God's protective seal: Ezek. 9:4-6
 - God commands an angel to put a mark on the faithful but to kill unfaithful Israelites (see also 1 Pet. 4:17)
 - The mark on the faithful provides protection from the coming judgment to be executed on unfaithful Israel by the Babylonians
 - #2 Background for God's protective seal: Ex. 12:7, 13, 22-28
 - Rev. 7:2-3—The faithful are sealed to protect them from the coming trumpet and bowl plagues (chs. 8-9, 11, 16) which find their background in the Exodus plagues (Exodus 7-12)

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- God's “sealing” of his people indicates God will protect them spiritually through their faith for their salvation (1 Pet. 1:5)
 - *The seal's protective function is evident in 7:3, 9:4 and 16:2
 - The seal is a metaphor of salvation (specifically immersion)
 - σφραγίς, *sphragís* – an etched (engraved) object pressed into soft wax or clay to seal a document” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/4973.htm>)
 - σφραγίζω, *sphragízō* ("to seal") “signifies ownership and the full security carried by the backing (full authority) of the owner. 'Sealing' in the ancient world served as a 'legal signature' which guaranteed the promise (contents) of what was sealed” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/4972.htm>)—Jer. 32:10 (Jer. 39:10 LXX)
 - “in order to mark a person or thing; hence, to set a mark upon by the impress of a seal, to stamp” (Thayer's, <https://biblehub.com/greek/4972.htm>)

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

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 - The seal is a metaphor of salvation (specifically immersion)
 - “at a very early date the term σφραγίς (*sphragís*) was associated with baptism (cf. Hermas, Sim. ix. 16. 2-4). To baptism there is, of course, no allusion in our text, but baptism combined the two ideas here present : (i) it marked the baptized as God's (or Christ's property) ; (2) it secured the baptized against demonic powers” (Charles, <http://bibletranslation.ws/down/Charles-Revelation-Vol-1.pdf>, 197)
- 2 Cor. 1:21-22→(Mt. 3:16-17; Jn. 6:27)
- Rom. 4:11→Col. 2:11-13
- Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- God's “sealing” of his people indicates God will protect them spiritually through their faith for their salvation (1 Pet. 1:5)
 - The seal is a metaphor of salvation (specifically immersion)
 - To be sealed is to receive a “name” (2:17; 3:12)
 - ὄνομα, *ónoma* – “Usage: name, character, fame, reputation”; “name; (figuratively) the manifestation or revelation of someone's character, i.e. as distinguishing them from all others” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/3686.htm>)—Mt. 28:19
 - “the inscription or impression made by a seal: Revelation 9:4 (the name of God and Christ stamped upon their foreheads must be meant here, as is evident from 14:1); 2 Timothy 2:19” (Thayer's, <https://biblehub.com/greek/4973.htm>)

The Seal of Redemption

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 - To know someone's name in the ancient world and the OT, often meant to enter into a close relationship and to share the same character, power or presence (Is. 62:2-5; 65:15-19; Acts 11:26)
 - To be given a new name indicated a new status (Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10→Gal. 3:27)

The Seal of Redemption

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 - The “name” and the “seal” identify those who belong to God
 - Ex. 28:9-21 provides background since most of the precious stones in Rev. 21:19-20 are listed and the names of the 12 tribes are written on the stones identifying those who belong to Israel [see also Ezek. 28:12-13]

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- The “name” and the “seal” identify those who belong to God
 - Ex. 28:9-21 provides background since most of the precious stones in Rev. 21:19-20 are listed and the names of the 12 tribes are written on the stones representing those who belong to Israel
 - The 12 stones are called “seals” (σφραγίς, *sphragís* [LXX]) worn on the high priest's shoulders
 - The seals correspond to the “seal” (σφραγίς, *sphragís* [LXX]) placed on Aaron's forehead, which also represented Israel (Ex. 28:36-38 LXX)

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- In Ex. 28:36 in place of the names of Israel is to be written on the seal “holiness/dedication/set apart of the Lord” (LXX: Ἁγίασμα κυρίου)
 - It expresses the idea of Israel as the Lord's dedicated possession (Ex. 19:6; Rev. 1:6→1 Pet. 2:9; also 1 Pet. 3:15)
- In Exodus 28 both seals function to maintain Israel and its offerings to God in holy dedication
 - Set apart from sinful defilement and God's wrath
 - This dedication was accomplished through the high priest's atoning sacrifices before the Lord
 - The attached names as seals are part of the necessary equipment for the high priest to enter and serve before the Lord

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- In Exodus 28 both seals function to maintain Israel and its offerings to God in holy dedication
 - Similarly, in Revelation 7 God's seal identifies his people and sets them apart from sinful defilement of compromising with the world
 - Washed in the blood of the lamb (7:14; see 1:5)
 - Consequently, they will not suffer God's wrath that the unbelieving world must suffer (2:22; 6:15-17)
- It will become clear in 7:13-15 that becoming sealed [as previously discussed, by being immersed into Christ] is required to enter God's temple (the church) and serve before God as priests

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- To be sealed is to receive a “name” (2:17; 3:12)
 - ὄνομα, *ónoma* – “Usage: name, character, fame, reputation”; “name; (figuratively) the manifestation or revelation of someone's character, i.e. as distinguishing them from all others” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/3686.htm>)—Mt. 28:19
 - Prov. 22:1—What kind of reputation do we have?
 - Do people see “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27)
 - When people think of us, would they say we have the character of Christ (Rom. 8:29) and belong to Jesus?
 - Do others see our lives (collectively and individually) and think “God has really stamped the image of his Son on their hearts!”?

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- ὄνομα, *ónoma* – “Usage: name, character, fame, reputation”; “name; (figuratively) the manifestation or revelation of someone's character, i.e. as distinguishing them from all others” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/3686.htm>)—Mt. 28:19
 - Does God see the image of his Son stamped on our hearts?
 - (v. 1) “O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee! Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art; Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart”
 - (v. 5) “Make me (should be “us,” the church) a temple meet for Thy dwelling, Fit for a life which Thou wouldst approve”
 - Would God count us worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' name (Acts 5:41)?
 - When we fail to live up to the character of Jesus' name upon us, we dishonor him and his Father (Is. 43:7—“name/glory”; it is imperative to glorify God in the name of Christ, 1 Pet. 4:16)

The Seal of Redemption

(Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1-4; 22:4)

- God's “sealing” of his people indicates God will protect them spiritually through their faith for their salvation (1 Pet. 1:5)
 - Jesus' name provides spiritual protection (Rev. 2:13; 3:8-10)
 - Similarities and contrasts between the mark and the seal
 - The name of Christ and God are on the foreheads of those who belong to God (14:1; 22:4) vs. the mark (name) of the beast on the foreheads of those who belong to the beast (14:9-11)
 - Rev. 13:1, 16-17
 - Rev. 14:9-11
 - Rev. 15:2; 16:2
 - Rev. 17:5
 - Rev. 19:20; 20:4

Two Pictures of the Same Group (Revelation 7)

- The 144,000 (7:1-8)
 - The 12 tribes multiplied by the 12 apostles (21:12, 14)
 - Their names are part of the figurative structure of the city
 - The 144,000 and the city represent the faithful bride of Christ, God's congregation (21:9-10)
 - They are pictured to be on the earth
 - The 144,000 represents the faithful to whom Revelation is written (yet it contains a message for the faithful of every generation)
 - They are the Lord's army, numbered and prepared for spiritual battle
 - In the OT a census determined military might
 - Num. 1:3, 18, 20-45; 26:2, 4
 - 1 Chron. 27:23-24; 2 Sam. 24:1-9
 - Num. 2:32→Rev. 7:4

Two Pictures of the Same Group (Revelation 7)

- The innumerable multitude (7:9-17)
 - The spiritual warriors are delivered and victorious
 - “clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands” (v. 9)
 - “Salvation” (v. 10) = “deliverance”/“victory”
 - They overcome by keeping their faith, suffering through the tribulation (v. 14)
 - Tribulation: pressure to compromise with the idolatrous world
 - “The great tribulation”: intensification of pressure to compromise
 - Such immense pressure that those who enforced pagan worship used the death penalty for those who resisted (see Rev. 13:11-18)
 - The saints' washing their robes is in harmony with victory in a holy war, after which God required the washing of garments for purification (Num. 31:19-24; also Num. 19:19)

Two Pictures of the Same Group (Revelation 7)

- The innumerable multitude (7:9-17)
 - They are before the Lord, serving God (7:15) [see Job 1:6; 2:1]
 - Similarly, Job serves in a priestly capacity (Job 1:5)
 - Just as Satan, who has been on earth, comes among God's righteous worshipers (Job 1:6-7), so he accuses God's righteous remnant before God (Rev. 12:9-10)
 - The innumerable multitude shares in God's presence, which is with them (7:15, 17; Phil. 3:20)
 - It is a message for those who are on earth, continually serving as priests in God's temple (the church)

Two Pictures of the Same Group (Revelation 7)

- The innumerable multitude (7:9-17)
 - The great multitude does not include God's congregation throughout the ages, but only those who “come out of the great tribulation” (7:14)
 - “The great tribulation' is about to fall upon the present generation, and in vii. 9-17 are represented the great multitude which had come through it faithfully” (Charles, <http://bibletranslation.ws/down/Charles-Revelation-Vol-1.pdf>, 199)
 - The tribulation represents pressures to compromise
 - Tribulation had already begun (Rev. 1:9; 2:9)
 - The faithful would be thrown into the trial of tribulation (2:10) and the unfaithful would be thrown into the punishment of “great tribulation” (2:22)

Two Pictures of the Same Group (Revelation 7)

- Summary of Revelation 7
 - Angels prevent the evil forces from commencing their destructive activity on earth until believers are given spiritual protection against losing their faith (7:1-8)
 - God and the Lamb are praised for revealing the salvation of multitudes by protecting them through a purifying tribulation (7:9-17)

Laboring Martyrs or Earthly Priests?

(Rev. 7:13-17)

- The picture given of those who die in the Lord is that they enter into rest (Rev. 14:13), not into a state of constant labor (Rev. 7:13-15)
 - Therefore Rev. 7:13-17 does not describe martyrs serving in Heaven but represents God's people who are serving continually as priests within God's temple, the church
 - 1 Cor. 15:58
 - Gal. 6:9
 - Contrast Heb. 4:9-10

Considerations in Applying Rev. 7:1-17

- Considering “sealing” and the assurance of salvation, if the “sealing” means protection from losing one’s saving relationship with God, how can we be assured that we are saved and have not fallen out of God's grace (Gal. 5:4)?
- Have we truly believed that Jesus the Lamb has purchased us by the price of his blood?
 - Rev. 5:9
 - Rev. 12:11
- Do we genuinely desire to keep God’s commandments?
 - 2:26
 - 12:17
 - 14:12
 - 22:3

Considerations in Applying Rev. 7:1-17

- Is the church so convicted of our collective failure in working together to evangelize that it leads to repentance and renewal of our relationship with Jesus?
 - Ephesus: Rev. 2:4-5
 - “The first works” means “the fruits of your first love”
 - Eph. 2:4-10
 - Eph. 3:8-12
 - Eph. 6:15
 - Laodicea: Rev. 3:15-19
- Are we willing to uphold and spread God's Word in the midst of pressures to compromise?
 - Rev. 6:9
 - Rev. 12:11, 17→How to make the devil angry
 - Rev. 19:10

Considerations in Applying Rev. 7:1-17

- The responses to the previous questions have a cumulative effect on our perception of assurance: How can we know we are saved, that is, in a right relationship with God?
- Considering being slaves of God
 - Rev. 7:3 says that those who have been “sealed” are “the slaves of God”
 - Faithful slaves in the ancient world were to please their masters with their whole being, since their whole body was owned by the master
 - Christians likewise want to please their divine master (Gal. 1:10; Eph. 6:6; Rev. 22:3)
 - Are there ways in which we do not submit to Jesus?
 - Individually: financial considerations or sexual issues?
 - Collectively: worshiping together and working together?

Considerations in Applying Rev. 7:1-17

- Paul says that we must present our entire beings and “dying bodies” to God as “slaves to righteousness” (Rom. 6:12, 16-19, 22)
 - Jesus “bought” us with a “price” (1 Cor. 6:20)
 - God's true slaves become “obedient from the heart” (Rom. 6:17)—does God have our entire hearts?
 - God’s “slaves” are those “who walk before him with all their heart” (1 Kgs. 8:23, 61)
 - Is our obedience to God only a duty, or do we also desire from our hearts to please him by being subject to him?
 - Negative answers to these questions reveal degrees of idolatry, which Revelation speaks much about (e.g., 2:12-23; 9:20-21)

Considerations in Applying Rev. 7:1-17

- Considering the church as the true Israel of God
 - What difference does it make for members of Christ's body when they realize that they are part of the continuation of true Israel from the OT?
 - One very practical difference is that the OT becomes much more a book for Christians
 - The OT contains many prophecies about Israel (e.g. Isaiah 40-66)
 - The fulfillment of the prophecies occur in the reality and existence of the church (Mt. 5:5—the kingdom of God in context, Mt. 5:3-10)
 - The prophecies about Israel's restoration to its land began to be fulfilled in unbelieving Jews and Gentiles being restored to God through Jesus
 - Therefore, the church represents the true Israel and new Jerusalem

Considerations in Applying Rev. 7:1-17

- Considering the Christian's warfare
 - The listing of those sealed from Israelite tribes in 7:4-8 represent an accounting of soldiers to fight in a holy war
 - If those called out and sealed represent the church as true Israel, then what kind of war is to be fought?
 - 7:14 interprets the manner of their fighting
 - They conquer in no other way than that of the Lamb
 - Through persevering faithfully in service to God as priests in the midst of suffering (7:15)
 - While many times we may think of our service to God as collectively worshiping together, their service to God is actually specific to the priestly function of collectively working together evangelistically
 - This is how a congregation will be a true lampstand, a true congregation (Rev. 1:20)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The seventh seal (8:1)
 - The seventh seal is the conclusion of the seal series
 - God's judgment of the persecuting idolaters is repeated as the final answer to the martyr's cry we saw in 6:10 (8:1-5)
 - When the Lamb opens the seventh seal, there results silence in heaven for about half an hour (8:1)
 - Some believe this silence means the seal has no content
 - This allows for the idea that the following trumpets and bowls make up the seal's content
 - They believe the trumpets and bowls refer to events coming after the judgments of the first six seals

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The significance of silence
 - The silence does have content (8:1)
 - The OT associates silence with divine judgment
 - God is pictured (as in Rev. 8:1) as being in his temple and about to bring judgment on the earth (Hab. 2:15 [20]–3:15 and Zech. 2:13–3:2)
 - For their persecution and their idolatry, God will punish the Babylonians (Hab. 2:15–3:15)
 - At the moment this judgment is to be delivered, God commands the earth to be silent
 - Similarly, in Zeph. 1:2-18, silence is commanded in connection with the “great day” of the Lord and of his judgment upon the idolatrous
 - Zeph. 1:14, 18 form part of the OT background to the phrase “the great day of his wrath” (Rev. 6:17)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- The thought of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1) is that God's answer of judgment is so awful that the response is silence
 - Just as subjects are to remain silent in the presence of their king, awaiting his judgment (as in the Hab. 2:20 background), all of Heaven was silent in anticipation that God would pour out his judgment in righteous fury upon spiritual Babylon and the beast (Rome and the Roman Empire)
 - Hab. 2:15
 - Ancient Babylon made his neighbor (including God's people) drink the cup of his cruel anger to the point of shameful humiliation
- Rev. 14:7-8→14:9-11, 14-20
 - God's judgment encourages the patient endurance of the saints through the affliction/tribulation (Rev. 14:12)
 - God's judgment of the idolatrous is contrasted with the reward of rest for the righteous (Rev. 14:13)

The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)

- Rev. 15:1, 7; Rev. 16:1, 19; Rev. 17:1, 4
- “Repay her as she also repaid others” (Rev. 18:6 [2-8, 9-24])
- Rev. 19:19-21→20:7-15→References to the same judgment, not multiple judgments
- “Hour” (8:1) often refers to the suddenness and perhaps unexpectedness of the time of judgment upon the wicked
 - 3:3; 11:13; 14:7; 18:10, 17, 19
- “Half” (8:1) is associated with “times” of crisis and judgment in Dan. 7:25 and 12:7
 - This background from Daniel lies behind the 42-month period of Rev. 11:2-3, 9; 12:6; 13:5
 - “About half an hour” may not refer so much to the precise temporal duration of the silence but may figuratively emphasize the suddenness and unexpectedness of a judgment
 - The final expression “one hour” (18:19) is followed in 18:22-23 by a description of what comes after the judgment—silence

Silence & Prayer (8:1, 3-4)

- In Jewish writings silence is associated with both divine judgment and with the prayers of the faithful being heard for that judgment
 - God does not forget the martyrs' request for judgment (Rev. 6:10)
 - He hears and answers their cry
 - “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears” (Is. 38:5)
 - The altar of Rev. 8:3 is the same as that of 6:9
 - Confirming this is the repetition of “altar” three times in vv. 3-5, in connection with offering “much incense . . . with the prayers of all the saints”
 - This phrase is similar in wording to 5:8, which is then developed in 6:9, showing that the altar and temple theme originate in the temple vision of chs. 4–5
 - The smoke of the incense going up with the prayers of the saints (8:4) shows that the petition of 6:9-10 is now being presented before God

Silence & Prayer (8:1, 3-4)

- In Scripture, incense is always associated with sacrifice, so that the sacrifice, accompanied by a pleasing aroma, will be acceptable to God
- These verses echo Lev. 16:12-13, where the priest takes the censer full of coals off the altar before the Lord, fills his hands with incense, and puts the incense on the fire before the Lord
- In Ps. 141:2 prayer is associated with incense and compared to a form of sacrifice: “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice”
- The fact that incense is offered from the altar shows that the prayers of those who were slain for the word of God (6:9) represent the sacrifice of their lives in the cause of Christ, and so their petition for judgment in 6:10 has been found acceptable to God

The Seven Seals

*** 7th Seal: Silence in Heaven (8:1)
 * Prelude to the 7 Trumpets (Rev. 8:2-6)

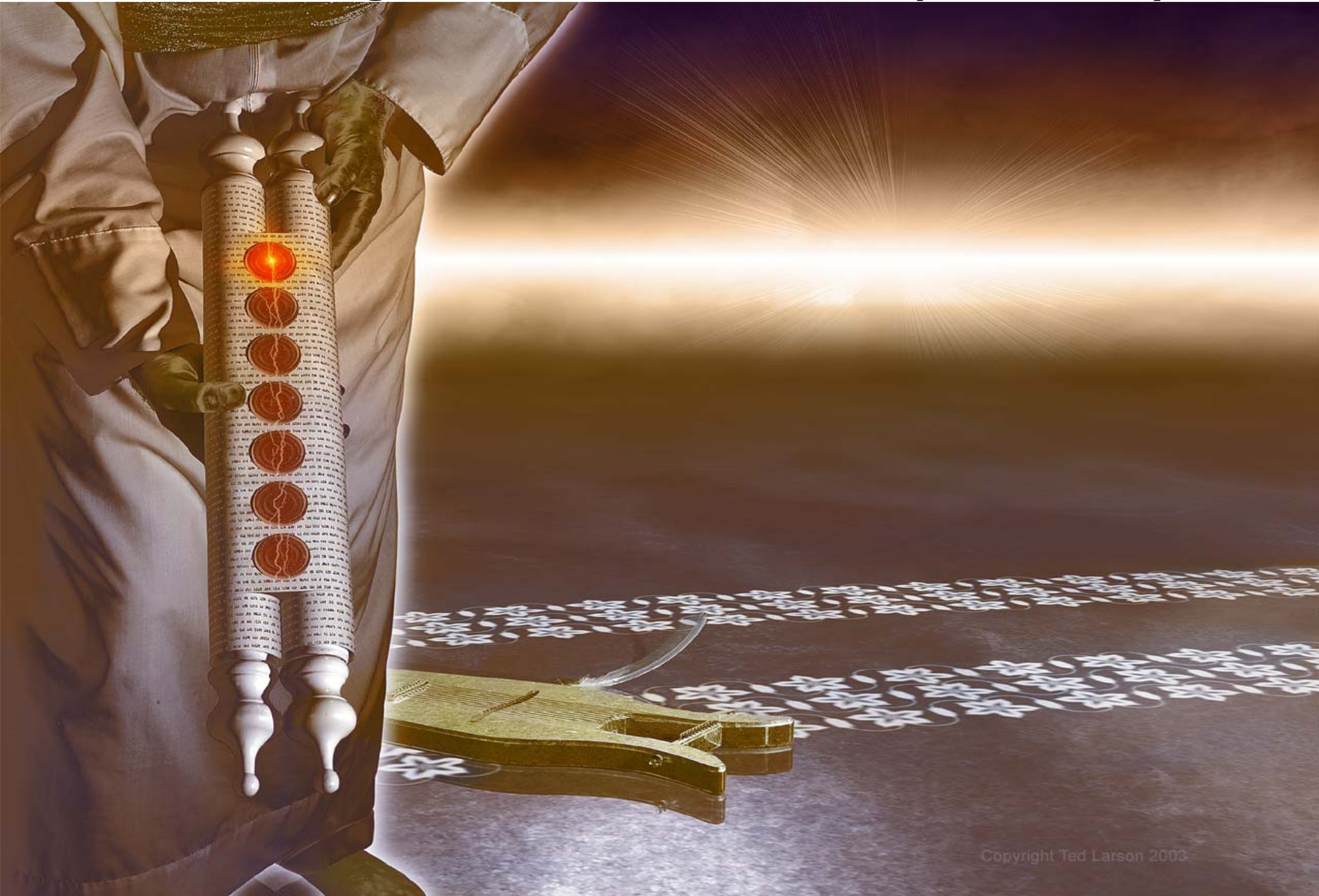
Rev. 11:15
 7th trumpet

Rev. 6:1-2 Rev. 6:3-4 Rev. 6:5-6 Rev. 6:7-8 Rev. 6:9-11 Rev. 6:12-17

1st Seal	2nd Seal	3rd Seal	4th Seal	5th Seal	6th Seal
conquest	warfare	famine	death to 1/4 of earth	vengeance invoked	cosmic upheavals and fear

7th Seal							
<u>Rev. 8:7</u>	<u>Rev. 8:8-9</u>	<u>Rev. 8:10-11</u>	<u>Rev. 8:12-13</u>	<u>Rev. 9:1-12</u>	<u>Rev. 9:13-21</u>		
T	r	u	m	p	e	t	s
1 1/3 of vegeta- tion burned	2 1/3 of sea water blood	3 1/3 of fresh water bitter	4 1/3 of heavenly bodies darkened	5 locust sting five months	6 1/3 of people killed		
						bowls	
						Rev. 16:2 malignant sores 1	
						Rev. 16:3 sea into blood 2	
						Rev. 16:4-7 fresh water into blood 3	
						Rev. 16:8-9 people scorched 4	
						Rev. 16:10-11 darkness 5	
						Rev. 16:12-16 gathering for battle 6	
						Rev. 16:17-21 Babylon judged 7	

Breaking the Seventh Seal (Rev. 8:1)



The Altar, the Censer and the Fire (Rev. 8:3-5)

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Throwing the Fiery Censer (Rev. 8:5)

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Throwing the Fiery Censer to Earth (Rev. 8:5)

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First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck (Rev. 8:7)



One-Third of Earth Was Burned Up (Rev. 8:7)

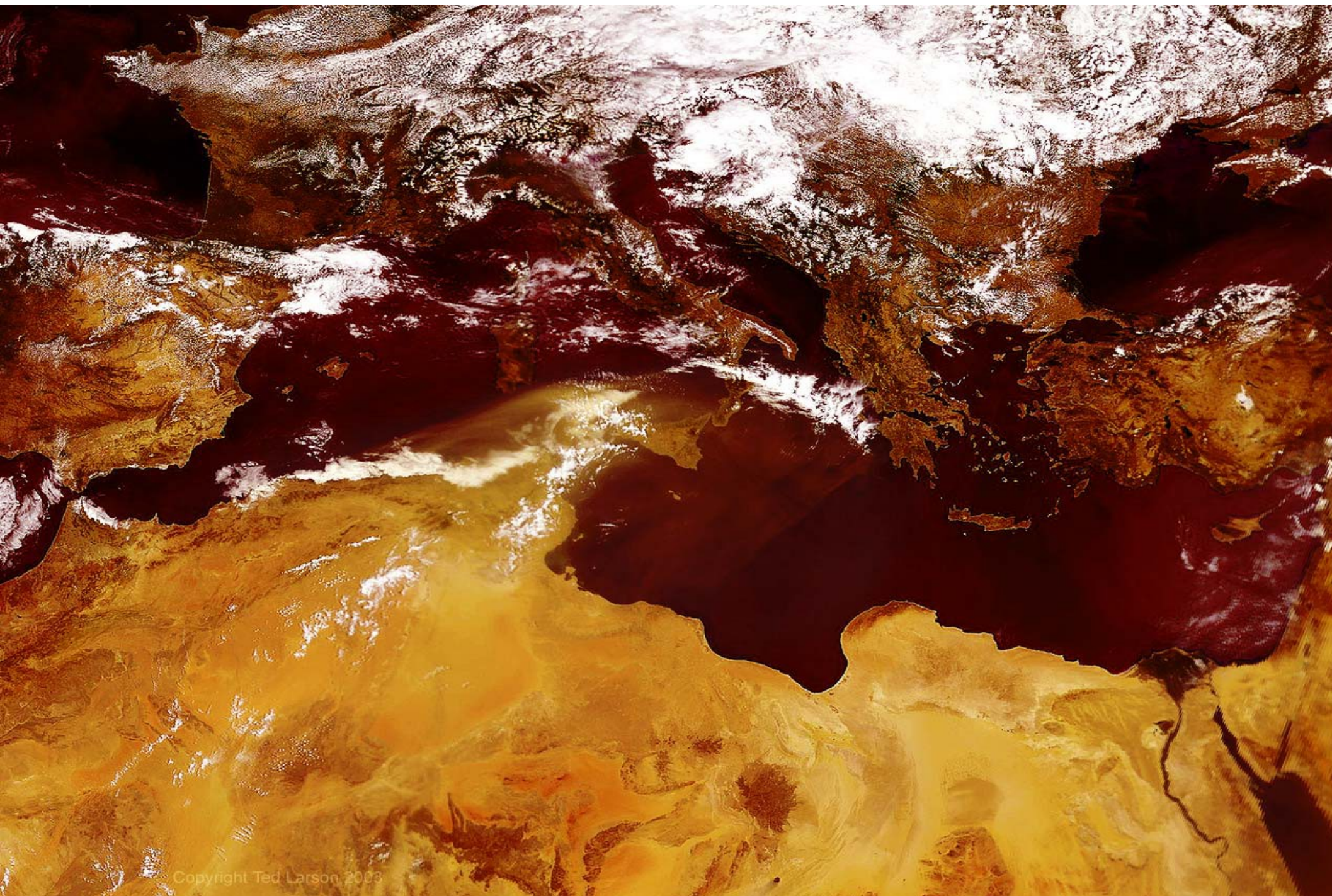
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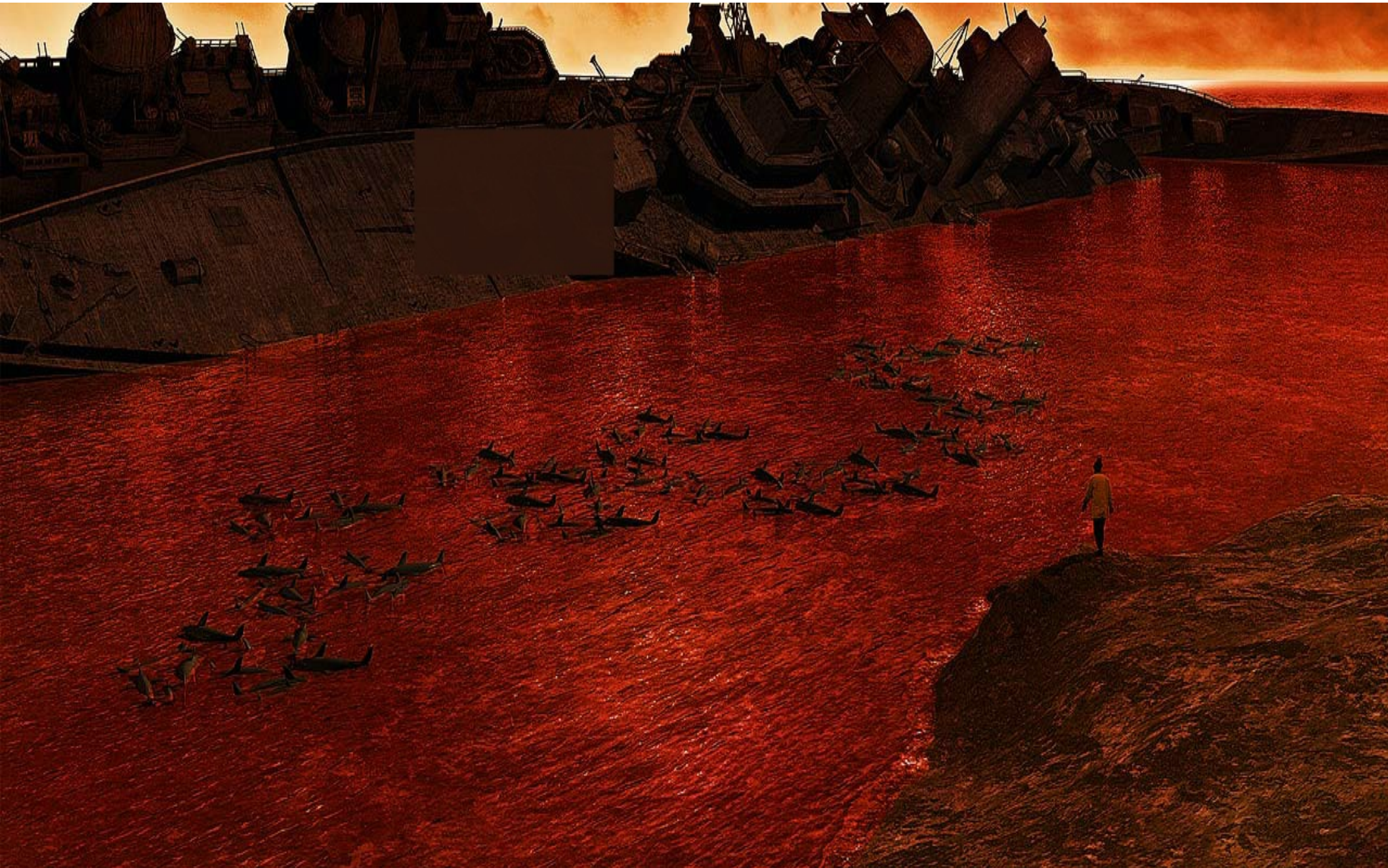
Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck (Rev. 8:8-9)



One-Third of the Sea Became Blood (Rev. 8:8)



One-Third of the Marine Life and One-Third of the Ships Destroyed (Rev. 8:9)



Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck (Rev. 8:10-11)



The Great Star Wormwood (Rev. 8:10-11)



Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck (Rev. 8:12)

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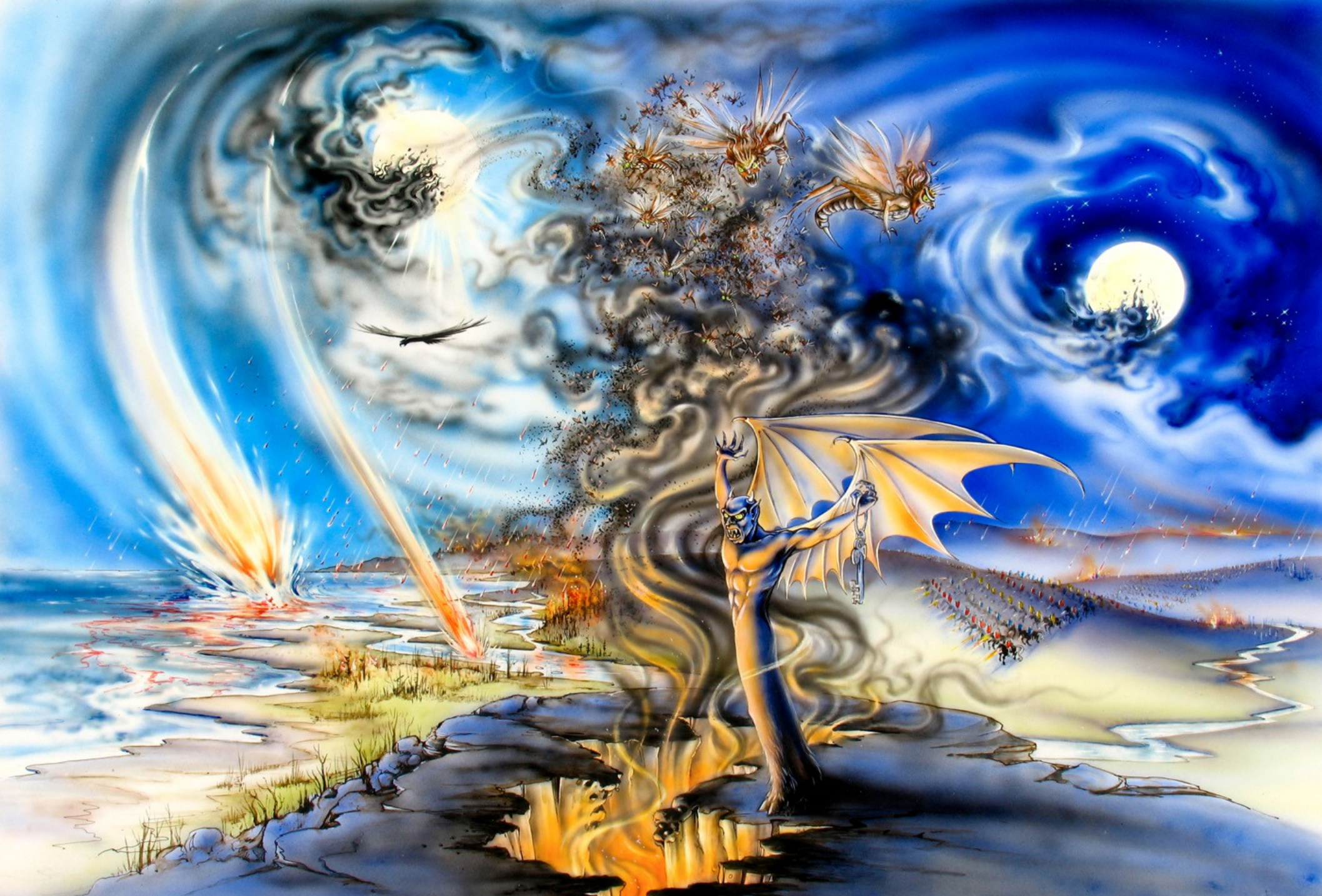
Fifth Trumpet: The Fallen Star (Rev. 9:1a)



Key to the Pit of Abyss (Rev. 9:1b)



Stinging Locusts Released (Rev. 9:2-10)



Stinging Locusts Released (Rev. 9:2-10)

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The Angel of the Abyss: Abaddon/Apollyon (Rev. 9:11)



Sixth Trumpet: The Angels From the Euphrates (Rev. 9:13-15)



Trumpets & Bowls

(Revelation 8-11, 15-16)

- Revelation 8:2 introduces the judgment of the seven trumpets
 - 8:3-5 serve both as a conclusion to the seals and as an introduction to the trumpets
 - The association of the trumpets (8:2) with the prayers of the saints (8:3-5) shows that the following series of trumpets is also a divine response to the saints' petition (6:9-11)
 - Prayer is an important part of the arsenal that God supplies to soldiers of Christ (Eph. 6:18)
- Judgment of the seven trumpets (Revelation 8-11)
 - The Exodus plagues and the trumpets of Jericho (Joshua 6) provide the background to the judgment of the seven trumpets

Trumpets & Bowls

(Revelation 8-11, 15-16)

- The first five trumpets are patterned after five of the Exodus plagues
 - The first trumpet (hail, fire and blood) corresponds to the plague of hail and fire (Exod. 9:22-25)
 - The second and third (poisoning of the sea and waters corresponds) to the plague on the Nile (Exod. 7:20-25)
 - The fourth (darkness) corresponds to the plague of darkness (Exod. 10:21-23)
 - The fifth (locusts) corresponds to the plague of locusts (Exod. 10:12-15)
 - As with the Egyptian plagues, these plagues punish hardness of heart, expressed in their idolatry (Rev. 9:20-21) and persecution of God's people (Rev. 6:9-11)
 - Concerning idolatry: each Exodus plague had a judgment suited to a particular Egyptian god

Trumpets & Bowls

(Revelation 8-11, 15-16)

- Judgment of the seven trumpets (Revelation 8-11)
 - First six trumpets (8:2, 6—9:21)
 - Seventh trumpet (11:15-19)
- Judgment of the seven bowls (15:1, 6-8; 16:1-21)

Revelation

Repent?

What About Us?

By Timothy Sparks
TimothySparks.com

“Did They Repent?”

(Revelation 2-3)

- God stresses the necessity to repent throughout Revelation
- Did Ephesus repent of their failure to evangelize?
 - Rev. 2:4-5
- Did Pergamos repent?
 - Rev. 2:16
- Did Thyatira repent?
 - Rev. 2:20-24
- Did Sardis repent?
 - Rev. 3:1-3
- Did Laodicea repent?
 - Rev. 3:19

“Did They Repent?”

(Revelation 2-3)

- While we probably prefer to ask “Did they repent?,” we ask the far more important question: “Will we repent?”
 - How many times have we said, “We don't need to repent”?
 - Or, “What are we doing incorrectly?”
 - How many times have we genuinely asked ourselves collectively, “Is there anything we need to correct and change?”

“They Did Not Repent”

(Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11)

- It is easy for us to say “they did not repent”
 - Few really like to be corrected—whether people in the world or in the church
 - Jer. 7:23-28
 - Jer. 9:3—“strong in the land, but not for truth”
 - Very few really want to change bad behavior
 - Some adopt the view, “You don't like to be corrected and I don't like to be corrected, so let's not correct each other”
 - The philosophy of “live and let live”
 - Oxford defines as “You should tolerate the opinions and behavior of others so that they will similarly tolerate your own”

<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/live>

“They Did Not Repent”

(Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11)

- It is much more difficult to ask ourselves, “Will we repent?” or “Will I change the things that I am not doing right?”
 - We seem to have a strong preference for:
 - wanting other people to change their bad behavior
 - doing nothing to change ourselves for the better
 - doing only what we like or are comfortable doing
 - doing nothing differently than what we have been doing
 - not changing even when we recognize we need to

“They Did Not Repent”

(Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11)

- Too often we focus on what “they” are doing incorrectly, all without any serious consideration about what we are or what we are not doing that we need to correct
 - If we will not acknowledge there is a problem we need to work toward correcting, we will never change
 - If we acknowledge there is action necessary for us to take, but we do nothing, we will never change
 - The sin of doing nothing

Strong Angel Descending (Rev. 10:1)

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Strong Angel Descending (Rev. 10:1)



“Little Scroll Open in His Hand” (Rev. 10:2a)



Strong Angel with Little Scroll (Rev. 10:1-7)



Strong Angel with Little Scroll (Rev. 10:1-7)



Strong Angel with Little Scroll (Rev. 10:1-7)

- Alludes to the angel in Dan. 12:7, who stood above the waters, raised his hands to heaven and swore by him who lives forever
 - Additional background: Deut. 32:40-43, where God swears that he will judge the ungodly

“A Loud Voice Like a Lion Roars” (Rev. 10:3a)



Strong Angel with Little Scroll (Rev. 10:2, 5-6)



“Take the Little Scroll” (Rev. 10:8)



“I Took the Little Scroll” (Rev. 10:10)



The Measuring Rod (Rev. 11:1)



The Measuring Rod and the Altar (Rev. 11:1)

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***Measuring Rod =
God's Spiritual Protection*** →



**God's Presence Provides Spiritual Protection
as His People Offer Spiritual Sacrifices**

Will we utilize the spiritual protection God provides?

The Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)



The Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

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The Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- The two witnesses are not individuals, but represent the corporate church in its capacity as faithful prophetic proclaimers of God's Word
 - This follows the previous context of God's Word and prophecy (10:10-11)
 - The witnesses are referred to as “two lampstands” (11:4)
 - Lampstands represent the congregations (1:20)
 - Joel had prophesied that the entire community of God's people would receive the gift of prophecy (Joel 2:28-32)
 - Peter understood that Joel's prophecy had begun fulfillment in their midst (Acts 2:16-21)

God's Temple, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- God's decree ensures his presence with his people and their effective evangelism, which leads to their persecution and results in judgment of their oppressors (11:1-13)
 - In 11:1, the focus is on God's people being a spiritual temple in which God's presence dwells (see also 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5)
 - Without exception, “temple” elsewhere in Revelation refers not to a literal or historical temple, but to God's heavenly spiritual temple of the present (3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5-6, 8; 16:1, 17; 21:22)
 - This usage points to the same identification in 11:1-2
 - God's people who are members of God's temple in heaven are referred to in their existence on earth as being “the temple of God” (see also Phil. 3:20)

God's Temple, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- In 11:1, the focus is on God's people being a spiritual temple in which God's presence dwells (see also 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5)
 - The temple of God = the church collectively
 - The altar = priestly service
 - In line with 6:9-10, the altar connotes the sacrificial calling, which requires suffering for their faithful evangelism
 - The Greek word here for "altar" (θυσιαστήριον, *thusiastérion*) can be translated as "the place of sacrifice" (<https://biblehub.com/greek/2379.htm>)

God's Temple, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- The picture of Christians as priests sacrificially serving in a spiritual temple is similar to 1 Pet. 2:5
 - “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”
 - Also Rom. 12:1, “logical priestly service”
- The outer court (which is part of the temple) represents the physical part of the temple
 - That is, the physical bodies of God's people
 - God does not promise to protect his people physically, only spiritually

God's Temple, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- The “holy city,” which is to be trampled underfoot (v. 2), is equated with the outer court
- In Revelation, the “holy city” refers to the earthly manifestation of the heavenly city, which is the church
 - Rev. 20:9: “They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city”
 - Clearly, God's enemies did not surround Heaven since the setting is on the earth
 - The enemies surround the beloved city, God's people—on the earth

Background to the Two Witnesses



Zechariah 4

Background to the Two Witnesses (Zech. 4)



Background to the Two Witnesses (Zech. 4)



The Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)



God's Temple, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- Zechariah 4:12-14 provides the background for the two witnesses who are called olive trees and lampstands
 - The olive trees provided the oil to light the lamps
 - As in Revelation, Zechariah's two witnesses (in context representing Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel) are described as standing in the presence of the Lord of the earth (Zech. 4:14)
 - God would provide His fruitful spirit (the oil) and cause it to issue from Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel (the olive trees) to lead the process of completing the temple
 - The establishment and preservation of the true temple despite opposition is introduced in Rev. 11:1-2
 - Zech. 4:14 is a climax to a section concerning the same topic

God's Temple, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-13)

- Zechariah 4:12-14 provides the background for the two witnesses who are called olive trees and lampstands
 - Just as Joshua and Zerubbabel were key vessels used by God's spirit (Zechariah 3-4) for the establishment of the temple against opposition, so the two witnesses are likewise empowered by God's spirit to perform the same role in relation to Rev. 11:1-2
 - Zechariah speaks of the two witnesses, the king and the priest, who reestablish a literal temple, whereas John sees two witnesses helping to build the heavenly temple
 - In contrast with Zechariah, the two witnesses are not individuals but represent the collective body of Christ

The Two Witnesses Ascended (Rev. 11:12)

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7th Trumpet: God's Reign Proclaimed (Rev. 11:15)



The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord (Rev. 11:19)

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The Pregnant Woman, the Sun & Moon (Rev. 12:1)

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The Woman, the Child & the Dragon (Rev. 12:1-4)



The Woman, the Child & the Dragon (Rev. 12:1-4)



The Child Caught Up to God (Rev. 12:5)



The Woman Fled into the Desert (Rev. 12:6)



War in Heaven & Dragon Thrown Out (Rev. 12:7-9)



The Woman Given Two Wings of the Great Eagle (Rev. 12:14)



The Woman Given Two Wings of the Great Eagle (Rev. 12:14)



The Dragon Spewed Water (Rev. 12:15-16)



God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- God protects Jesus and the covenant community throughout the Devil's spiritual attacks (12:1-6)
 - “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 [*crown*] of twelve stars” (12:1)
 - Background of Rev. 12:1
 - Gen. 37:9-10: The sun, moon and eleven stars metaphorically represent Jacob, his wife and eleven of the tribes of Israel, who bow down to Joseph, representing the twelfth tribe
 - Later Jewish literature used Song 6:10 to describe Israel in terms of the sun, moon and stars

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- Background of Rev. 12:1
 - Restored Israel (which in Revelation is the church) is described similarly in Is. 60:19-20
 - In Isaiah a woman often represents restored Israel
 - e.g. Is. 54:1-6; 61:10
 - Is. 62:3-5 prophesies that restored Israel will be like a bride wearing a crown
- The woman represents the faithful community, which existed both before and after the coming of Jesus
 - That the woman represents both the old and new covenant communities becomes clearer in vv. 11-17, where her offspring is not only Jesus but also the entire community of his followers

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- Jesus' death and resurrection result in two things (12:7-12):
 - (1) the victory of God's children over the Devil (12:7-9)
 - (2) the beginning of the messianic kingdom (12:10-12)
- As a result of Jesus' victory over the Devil, God protects the messianic community against the Devil's enraged attacks (12:13-17)
 - Ex. 19:4 and Deut. 32:10-12 provides the background of the two wings of the great eagle (12:14a)
 - God carried Israel as an eagle in the desert
 - The church is the Israel of God and the spiritual desert represents God's protective presence substituted for the physical desert of Sinai

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- God will take care of the church in its exodus wanderings through the desert of this world (12:14b)
 - This world is a spiritually bone-dry desert and provides no spiritual food
 - Just as God sustained his people in Sinai desert, he provides manna for the spiritual people of God
 - Ex. 16:32; Deut. 8:16
 - Rev. 2:17—God's promise of manna to overcomers
 - Jesus is the manna (bread) from Heaven (Jn. 6:31-58)
 - His presence strengthens and supports his people in the midst of persecution and suffering
 - In his presence his people find their place of protection within the desert of this world

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- The serpent's throwing water like a river out of his mouth after the woman (12:15) symbolizes the Devil's persecution of the church—specifically his deception
 - Background: “flood” represents
 - an army spreading out to conquer (Dan. 11:10, 22, 26, 40)
 - persecution of God's people by enemies from whom the Lord delivers them (2 Sam. 22:4-5; Ps. 18:3-4, 16-17; 66:12; 69:1-2, 14-15; 124:1-8; 144:7-8)
 - In Ps. 18:4, David describes Saul's pursuit of him explicitly as “the torrents of Belial” assailing him
 - Ps. 144:7-8, 11 is a prayer that God would deliver David “out of great waters,” which is a picture of those who speak deceit and falsehood

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- The serpent's throwing water like a river out of his mouth after the woman (12:15) symbolizes the Devil's persecution of the church—specifically his deception
 - Previously, part of the deception was through false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians (Rev. 2:14-15, 20-21)
 - “The power of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm” (Rev. 9:19)—points to deception
 - Part of the effect of the demonic horses’ mouths is to intensify the deception of unbelievers, hardening them in idolatry (Rev. 9:17-21)
 - Satan is “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9)

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- The serpent's throwing water like a river out of his mouth after the woman (12:15) symbolizes the Devil's persecution of the church—specifically his deception
 - The dragon gives the sea beast “a mouth speaking 'great things' and blasphemies . . . against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven” (13:5-6)
 - The dragon gives the evil Roman government the power to deceive people into idolatry
 - The earth beast is also involved in deception
 - “And he deceives my own, those who dwell on the earth . . . telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast . . .” (13:14, M-Text)

God Spiritually Protects His Children Against the Devil (Rev. 12:1-17)

- The serpent's throwing water like a river out of his mouth after the woman (12:15) symbolizes the Devil's persecution of the church—specifically his deception
 - The sixth bowl pictures a judgment of deception:

“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” (16:13)

 - The false prophet is the earth beast (13:11)
 - A false prophet uses his mouth to deceive

Background of the “Dragon” (Rev. 12:3)

- “And another sign appeared in heaven, and behold, a great fiery red dragon” (12:3)
 - “Dragon” in the Old Testament translates the word *tannin*, which also may be translated serpent or sea monster
 - Without exception, throughout the Old Testament the symbolic “dragon” represents evil kingdoms who persecute God’s people
 - Often, the sea dragon or sea monster symbolizes the wicked kingdom of Egypt and/or Pharaoh whom God defeats at the exodus deliverance as well as later in Egypt’s history
 - Ps. 74:13-14; Is. 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2-3
 - Through Christ, God will again defeat the Egyptian dragon (Is. 27:1)

Background of the “Dragon” (Rev. 12:3)

- That the spirit of a kingdom of evil resides in the dragon is evident from the widespread influence of exodus themes elsewhere in the book
 - E.g., the plagues of trumpets and bowls and the reference to the Red Sea deliverance (15:2-4; cf. also 11:6, 8)
 - As is the case with the Old Testament identifications of the dragon, the dragon of Revelation closely relates to an evil kingdom—the kingdom of Rome: the Roman Empire
 - The sea beast represents the Roman Empire
 - The Devil (the dragon; 12:3, 9) is the representative head of the evil kingdom, using the Roman Empire (the sea beast; 13:1) and those who enforce idolatrous worship (the earth beast; 13:11) to wage war against God's kingdom

Summary of Revelation 13

- In order to hold on to their faith, believers must be on guard against Satan's powerful deceptive workers and not to participate in false worship (13:1–18)
 - Satan authorizes the Roman government as his agent to persecute the church and to deceive the ungodly (13:1–8)
 - Believers must recognize true worship from false worship (13:9-10)
 - The Roman government authorizes its political, religious and economic allies as its agents to persecute the church and to deceive the ungodly (13:11-18)
 - The earth beast = the Roman Empire's political, religious and economic allies = those who enforce pagan worship
 - Rev. 13:18—“the completeness of sinful incompleteness”; “failure, failure, failure”; complete failure

The 1st Beast: The Sea Beast (Rev. 13:1-8)

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The 2nd Beast: The Earth Beast (Rev. 13:11-18)



The Mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18)

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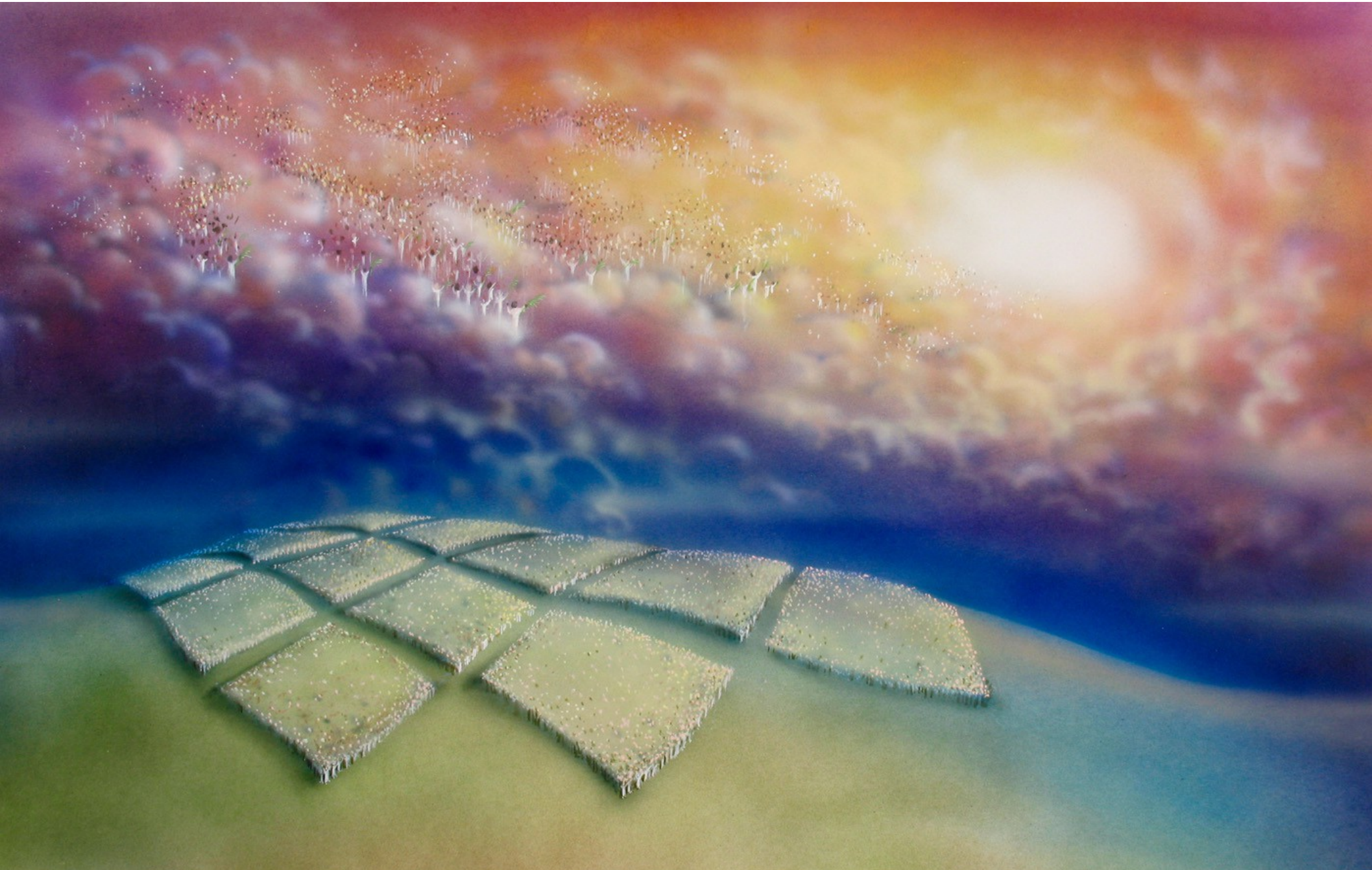
The Dragon and the Two Beasts (Rev. 13:1-18)



Summary of Revelation 14

- God is glorified in giving his people victory and in bringing judgment on the ungodly persecutors (14:1–15:4)
 - The majority of chs. 12–13 concern the persecution of believers by the forces of evil led by Satan and his two beastly allies who deceive multitudes into following them
 - Revelation 14, together with 15:2-4, show the victory of the faithful and the defeat of the beast and those who follow him
 - The section ends with the saints' victory over the beast and the praise of God's glory (15:2-4)
 - All of 12:1–15:4 moves toward the goal of glorifying God
 - We see the same design in chs. 4–5, the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments

***The 144,000
(Rev. 14:1-5; cf. ch. 7)***



The Seal of Spiritual Protection (Rev. 14:1; cf. 7:4-8)



Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1)

- Background

- “But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’ (Ps. 2:6-7 NASB)
- “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King. God, in her palaces, has made Himself known as a stronghold . . . As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish her forever. Selah” (Ps. 48:1-3, 8 NASB)

Mount Zion

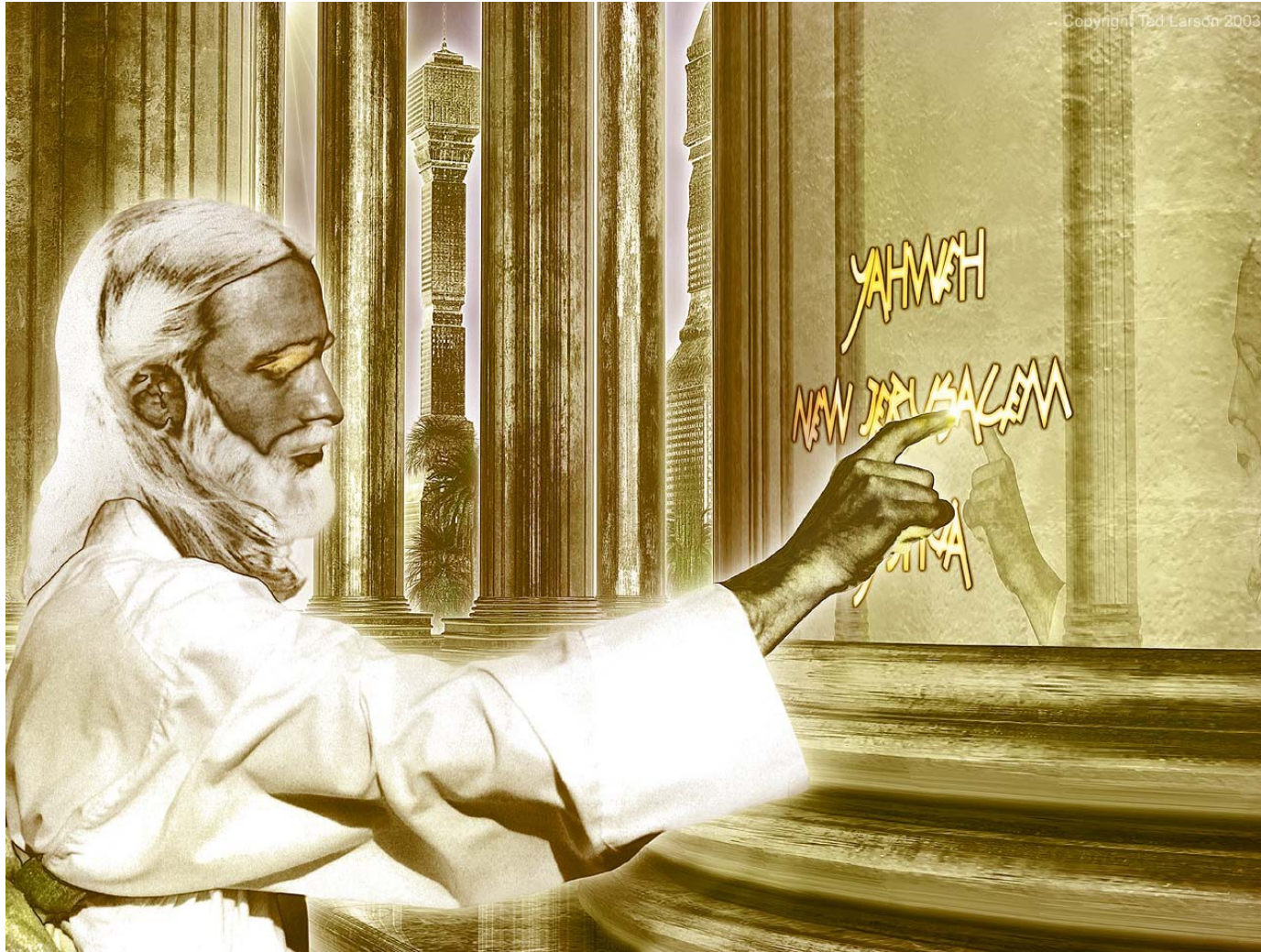
- Background

- “We have thought on Your lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Your temple. As is Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness. Let Mount Zion be glad, let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments. Walk about Zion and go around her; count her towers; consider her ramparts; go through her palaces, that you may tell it to the next generation. For such is God, our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death (Ps. 48:9-14 NASB)
- 2 Kings 19:21, 31; Ps. 132:13; Is. 52:1; 62:1-4, 12→Zion given a new name, but not limited to one new name
 - Rev. 14:1-4
 - Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1)→Ezek. 40:2; Mic. 4:1; Is. 2:2; Rev. 21:10

Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1)

- Mount Zion is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem
 - A spiritual reality where God and his people meet
 - More specifically, Mount Zion is the spiritual city of God where God dwells with and provides protection for the redeemed
 - In contrast to Philadelphia's geographical background
 - “But you have come (1) to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of messengers, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, (2) to God the Judge of all, (3) to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, (4) to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant . . . Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:22-24, 28)

“ . . . a pillar in the temple of My God . . . the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem . . . ” (3:12)



“The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35)

Outline of Rev. 14:1-13

- God and Jesus are with those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes and are spiritually protected (14:1-5)
- 1st Angel: The Evangelistic Messenger of Judgment (14:6-7)
 - God's judgment has begun
- 2nd Angel: The Messenger of Babylonian Doom (14:8)
 - God's judgment is so certain that the idolatrous city already “fell”
- 3rd Angel: The Messenger of Idolaters' Doom (14:9-11)
 - Idolaters will “drink the wine of God's wrath” (14:10)
- God's judgment urges believers to remain faithful to Jesus in order to receive an eternal reward (14:12-13)

The Evangelistic Messenger of Judgment (Rev. 14:6-7)



The Messenger of Babylonian Doom (Rev. 14:8)



The Messenger of Idolaters' Doom (Rev. 14:9-11)

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Outline of Rev. 14:14-20

- Unbelievers will suffer God's wrathful judgment (14:14-20)
 - The reapers (14:14-19)
 - Reaping the harvest of the earth (14:14-16)
 - Reaping the vine of the earth (14:17-19)
 - The imagery of harvest in vv. 17-19 is very similar to vv. 15-16, though there is amplification of the picture
 - These are two different pictures of the same judgment
 - Treading the great winepress of God's wrath outside the city (14:19-20)

The Reaper (Rev. 14:14)



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Rev. 14:14-20

- Unbelievers will suffer God's wrathful judgment (14:14-20)
 - The judge appears for the judgment (14:14)
 - The judge is one like the Son of man who is sitting on the cloud (Dan. 7:13)
 - The heavenly figure has a golden crown on his head, identifying him as King over his people, who rule with him and also wear “golden crowns” (4:4, 10; cf. also 2:10; 3:11; 12:1)
 - His crown also conveys kingship over his enemies (19:12)
 - The “sharp sickle” is a metaphor of judgment
 - Seven heavenly beings are described in vv. 6-20, but the Son of man is the only one not referred to as an angel
 - 1:7, 13-16 pictures Jesus as the Son of man
 - In the OT, God alone comes from heaven or to earth in a cloud

Reaping the Earth (Rev. 14:16)



The Angelic Reaper (Rev. 14:17, 19)

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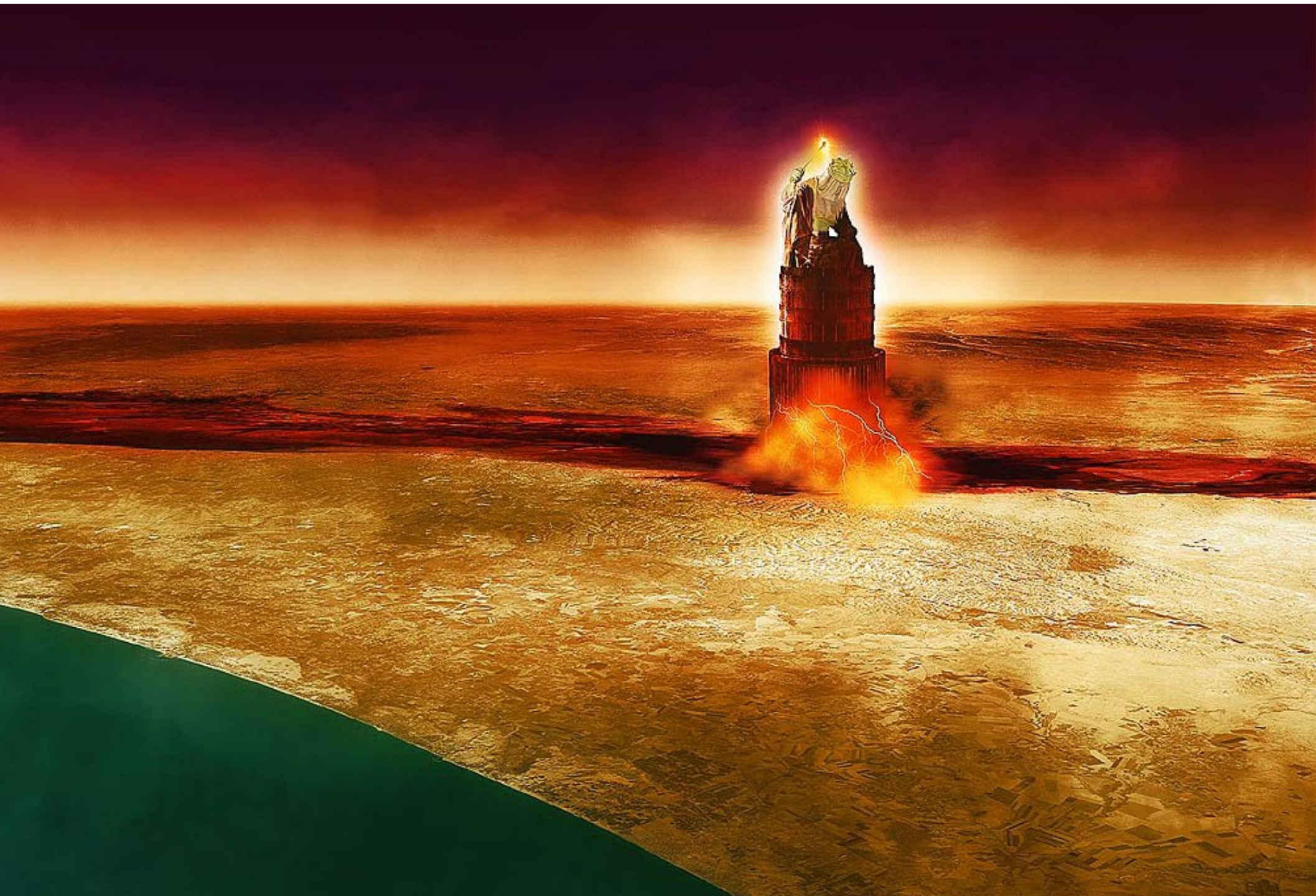
The Fire Angel (Rev. 14:18)



The Vine Reaping Angel (Rev. 14:19)



The Great Winepress of God's Wrath (Rev. 14:19-20)



Rev. 14:14-20

- Unbelievers will suffer God's wrathful judgment (14:14-20)
 - Treading the great winepress of God's wrath outside the city (14:19-20)
 - “And the winepress was trampled outside the city” (14:20a)
 - Background: Joel 3:13 and Is. 63:2-3—referring to the judgment of unbelieving nations
 - Isaiah helps identify “the city” and the meaning of the trampling
 - The destruction of the nations occurs after mention that the gates of the holy city will remain open for the faithful
 - Is. 60:11-14; 62:10; 63:1-6
 - Therefore, the overthrow of the nations implicitly takes place outside the holy city and not in it

Rev. 14:14-20

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 - Is. 60:11-14; 62:10; 63:1-6
 - Therefore, the overthrow of the nations implicitly takes place outside the holy city and not in it
 - This background fits the context of Revelation where judgment of the ungodly occurs outside the city
 - Revelation later confirms this analysis
 - Rev. 20:8-9 pictures unbelievers being judged outside the "beloved city"
 - Rev. 21:8; 21:27 and 22:15 together locate the judgment of the ungodly outside the church, which is the eternal city of God

Rev. 14:14-20

- Unbelievers will suffer God's wrathful judgment (14:14-20)
 - Treading the great winepress of God's wrath outside the city (14:19-20)
 - As previously noted, Mount Zion (v. 1) is primarily a reference to the protection God provides for his people
 - Outside Zion there will be only destruction, as predicted by the prophets
 - For example, Zech. 14:2-5, 11-16 affirms that Jerusalem will dwell in security, the rebellious nations will be defeated in the vicinity of Jerusalem
 - God will stand on the Mount of Olives, in front of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2-4), to destroy the enemy armies who have invaded Jerusalem

Rev. 14:14-20

- Unbelievers will suffer God's wrathful judgment (14:14-20)
 - Treading the great winepress of God's wrath outside the city (14:19-20)
 - Joel 3:2, 11-12, 14 says that God will enter into judgment with the “surrounding nations” (v. 11) outside Jerusalem in the nearby “valley of Jehoshaphat” (v. 2)
 - It is in this context that Joel 3:13, the primary background for Rev. 14:14-20, describes the judgment as both a grain harvest and treading the winepress in which the vats overflow due to great wickedness
 - Blood rising up to the horses' bridles (Rev. 14:20) is figurative battle language
 - Functions as hyperbole to emphasize the severe and unqualified nature of the judgment

Rev. 14:14-20

- Blood rising up to the horses' bridles (Rev. 14:20) is figurative battle language
 - Functions as hyperbole to emphasize the severe and unqualified nature of the judgment
 - Rev. 19:17-19 provides a parallel picture of the slaughter of the ungodly in association with battle and horses
 - The spreading of blood for a distance of 1,600 *stadia* (about 184 miles or 300 km) from the city is the approximate length of Palestine measured from Tyre to the border of Egypt (1,664 *stadia*)
 - This would be symbolic of the extent or completeness of the nations' destruction prophesied to occur outside Jerusalem
 - 1,600 is the product of the squares of four and ten, both of which are figurative for completeness in the book
 - The number also could well have been thought of as the square of 40, a traditional number of punishment

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The saints glorify God and the Lamb for their majesty in achieving redemption and executing judgment (15:1-4)
- The judgment of the seven bowls: God punishes the ungodly because of their persecution and idolatry (15:5–16:21)
 - The resumption of the introduction to the judgment of the seven bowls (15:5-8)
 - The introduction to the bowls begun in v. 1 and interrupted in vv. 2-4 now resumes
 - Chapter 16 explains the contents of each of these woes
 - Some argue that the trumpets are different judgments than the bowls because: (1) the first four trumpets appear to affect only nature, whereas the first four bowls affect wicked people and (2) the first six trumpets are said to be partial in their effect, whereas the bowls seem to have universal effect

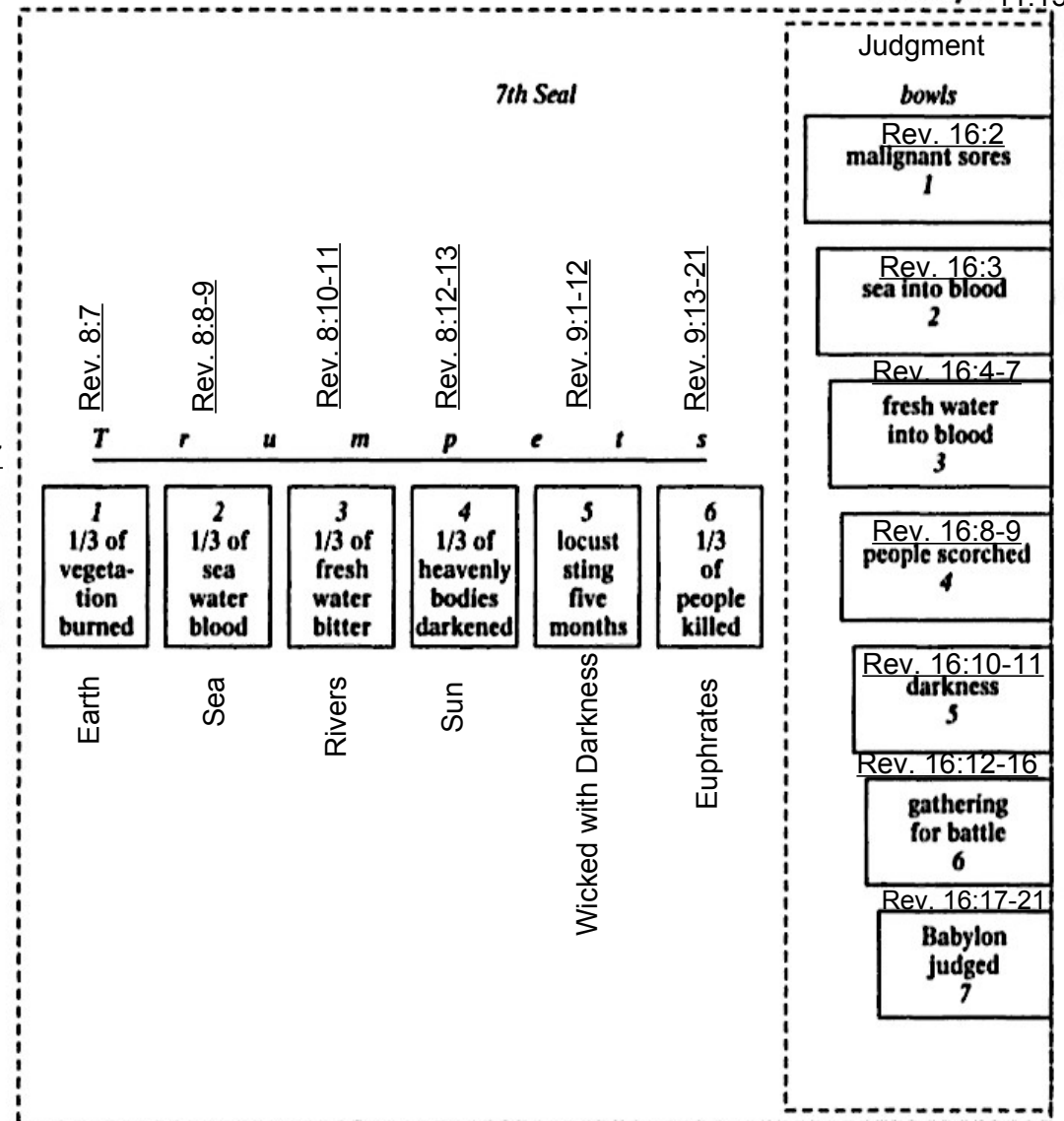
Rev. 15:1–16:21

- But the similarities of trumpets and bowls overshadow the differences
 - Generally, what the trumpets state more figuratively and dramatically, the bowls state more directly and completely
 - The difference in the relative extent of their effect may suggest that the trumpets are part of a larger process of judgment which, according to the bowls, strikes the entire world at the same time
 - Both trumpets and bowls present each of the plagues in the same order:
 - Plagues striking the earth, the sea, rivers, the sun, the realm of the wicked with darkness, the Euphrates (together with influencing the wicked by demons) and judgment (with the same imagery of lightning, sounds, thunders, earthquake and hail)

The Seven Seals

*** 7th Seal: Silence in Heaven (8:1)
 * Prelude to the 7 Trumpets (Rev. 8:2-6)

Rev. 6:1-2	Rev. 6:3-4	Rev. 6:5-6	Rev. 6:7-8	Rev. 6:9-11	Rev. 6:12-17
1st Seal conquest	2nd Seal warfare	3rd Seal famine	4th Seal death to 1/4 of earth	5th Seal vengeance invoked	6th Seal cosmic upheavals and fear



Rev. 15:1–16:21

- But the similarities of trumpets and bowls overshadow the differences
 - In each series seven angels execute the seven plagues
 - The overwhelming likeness of the trumpets and bowls is a result of both being modeled on the Exodus plagues
 - Each woe in each sevenfold series (except for the sixth trumpet) is an allusion to an Exodus plague
 - These observations point to the conclusion that the trumpet and bowl series refer to the same tribulation or judgment
 - The parallelism of the two series can be set out as follows:

The Seven Trumpets	The Seven Bowls
<p>#1: Hail, fire and blood fall on the earth, one third of which is burned up (Rev. 8:7)</p> <p>7th Exodus plague (Ex. 9:22ff)</p>	<p>#1: A bowl is poured on the earth. Malignant sores come on those who have the mark of the beast and worship his image (Rev. 16:2)</p> <p>6th Exodus plague (Ex. 9:8ff)</p>
<p>#2: A blazing mountain falls into the sea. One third of the sea becomes blood, a third of sea-creatures die and a third of ships are destroyed (Rev. 8:8-9)</p> <p>1st Exodus plague (Ex. 7:17ff)</p>	<p>#2: A bowl is poured on the sea. It becomes blood and every living thing in it dies (Rev. 16:3)</p> <p>1st Exodus plague (Ex. 7:17ff)</p>

The Seven Trumpets	The Seven Bowls
<p data-bbox="221 204 1021 555">#3: A blazing star (Wormwood) falls on a third of rivers and fountains; their waters are poisoned and many die (Rev. 8:10-11)</p> <p data-bbox="370 635 872 767">1st Exodus plague (Ex. 7:17ff)</p>	<p data-bbox="1093 204 1942 411">#3: A bowl is poured on rivers and fountains and they become blood (Rev. 16:4-7)</p> <p data-bbox="1268 635 1770 767">1st Exodus plague (Ex. 7:17ff)</p>
<p data-bbox="202 810 1046 1161">#4: A third of the sun, moon, and stars are struck. Darkness results for a third of a night and day (Rev. 8:12-13)</p> <p data-bbox="363 1241 878 1374">9th Exodus plague (Ex. 10:21ff)</p>	<p data-bbox="1123 802 1915 1002">#4: A bowl is poured on the sun, which scorches people with fire (Rev. 16:8-9)</p> <p data-bbox="1264 1230 1774 1362">7th Exodus plague (Ex. 9:22ff)</p>

The Seven Trumpets	The Seven Bowls
<p>#5: The shaft of the pit is opened. Sun and air are darkened with smoke from which locusts emerge to torment people without the seal of God (Rev. 9:1-12)</p> <p>8th & 9th Exodus plagues (Ex. 10:4ff; 10:21ff)</p>	<p>#5: A bowl is poured on the throne of the beast. His kingdom is darkened and people are in anguish (Rev. 16:10-11)</p> <p>9th Exodus plague (Ex. 10:21ff)</p>
<p>#6: Four angels bound at the Euphrates are released, with their 200 million cavalry. A third of humanity is killed by them (Rev. 9:13-21)</p>	<p>#6: A bowl is poured on the Euphrates, which dries up for kings from the east. Demonic frogs deceive kings of the world to assemble for battle at Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16)</p> <p>2nd Exodus plague (Ex. 8:2ff)</p>

The Seven Trumpets	The Seven Bowls
<p data-bbox="180 228 1059 651">#7: Loud voices in heaven announce the coming of the kingdom of God and of Christ. Lightning, thunder, earthquake and hail occur (Rev. 11:15)</p> <p data-bbox="197 799 1042 1082">7th Exodus plague (Ex. 9:22ff) + description of God's appearance at Sinai (Ex. 19:16-19)</p>	<p data-bbox="1102 228 1985 544">#7: A bowl is poured into the air and a loud voice from God's throne announces, "It is done." Lightning, thunder and an unprecedented earthquake occur and terrible hail falls (Rev. 16:17-21)</p> <p data-bbox="1102 603 1970 759">7th Exodus plague (Ex. 9:22ff) + description of God's appearance at Sinai (Ex. 19:16-19)</p>

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The phrase “the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete” (Rev. 15:1) refers to the bowls coming last in the sequence of formal sevenfold visions—after the seals and trumpets—that John sees
 - They are “last” in that they complete the thought revealed in the preceding woe visions and picture the wrath of God more intensely than in the previous visions
 - The trumpets may be compared to incomplete snapshots and the bowls to fuller photographs
 - The bowls reveal more clearly that the trumpets are primarily plagues directed against unbelieving humanity
 - The bowls demonstrate God’s uniqueness and omnipotence, as well as his righteous judgment (16:5-6)

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The bowls reveal more clearly that the trumpets are primarily plagues directed against unbelieving humanity
 - These plagues reveal unbelievers' hardness of heart and that they are punished because of such hardness, which is expressed by their
 - idolatry (16:2)
 - persistent impenitence (16:9, 11) and
 - persecution of the saints (16:6)
 - Like the trumpets, the bowls are also God's answer to the saints' plea (6:9-11) for judgment
 - A link is apparent in 16:5-7 by reference to the altar and to God as "holy" and his judgments as "true"
 - This connection with 6:9-11 also explains why the bowls are called "bowls of wrath" (16:1; cf. 15:1, reference to God's wrath)



The Song of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4)

- 14:6-1, 14-20 pictures judgment on Babylon and those who worship the beast and 15:2-4 builds on that scene by picturing the beast's defeat as completed and the saints enjoying the results of that victory, praising God for it
 - What looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire represents the counterpart to the Red Sea (15:2)
 - This becomes clear in 15:3, where the saints are pictured as singing the new song of Moses, which is the latter-day counterpart of Moses' song in Exodus 15
 - The Red Sea represents the obstacle to freedom and the OT presents it as the dwelling place of the dragon or sea monster (Is. 51:9-11; Ps. 74:12-15; Ezek. 32:2)
 - The “sea” in Revelation generally represents cosmic evil
 - Calmed—4:6; Origin of beast—13:1; 16:3; No more—21:1
 - The beast's origin is from the sea (Dan. 7:2-3)

The Song of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4)

- Deuteronomy 32, a song of Moses (Deut. 31:19, 22, 30; 32:44) is included together with the allusion to Exodus 15 since it also describes judgment
 - Deuteronomy 32 describes judgment against apostate Israel because of their idolatry
 - Similarly, the congregations of Christ are warned in Revelation against being judged along with the nations
 - That song concludes with the thought that God will punish the enemy nations and will provide atonement for his people (Deut. 32:43)
 - The same ideas are included in Rev. 15:2-4, where God has vindicated his people and caused them to be victorious over the power of the beast

The Song of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4)

- The song is the same as the “new song” of Rev. 5:9ff and 14:3, where the singers likewise hold harps while praising the Lamb for his redemptive work (cf. 5:8; 14:2)
- That this is also a “new song” is evident since they sing not only the old song of Moses but also the song of the Lamb, which previously has not been sung
- The actual contents of the song itself do not come from Exodus 15 but from passages throughout the OT extolling God’s character
 - Combined in Rev. 15:3-4 to explain the new exodus from affliction
 - “Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God, the Almighty” (Rev. 15:3b)
 - Ps. 111:2-4 speaks of God's great, splendid and majestic work
 - “The Lord God, the Almighty” repeatedly occurs in the prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi
 - God directs his people’s history and this is its meaning elsewhere in Revelation

The Song of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4)

- “Just and true are Your ways” (Rev. 15:3c)
 - God is praised again as he was by the exodus generation for his works being perfect and all his ways just (Deut. 32:4)
 - This emphasizes that God’s sovereign acts are not demonstrations of raw power but moral expressions of his righteous character
 - His redemption through Christ has brought to supreme expression how he demonstrates his justice
 - Those trusting in Jesus are forgiven by his blood (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11)
 - Those who reject the divine provision will die in their sins (Jn. 8:21, 23-24)
- The great and true acts of the Sovereign stated in 15:3 are the reason people should fear and glorify him (15:4)
 - Jer. 10:7—“Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?”

The Song of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4)

- Jer. 10:7—“Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?”
 - Surely they will fear him, both texts suggest, because they have witnessed his great and righteous acts
 - Jer. 10:1-16 contrasts God with humans and idols, affirming that God alone is due worship
 - The singing saints in Rev. 15:3-4 also know worship is due God and the Lamb only, in contrast to the beast and his image
- “For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been revealed” (Rev. 15:4c)
 - Ps. 86:8-10—“Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works. All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God”

The Song of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4)

- “For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been revealed” (Rev. 15:4c)
 - The song of Moses and the Lamb concludes suitably with another reference to the exodus from Ps. 98:2: “The Lord . . . has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations”
 - The Psalm begins with a reference to Exodus 15: “Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! . . . His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory”
 - It also encourages the singers of the “new song” to play harps (98:5), as in Rev. 5:8; 14:2-3; 15:2-3
 - The Psalm’s closes with a final statement that God “will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity” (Ps. 98:9)
 - The same transition of thought (the exodus leading to God’s judgment of the nations) is present in Revelation 15, where the “song” of the first exodus serves as a broad model for the Revelation exodus

God and Jesus Are Worthy

- Even without motivating us with physical or spiritual blessings, God and Jesus are worthy:
 - “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” (Rev. 4:11)
 - “Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise” (Rev. 5:12)
 - “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: “Praise and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever! And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshiped” (Rev. 5:13-14)

1st Bowl: Loathsome Sores (Rev. 16:2)



2nd Bowl: The Sea Turns to Blood (Rev. 16:3)



3rd Bowl: Fresh Waters Turn to Blood (Rev. 16:4-7)



4th Bowl: People Are Scorched (Rev. 16:8-9)



5th Bowl: Darkness and Pain (Rev. 16:10-11)

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6th Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up (Rev. 16:12-16)



7th Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken (Rev. 16:17-21)



Judgment of the 7 Bowls (Rev. 16:1-21)



Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The saints glorify God and the Lamb for their majesty in achieving redemption and executing judgment (15:1-4)
- The judgment of the seven bowls: God punishes the ungodly because of their persecution and idolatry (15:5–16:21)
 - The 1st bowl: God causes the idolatrous to suffer (16:2)
 - Just as the pouring out of the bowls and the mark of the beast are figurative, so is the reference to a loathsome and malignant sore
 - The description of the first bowl's effect is based on the literal Egyptian plague of boils (Exod. 9:9-11), which is referred to in Deut. 28:35 as “sore boils”
 - The punishment matches the crime: those who receive an idolatrous mark will be given a mark of punishment
 - The sore here represents some form of suffering presumably like that entailed by the spiritual and psychological “torment” of the 5th trumpet (9:4-6, 10)

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The 2nd bowl: God causes the idolatrous world system to suffer economic hardship (16:3)
 - The “mark of the beast,” (16:2), first appeared in 13:16-17, where it had an essentially economic implication
 - The economic implications of the judgment are also to be seen in the light of chapter 18
 - The 2nd bowl is either a symbolic parallel with or an anticipation of the destruction of “Babylon the great” as the source of prosperous maritime business in chapter 18
 - As a result, all those who make their living on the “sea” become impoverished (18:17-19)
 - The phrase “every living creature in the sea died” is similar to the 2nd trumpet’s woe (8:9)
 - This describes maritime disaster and famine conditions in which both sea life and humans die and suffer

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The 2nd bowl: God causes the idolatrous world system to suffer economic hardship (16:3)
 - Therefore, the sea being turned to blood is figurative for the failure of the idolatrous world's economic life support system, as represented by maritime business, which includes human suffering and loss of life
 - That blood here (and in the second trumpet, 8:8) includes not only the harm of sea life but also the suffering of the ungodly is evident from the immediate context (16:2, 8-11)
 - “Blood” elsewhere in Revelation without exception refers to the suffering of the wicked or of Christ and the saints
 - For the former see 11:6; 14:20; 19:13; cf. 6:12; 8:7-8
 - For the latter see 1:5; 5:9; 6:10; 12:11; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2
 - In summary, death does not need to be taken literally here but can mean scarcity of sea life and of humans who work the sea, leading to economic hardship and the suffering caused by it

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The 3rd bowl: God economically punishes the persecutors (16:4-7 [18:24])
 - The combined use of “the Holy One” (NU, M-Text) and “judge” (16:5) reflects the same twofold description of God in the persecuted saints’ appeal to God (6:10)
 - God will vindicate himself and them by judging the persecutors
 - The 3rd bowl is part of God’s answer to the saints’ plea in 6:10
- The 4th bowl: God punishes the ungodly due to their idolatry (16:8-9)
 - God’s wrath in the OT is often figuratively expressed with fire: “Behold, My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place . . . and it will burn and not be quenched” (Jer. 7:20, NASB)
 - “I shall gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it . . . and you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out My wrath on you” (Ezek. 22:21-22)
 - “*They will* be wasted by famine and devoured with burning heat” (Deut. 32:24)
 - There will be economic consequences due to disobedience

Fear God

- A man who was trying to convince me to join his deception to circumvent city code told me, “You seem to have a real fear of authority!”
 - I said, “Yes, I do. I fear God.”
 - He said, “Why would you fear God?”
 - How would you answer the question?
 - Think about . . . it surprised me that he asked
 - The first verse that came to mind was “Fear God and give glory to Him” (Rev. 14:7)—he didn't seem to know how to respond to this Scripture being quoted
 - The second Scripture he heard was 2 Cor. 5:11
 - Had I not been so surprised by his question, next I would have mentioned Eccles. 12:13-14

Fear God

- The importance of fearing God:
 - More than 300x in Scripture God tries to teach us to fear him
 - We must learn to fear the Lord our God and carefully observe all the words of God's law (cf. Deut. 31:12)
- Fearing God will help us not to be deceived
 - As is also implied in the message of Revelation
- We talk about “fearing God,” “God-fearing people,” “fear of God,” and “fear of the Lord” but what does that really mean?
 - Many seem to believe (and possibly explain) fearing God as simply respect or reverence but being unafraid of God
 - To do so understates the importance of what it really means to fear God

Fear God

- Fear of God is reverent regard for God, tempered with awe and fear of the punishment of disobedience (W. L. Walker, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, <https://biblehub.com/topical/f/fear.htm>)
 - Reverence for God; afraid to displease God (Jn. 8:29)
 - Fear, dread, reverence, to be afraid
 - φόβος, *phobos* (~47x)
 - Definition: panic flight, fear, the causing of fear, terror
 - Rom. 3:18—“There is no fear of God before their eyes”
 - φοβέω, *phobeó* (~95x)
 - Definition: to put to flight, to terrify, frighten
 - Mt. 10:28
 - Godly fear
 - εὐλαβής, *eulabés*
 - Heb. 5:7; 11:7 (reverence); 12:28 (reverence and awe)

Fear God

- Some Old Testament verses
 - Gen. 22:11-12; 31:42, 53; 42:18; Ex. 1:17, 21; 14:31; Lev. 19:14, 32; 25:17, 36, 43
 - Deut. 4:10; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:4; 14:23; 17:18-20; 31:9-13; Josh. 24:14-15; 1 Sam 12:24; Neh. 7:2
 - Job 1:1, 8-9; 2:3
 - Ps. 25:12, 14—taught by God (Jn. 6:45); 33:8; 34:7, 9, 11; 36:1→ (Rom. 3:18); 66:16; 89:7; 111:5, 10; 119:38, 63, 74, 79, 120; 147:11
 - Prov. 1:7; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 14:26; 15:16; 16:6; 19:23; 23:17; 31:30
 - Eccles. 5:7; 8:12-13; 12:13-14
 - Is. 8:13; 50:10
 - In every chapter of Malachi: 1:14; 2:5; 3:5, 16; 4:2
 - An extensive passage about fearing God: 2 Kings 17:5-41

Fear God

- Some New Testament verses
 - Mt. 10:28→Lk. 12:5
 - Lk. 1:50; 23:40
 - Acts 9:31; 10:2, 22, 35; 13:26
 - 2 Cor. 5:11; 7:1
 - Eph. 5:21
 - Col. 3:22
 - 1 Pet. 1:13-17; 2:17
 - Rev. 11:18; 14:7; 15:4; 19:5

1st Bowl: Loathsome Sores (Rev. 16:2)



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6th Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up (Rev. 16:12-16)



7th Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken (Rev. 16:17-21)



Judgment of the 7 Bowls (Rev. 16:1-21)



Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The 5th bowl: God punishes hardened idolaters by causing them to suffer because of their refusal to change their hearts (16:10-11)
 - Like the fourth trumpet (Rev. 8:12), this woe is also based on Ex. 10:21-29, where God brought darkness over Egypt
 - The plague came against Pharaoh because of his disobedience to God's command and his oppression of Israel and allegiance to Egypt's idolatrous system
 - “The throne of the beast” identifies with “Satan's throne” (Rev. 2:13)
 - “Satan's throne” refers to Pergamos as a center of Roman government and of the imperial cult, under Satan's control
 - The similar woe in Rev. 16:10 appropriately applies to world rulers who oppress the saints and promote idolatry
 - The suffering of Rev. 16:10 does not soften the subjects of the beast but like Pharaoh and his subjects (Ex. 10:1-2), hardens them further in their opposition to God (Rev. 16:11)

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The refusal to repent here (16:11) and throughout chapter 16 (vv. 9, 21) follows the pattern of Pharaoh's hardening his heart
- The mention of sores (16:11) points back to the first bowl plague (16:2) and suggests that the sufferers of the fifth bowl also sustain injury from the previous bowls and vice-versa
- The works of which they did not repent (16:11) include idolatry, murder, sorcery, immorality and theft (9:20-21)
 - This is implied by the parallel with 9:20 (“they did not repent of the works of their hands”)
- The 6th bowl: God gathers together ungodly forces in order to punish them decisively (16:12-16)
 - The woe of the sixth bowl follows the description of God’s judgment of Babylon and Israel’s restoration, which itself was patterned after the drying up of the Red Sea at the exodus
 - Ex. 14:21-22; Is. 11:15; 44:27; 50:2; 51:10

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The OT prophesied that this judgment would include the drying up of the Euphrates River (Is. 11:15; 44:27-28; Jer. 50:38; 51:36)
 - The prophecy was fulfilled fairly literally by Cyrus, who according to Herodotus, diverted the waters of the Euphrates (Is. 44:27-28)
 - This allowed his army to cross the now shallow waters of the river “in sandals” (Is. 11:15), enter the city unexpectedly and defeat the Babylonians
 - God executed judgment against Babylon by raising up Cyrus, who was to come “from the east” (Is. 41:2; 46:11; cf. Rev. 16:12), or “from the rising of the sun” (41:25)
 - Jer. 50:41 and 51:11, 28 refer to “kings” whom God was preparing to bring against Babylon
 - The victory by Cyrus led to Israel’s release from captivity (Is. 44:26-28; 45:13)
 - In the OT, God is always the one who dries up the water, whether for redemption or judgment

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The three unclean spirits coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet represent deception (16:13-14, 16)
 - The purpose of the deception is to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty
 - 19:19; 20:8
 - The demonic spirits deceiving the kings gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon, where the war is to occur
 - The outcome of the war is found in 17:14; 19:14-21 and 20:7-10, where the forces of the dragon and beast are destroyed by Jesus and God
 - If 20:8 is a parallel referring to the same war as 16:14, then 20:9 defines Armageddon as “the beloved city”
 - The same as “the holy city, New Jerusalem” (21:2) and “Mount Zion” (14:1)—the church
 - See also Heb. 12:22

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- A figurative view of Armageddon is apparent from the fact that there is no mention of a “mountain” of Megiddo in the OT or in Jewish literature
 - In OT times, the city of Megiddo would have sat on a “tell” or very small hill, whereas the normal meaning of the word “har” in Hebrew is a mountain
- Israel’s battles in the plain of Megiddo became a prophetic or typological symbol battle/judgment
 - Megiddo became proverbial in Judaism where righteous Israelites were attacked by evil nations
 - The battle between Barak and Sisera took place at Megiddo (Judges 5:19)
 - As did the war between Pharaoh Necho (on his way to the Euphrates) and Josiah (2 Kgs. 23:29; 2 Chron. 35:22)
 - The battle between Barak and Sisera served as a pattern for Israel’s defeat of a foe with overwhelmingly greater power (Judg. 4:3; 5:8)

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- God said he would draw out the commander of the army, with his chariots and many troops, to the river Kishon (Judg. 4:7), where the kings came and fought by the waters of Megiddo (Judg. 5:19)
 - In the same way God is ultimately the one drawing the enemy kings together to do battle at Megiddo (Rev. 16:12-14, 16)
- But the fact that there never was any mountain of Megiddo suggests another possibility
 - Not far from Megiddo is Mount Carmel (~5 miles)
 - If the mountain of Megiddo is to be identified with Mount Carmel, there may be a symbolic reference to the site of one of the OT's greatest battles between the forces of good and evil (1 Kgs. 18:19-46), where Elijah (symbolic, along with Moses, of the church in Rev. 11:3-7) defeated the prophets of Baal
 - Mount Carmel thus becomes symbolically representative of the church

Rev. 15:1–16:21

- The 7th bowl: God punishes the idolatrous world system with judgment (16:17-21)
 - The “sun and the air” were darkened by the smoke coming out of the pit at the sound of the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:2), which seems to associate the “air” (16:17) with demonic activity
 - Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2)
 - As in the fourth, fifth and sixth bowls, the judgment here is also upon the unbelieving realm ruled by the dragon and the beast
 - Rev. 16:18 is imagery of judgment based largely on Ex. 19:16-18, which describes the appearance of God on Mount Sinai
 - Ps. 77:18
 - Is. 29:6, “You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise”
 - The presence of hailstones in 16:21 suggests a link with the Exodus plague of hail (Ex. 9:22-35; note v. 30)

Considerations in Applying Rev. 15:1–16:21

- Concerning God's judgment of the world's economic system:
 - These plagues make clear how God carries out his judgment against the economic system of the world
 - The devil and his agents use the world's economic system (the Roman Empire) to deceive unbelievers and lure them away from worship of the true God
 - Collapse of the economic system eventually plunges the kingdom of the beast into darkness (16:10)
 - How careful are we as Christians to avoid dependence on this system or compromise with it?
 - How closely and regularly do we examine the values governing our attitude toward money and material success?
 - Do we depend on some aspect of the world and its physical security, which will pass away (1 Jn. 2:15-17)?
 - How can this become an idolatrous focus of which we may not even be conscious?

Babylon Sitting on the Beast (Rev. 17:1-6)



The Prostitute Named Babylon (Rev. 17:4-6)

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The Prostitute Named Babylon (Rev. 17:5)

תיִרָאֵת.
 הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֶּה
 הַמִּתְהַפֵּק עַל הַכֹּחַ
 וְעַל הַבְּרִיאָה
 עַל הָאָרֶץ

Summary of Rev. 17:1–19:21

- The judgment of Babylon and the beast (17:1–19:21)
 - The influence of the world's economic-religious system (Rome) and the state (the Roman Empire), their alliance and the downfall of both (17:1-18)
 - The great prostitute, Babylon: the city of Rome
 - The beast on which Babylon sits: the Roman Empire
 - Rev. 17:1–19:10 is a large interpretative snapshot of the 6th and 7th bowls, which have foretold the judgment of Babylon (which was first explicitly prophesied in 14:8)
 - Rev. 19:11-21 then gives an expanded description of battle/judgment, in which Christ triumphs over the forces of evil

Summary of Rev. 17:1-7

- The introduction to the vision: the angel announces to John that he is to witness a vision about the judgment of the world's idolatrous economic-religious system (17:1-3a)
- The vision and John's response: John is perplexed by the appearance of the hostile economic-religious system in its alliance with the state (17:3b-7)
 - “Marvel”—John, greatly astonished (and most certainly appalled) wondered what these meant
 - θαυμάζω: 2296 thaumázō (from 2295 /thaúma, "a wonder, marvel") – properly, wonder at, be amazed (marvel), i.e. astonished out of one's senses; awestruck, "wondering very greatly" (Souter); to cause "wonder; . . . to regard with amazement, and with a suggestion of beginning to speculate on the matter" (WS, 225) [<https://biblehub.com/greek/2296.htm>]

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “The judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters” (17:1)
 - Judgment (Jer. 51:11-13)
 - The great prostitute
 - Very alluring and seductive
 - Trying to lure people away from God and Christ
 - Sitting (17:3, 9, 15)
 - Suggests her powerful influence to control people and the beast (also 18:7)
 - The sitting of God, Jesus, elders and saints indicates rule, authority and control
 - 3:21; 4:2-4; 11:16; 20:4

“Roma” Coin



“Roma” Coin



Seven Hills of Rome

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- The kings of the earth committed fornication with her (17:2)
 - Fornication is symbolic of idolatry
 - Cooperation with Babylon ensures financial security (cf. 2:9, 13; 13:16-17)
 - The nations did not resist Babylon's offer (14:8; 18:3, 9)
- “Those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (17:2)
 - “Those who dwell on the earth”—evil people
 - 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:8
 - Drunkenness = spiritual blindness (Is. 29:9; Hos. 4:11-12)
 - “She has made to drink” (14:8)—forced to “drink”
 - Partaking of the idolatrous demands of Roman society

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “Those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (17:2)
 - Idolatry is linked directly with fornication
 - 2:14, 20-21; 9:21
 - “The wine of her fornication” (also 14:8; 18:3)
 - Rome's religious and idolatrous demands in return for economic security
 - cf. 2:9; 13:16-17
- Sits “on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns” (17:3)
 - Same as the first beast (13:1)

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “Clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls” (17:4)
 - Worldly, royal, economic power luxuriously arrayed (18:16)
 - The items of her attire are trade products (18:12-14)
 - Clothed with trade products = prosperous trade system
 - She symbolizes a culture of financial prosperity
 - Seductive clothing of a prostitute (Jer. 4:30)
 - Babylon seduces through economic prosperity
 - Colors of royalty; Color of blood (persecution; 12:3; 17:3)
 - The harlot of Jeremiah is clothed in scarlet/crimson (4:30) and on her “skirts is found the lifeblood of the innocent poor” (2:34; NASB)

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “Having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (17:4)
 - Jer. 51:7-8
 - “abominations”/“unclean things”/“fornication” = idolatry
 - 16:13-14—“unclean” is used of deceptive, demonic spirits from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet
 - 18:2—Babylon, a place of idolatry
 - “demons” and “every unclean spirit”
 - 21:27—“defiling/unclean,” “abomination,” “lying”
 - 1 Thess. 2:3—“uncleanness/impurity” linked with deceit
 - Babylon's intoxicating influence deceives people into idolatry (= fornication; 17:2) for economic gain

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5)
 - Names written on foreheads indicate true character, allegiance and relationship
 - To God (7:3; 14:1; 22:4)
 - To Satan (13:16-17; 14:9-11; 20:4)
 - To the beast (17:5)
 - Seductive and idolatrous
 - Background may be the reported practice of Roman prostitutes, who had their names written on bands across their foreheads (Seneca, *Controversiae* 1.2.7)

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY” (17:5)
 - No significant difference whether “mystery” is part of the title or part of the introduction to the title along with “having been written” (γεγραμμένον, a perfect participle)
 - “Mystery” describes a hidden meaning of “Babylon the Great” that requires additional revelatory explanation
 - Perhaps some background is the goddess *Roma*
 - The latin word for “love” is *amor*
 - *Amor* spelled backward is *Roma*
 - Rome would then be pictured as a prostitute, the opposite of true love (Aune, *Harper's Bible Commentary*, 1315)

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY” (17:5)
 - Daniel 4:9—“secret” (KJV, NKJV, YLT); “mystery” (NASB, NRSV, NIV)
 - The LXX and Theodotion's Greek translation have μυστήριον (*mystērion*, “mystery”; Dan. 4:9)
 - Confirms the Daniel background since “mystery” (Dan. 4:9) serves to introduce Nebuchadnezzar's pride and later judgment (Dan. 4:19-33)
 - “Mystery” in Daniel (2:18-19, 27-30, 47)
 - “Mystery” in Revelation (1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7)
 - “Mystery” is something prophesied and will be fulfilled according to God's words (10:7; 17:5, 17)

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- “THE MOTHER OF THE PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5)
 - The combination of “prostitute” and “abomination” refers to idolatry
 - “The mother of the prostitutes” = “The mother of idolaters”
 - Rome's influence over the system of idolatry helped ensure its economic security
 - Rome provided economic prosperity to those who were faithful to the idolatrous system of which Rome was the mother

The Prostitute Named Babylon Represents Rome

- Those who resist the economic and religious practices of “Babylon” (Rome) will be persecuted and even killed (17:6)
 - Persecution could take the form of exclusion from one’s trade
 - Revelation gives actual examples of punishment:
 - Exile (1:9)
 - Imprisonment (2:10)
 - Death (2:10, 13)
 - The blood of the saints encompasses not just martyrdom but all forms of suffering endured by believers

Considerations in Applying Rev. 17:1-6

- The relevance of the Babylonian prostitute
 - How would we identify an institution today that appears to be similar to the Babylonian prostitute who represented cultural, economic and idolatrous religious power united in institutional form?
 - We should be able to find some application in one or more of the following:
 - Government, church, business, school, etc.
- Temptations to compromise
 - In what ways can modern-day institutions of the world that are evil appear good and admirable?
 - The Babylonian prostitute looked attractive to the worldly mind but appalling to the spiritual mind (Rom. 8:6)
 - In what ways are believers tempted to compromise with these institutions?

Revelation 18:1–19:8

- Chapter 18 fulfills in detail the angel's promise that he would show John the judgment of the great prostitute (17:1)
- 18:1–19:8 pictures Babylon's demise as a continuation of the vision begun in 17:3
 - Note the verbal repetition of 17:2 in 18:3
- The events described in ch. 18 are laid out in this way:
 - The fall of Babylon is predicted (vv. 1-3)
 - God's people are exhorted to separate from Babylon before her judgment, lest they suffer with her (vv. 4-8)
 - Those cooperating with Babylon will lament her judgment (vv. 9-19)
 - The faithful will rejoice over her judgment (vv. 20-24)
 - Conclusion to Babylon's fall (19:1-8)

Revelation 18:1–19:8

- The declaration of Babylon's coming punishment is the basis for the following four things:
 - Urging the saints to escape Babylon lest they be judged with her (vv. 1-8)
 - Babylon's allies lamenting because they perceive their own demise (vv. 9-19)
 - The saints rejoicing (vv. 20-24)
 - The climactic purpose of glorifying God as righteous (19:1-8)
- An angel announces Babylon's judgment and its severe effects, which will come because of her idolatrous seduction (18:1-3)
 - (v. 1) Illuminating angel: his glory—the glory of God
 - (v. 2) Babylon's desolation
 - (v. 3) Babylon's idolatrous intoxication of the nations

The Illuminating Angel (Rev. 18:1-3)



Revelation 18:1-3

- That the angel cried out with a mighty voice further emphasizes the authority of this pronouncement (18:2)
 - Other angelic pronouncements: 7:2, 10; 10:3; 14:7, 9, 15; 19:17
- The angel is more glorious than Babylon (v. 1) and has an authority more compelling than Babylon's
 - The loud voice is meant to get the attention of any who are in danger of falling under Babylon's spell
 - Narrating the consequences of the destruction in the past tense, as if it has already happened, emphasizes the certainty of the judgment
 - The prophecy and fulfillment of historical Babylon's past fall is viewed as a historical pattern pointing forward to the fall of a much larger Babylon

Revelation 18:1-3

- 18:2 explains Babylon's desolate condition resulting from her judgment: Majority Text: "Fell—Babylon the great! [or "Babylon the great fell!"] And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and detestable bird"
 - This description of desolation is similar to the picture of Babylon's and Edom's judgment (Is. 13:21; 34:11, 14)
 - Babylon's demonic nature is revealed
 - Contrary to the outward appearance of beauty and glory she projects (17:4; 18:16), she has become a dwelling place for demons and unclean spirits
 - As her outward glory is stripped away, all that is left are the skeletal remains, surrounded by evil spirits
 - The demonic realm has been Babylon's guiding force

Revelation 18:3, 4-8

- 18:3—The cause of Babylon’s judgment lies in her idolatrous seduction of nations and rulers
 - As the chapter will reveal, coercing the nations to trust in her economic resources, as she herself does, is an expression of pride and a form of idolatry for which she is also condemned (see also vv. 7, 23)
- Another voice from Heaven urges God’s people to separate from cooperating with the Babylonian system lest they also suffer its just punishment (18:4-8)
 - The imperative to separate from Babylon’s ways because of God’s coming judgment (v. 4) is patterned after the repeated commands of Isaiah and Jeremiah
 - Jer. 51:45a: “My people, go out of the midst of her!”
 - Also Is. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6

Revelation 18:4-8

- Babylon will be punished with such plagues because her sins have piled up as high as heaven and God has remembered her iniquities (18:5)
 - Spiritual Babylon mirrors the old earthly Babylon
 - “Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies” (Jer. 51:9)
- 18:6-7 explain the nature of God’s judgment, implicitly mentioned in v. 5
 - Ps. 137:8—“O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, happy the one who repays you as you have served us!”
 - Similarly, Jer. 50:29; 51:24
 - “Double”—Ex. 22:4, 7, 9; Is. 40:2; Jer. 16:18

“She Says in Her Heart, ‘I Sit as Queen, and Am No Widow, and Will Not See Sorrow’ (Rev. 18:7)

“For you
will no
longer be
called
the queen
of
kingdoms”
(Is. 47:5b,
NASB)

Is. 47:5, 7-8



“Yet you said, ‘I will
be a queen forever.’
These things you did
not consider nor
remember the
outcome of them.
Now, then, hear this,
you sensual one,
who dwells securely,
who says in your
heart, ‘I am, and
there is no one
besides me.
I will not sit as a
widow, nor know loss
of children’”
(Is. 47:7-8, NASB)

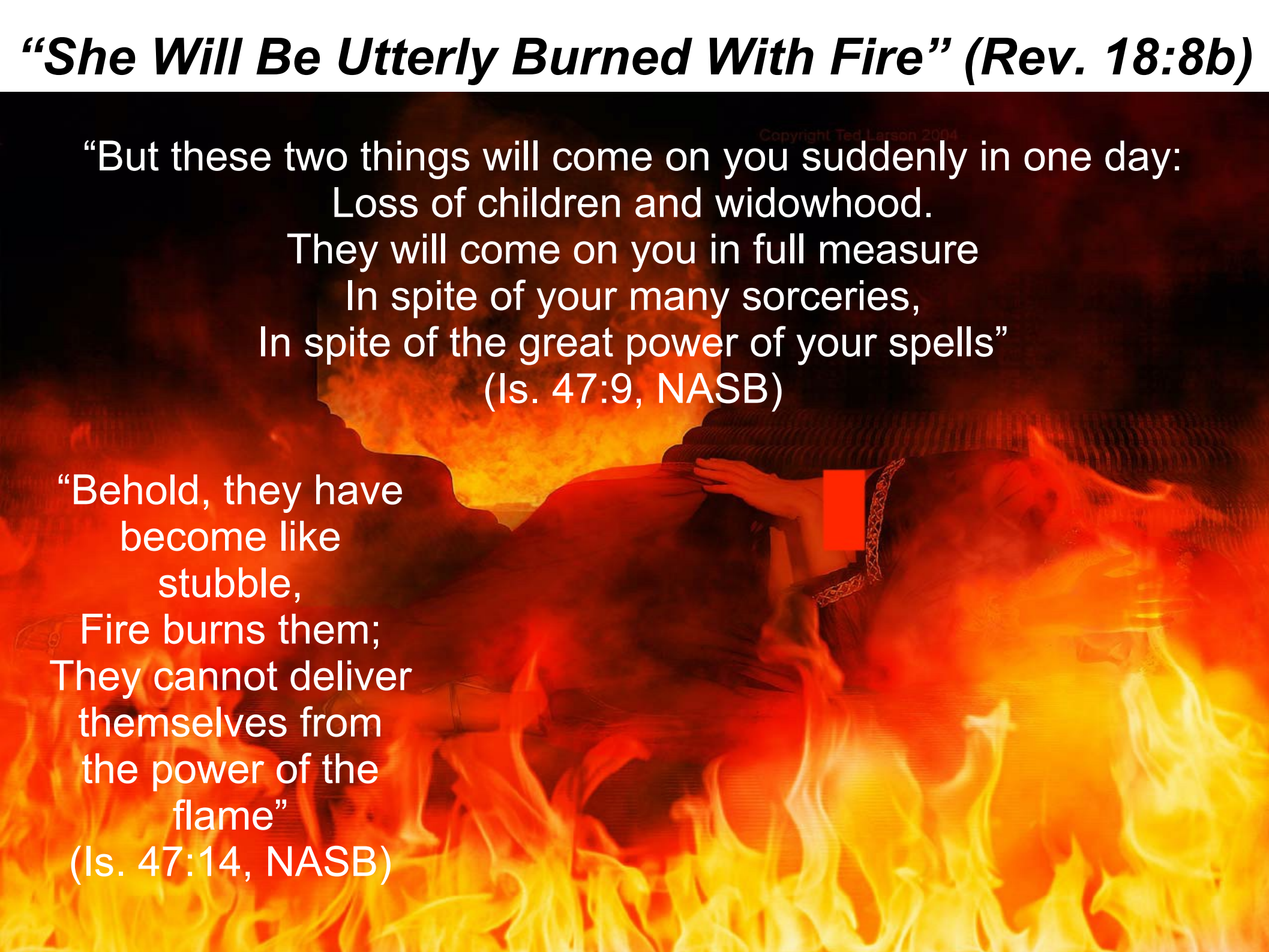
Parallel to
Laodicea
(Rev. 3:17)

“She Will Be Utterly Burned With Fire” (Rev. 18:8b)

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“But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day:
Loss of children and widowhood.
They will come on you in full measure
In spite of your many sorceries,
In spite of the great power of your spells”
(Is. 47:9, NASB)

“Behold, they have
become like
stubble,
Fire burns them;
They cannot deliver
themselves from
the power of the
flame”
(Is. 47:14, NASB)



“The Kings of the Earth . . . Will Weep and Lament for Her” (Rev. 18:9-10)

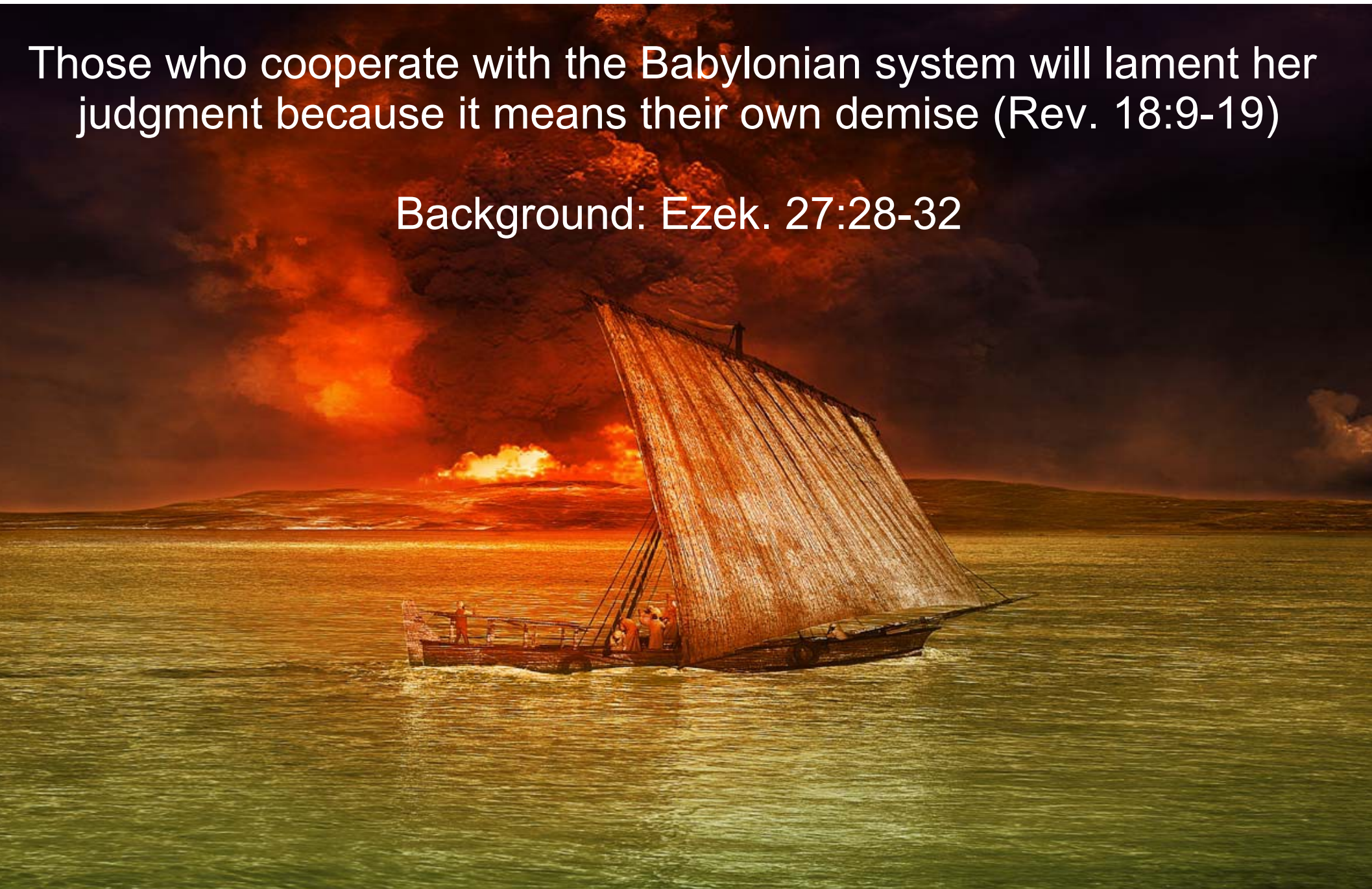
Selfish Sorrow: Lamentation of their own loss
Background: Ezek. 26:15-18

Ungodly Sorrow—“worldly sorrow” (2 Cor. 7:10)

“The Merchants of the Earth Will Weep and Mourn Over Her” (Rev. 18:11-19)

Those who cooperate with the Babylonian system will lament her judgment because it means their own demise (Rev. 18:9-19)

Background: Ezek. 27:28-32



Considerations in Applying Rev. 18:4-19

- Christians must be in the world but must not be of it
 - To be “of” the world means to compromise our values to share in the world’s present wealth and advantages but at the cost of sharing in its coming judgment
 - The worldliness both outside and inside the body of Christ is always making godly standards appear odd and making sinful values seem normal
 - We are tempted to adopt the worldly idea of “normal”
 - How do we practically avoid such contamination while we are living in this world and engaged in the following?
 - Working to provide for our families
 - Buying houses and cars
 - Making prudent financial decisions
 - Planning for retirement

Considerations in Applying Rev. 18:4-19

- Are we continuously addressing our stewardship?
 - In other words, are we paying careful and responsible attention to all that God has entrusted to our care?
 - Our finances must be managed according to God's ways
 - Jesus and Paul talked a great deal about money . . . and for good reason
 - Lk. 12:15
 - 1 Tim. 6:17-19
 - Before you or I say, "I am not rich" . . .
How many of us would be considered anything but rich by the standards of very poor countries who may believe each one of us is wealthy (perhaps just by the fact that we live in the United States)?
 - Are we examining what God said and are we putting it into practice?

Considerations in Applying Rev. 18:4-19

- The destructive power of human self-interest
 - Before we mourn due to our own financial loss, we should focus on the sorrow that pleases God (Mt. 5:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-11)
 - Entanglement in the things of this world and particularly pursuit of material wealth:
 - Focuses us inward on ourselves
 - Blinds us to the interests of others
 - Numbs us to the approaching judgment of God
 - Causes many to fail spiritually, either never recognizing or never correcting their entanglement in worldliness—and they pass through life with no alarm, unprepared to meet God
 - The people represented in these verses are about to lose something of far greater value than their material wealth, yet their obsession with that wealth leaves them apparently oblivious to their impending and eternal judgment

Considerations in Applying Rev. 18:4-19

- How often do we tragically see this played out in the lives of people around us?
- Even if we are not witnessing the events of the end of history, is it not true that the same principles operate regardless?
- How can we guard ourselves against this kind of poison entering our lives?
 - We need to “come out of Babylon” completely so that we “will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4; also 119:9-16)
 - To “come out of Babylon” did not mean for Christians to leave Rome or the Roman Empire—it is not a mandate to move geographically (also 1 Cor. 5:10)
 - It means for Christians not to compromise and not to participate in their sins
 - Apply 2 Cor. 6:14, 17—the compromise of becoming yoked with an unbeliever who serves another god, which is idolatry

“The Millstone Angel” (Rev. 18:20-24)



Background:
Jer. 51:47-49, 60-64
Ezek. 26:12, 21
Neh. 9:11

Background:
Mt. 18:6-7
("offenses":
enticements to sin)

Revelation 18:20-24

- Those who separated from Babylon should rejoice over her judgment because it vindicates their faith and God's righteous character (18:20-24)
 - It is best to see the suffering saints who cried for vengeance in 6:9-11 at the center of the heavenly throng who are told to rejoice in 18:20
 - This is confirmed in 19:1-2, where the basis for the “Hallelujah!” explicitly alludes to 6:1
 - “because His judgments are true and righteous, because He has judged the notorious prostitute who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality; and He has avenged the blood of His slaves . . .” (19:1-2, HCSB)

Revelation 18:20-24

- The rejoicing does not arise out of a selfish spirit of revenge, but out of a fulfilled hope that God has defended the honor of his justice by:
 - Punishing sin
 - Showing his people to have been in the right all along
 - Showing the verdict rendered by the ungodly world against the saints to be wrong (6:10)
 - This is in keeping with the Old Testament law of malicious witness: if “he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother” (Deut. 19:18-19, NASB)
- Just as the wicked, idolatrous system had previously rejoiced over the unjust death of the two witnesses (11:10), the saints similarly rejoice over the downfall of the idolatrous city

Revelation 18:23b

- “For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived”
 - Her merchants were the great men of the earth
 - The reference is to God’s judgment of Tyre (Isaiah 23), where Tyre’s merchants were “princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth” (Is. 23:8)
 - These merchants were concerned only for their own glory instead of acting as stewards responsible for what God had entrusted to them
 - God judged Tyre for the proud flaunting of her economic wealth and he destroyed it

Revelation 18:23b

- Ezekiel also sees God condemning Tyre for believing that her wealth made her divine rather than human: “your heart is lifted up and you have said, ‘I am a god’” (Ezek. 28:2)
 - Babylon’s judgment because of self-glorification has already been announced in v. 7
 - One expression of that was the overwhelming pride of her merchants, the great men, who will be laid low
- According to Revelation, the point is that the chief purpose of humanity is to glorify God and to enjoy him, not to glorify oneself and not to enjoy one’s own achievements (e.g., 4:11; 5:12-13; 7:12; 15:3-4; 16:9; 19:1, 7)
 - To focus on humanity as the center of everything and to forget God is idol worship

Revelation 19:1-6

- The declaration of Babylon's coming judgment is the basis for the saints' glorifying God's kingship (19:1-6)
 - We often focus our praise on what God does for us—whether our salvation or things related to our daily lives
 - Yet here the praise of the saints is centered on who God is and what he has done completely separate from the circumstances of our individual lives
 - The fact that God's judgments are true and righteous (v. 2)
 - The fact that he has judged the harlot (v. 2)
 - And the fact that God reigns over all (v. 6)

Revelation 19:1-6

- There is nothing wrong with our praising God for what he has done in our lives
 - It is always good to acknowledge God's faithfulness and providential mercies toward us
 - But how often do thank God simply for who he is and what he has done in the wider context of his creation, and what he has done simply for the glory of his name?
- Babylon's coming judgment and the display of God's powerful reign is the basis for and leads to the righteous vindication and union of Jesus with his righteous people, for which they glorify God (19:7-10)
 - Remember our previous discussion of Rom. 5:3-4

Memorization (Revelation)

- Rom. 5:3-4—“³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope”
 - Notice the relevance of Revelation 19:7-9
 - Babylon’s existence provided the tribulations necessary for the refining of believers
 - This refining was necessary for them to enter the eternal kingdom

- Nelson Lichtenstein, professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara says concerning our current pandemic, “This whole crisis is like an X-ray revealing the inner workings of the social/economic structures”
 - Similarly, it appears that our current tribulation is revealing the spiritual health of the church
 - If we are not careful, we can become more concerned or more fearful about the physical health of the congregation than we are the spiritual health of the congregation
- John Ioannidis, professor of medicine, population health, statistics, biomedical data science and epidemiology and the co-director of Stanford University’s Meta-Research Innovation Center says, “A population-wide case fatality rate of 0.05% is lower than seasonal influenza. If that is the true rate, locking down the world with potentially tremendous social and financial consequences may be totally irrational. It’s like an elephant being attacked by a house cat. Frustrated and trying to avoid the cat, the elephant accidentally jumps off a cliff and dies”

- Similarly, is it possible to “lock down the church” so much that it has tremendous spiritual consequences, primarily due to irrational fear?
 - It could be like the church being attacked by a church mouse—fearful and trying to avoid the mouse, the church accidentally jumps off a cliff and dies
- A number of congregations around us have become so “concerned” or fearful in an effort to protect physical health that they are no longer assembling “face to face” (2 Jn. 1:12; 3 Jn. 1:14)
 - Posted on the website of a conservative congregation:

“Message from the elders: We have come to the difficult conclusion that the wise course of action is to cancel all services, including the Sunday morning worship service.

We will update this page once any further decision is made as it pertains to our assemblies” (<https://www.cyfairchurch.org/news>, retrieved 3-21-20)

- Posted on the website of a second conservative congregation:

“Temporary Changes due to COVID-19

Given the virus continues to spread at a rapid rate in the US and the guidance provided to limit gatherings to no more than 10 people, the elders have decided the following:

No worship services at the building until further notice

Online worship service: broadcasting each Sunday beginning March 22 at 10 a.m. to the public. This is best viewed through your computer. To view the live broadcast click [here](#) or click on the "Resources" tab then LiveServices link . . .

Songs, Prayers and Bible lesson: We will have songs broadcast to sing along at home. Prayers will be led individually at your home. Bible lesson provided by Jeff or Randy

Lord's Supper: Time will be allotted for members to partake at home during the online broadcast, the prayers will be offered. Please search out and secure unleavened bread and juice but if you are unable to do so, please let us know

Please pray this pandemic will pass soon as our desire is to once again be together as a congregation of God's people. If you have any questions, please contact any of the elders” (<https://kleinwood.com/>, retrieved 3-21-20)

- Posted on the website of a third conservative congregation:

“Meeting Times

Sunday Morning Bible Studies	Temporarily Suspended
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am - Online Service
Sunday Evening Worship	Temporarily Suspended
Wednesday Evening Bible Studies	Temporarily Suspended

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and restrictions the Elders have elected to follow the guidance suggested by Local, State, and Federal officials and forego physically meeting together to worship at the building. In lieu of this congregation of saints, we invite you to participate in the online Bible Study and Lesson available each Sunday until the restrictions have been lifted. For a full schedule of Bible Studies and Lessons please follow our Facebook page” (<https://www.deckerprairiechurch.org/about/location-and-service-times>,

retrieved 3-21-20)

- While there are undoubtedly other conservative congregations, just a couple more postings on websites should help us see how widespread the coronavirus fear has become:

Congregation #4:

“March 18 Update from Our Shepherds

Due to the current global health situation as it relates to our community, we have decided to suspend worship services and classes effective immediately. This decision will be in place through the end of April, unless situations change in a very positive way before then. For now, we believe this is best. The sermons for Sunday will be made available for those who can connect

Many of our brethren in the First Century had to hide from the danger of persecution lest they be killed. Many were slaves and could not assemble the way we do, but they met and worshipped and helped one another. In Acts 16, we read about two brothers in a dark prison cell praying and singing praises to God. The result of their faith? The jailer and his household were saved.

Our trust in our Lord is unwavering. We believe He will continue to care of us. Look for opportunities to use the unique situation to see to the needs of our Southside family, especially those who are elderly.

Our prayer

'Our Father, please be with us through this trying time. Guide us in the paths of righteousness and let us feel Your abiding presence. Be with this congregation and Your people all over the world. Lord, we love You and look to You for strength and wisdom. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen"' (<https://www.southsideonline.org/>, retrieved 3-21-20)

Congregation #5:

“No Assemblies in Church Building

In light of the 15-day guidelines issued by our president and the new and developing information pertaining to the spread of COVID-19, the Elders . . . have made the difficult but necessary decision to not meet for worship services at our church building.

Right now, this includes:

- The three Sundays of March 22nd, March 29th and April 5th and
- The intervening Wednesday night services of March 18th, March 26th, and April 1st.
- We do not know if these guidelines will be extended beyond the 15-day period. If they are, we will comply and refrain from meeting in our church building until such time as our Government tells us it is safe to do so.

If you will notice, we did not say we are cancelling worship services. We are simply not meeting in our building to worship God. During this temporary period, here is how we shall proceed:

1. Worship Services: We will worship together - with each other - remotely within our own homes.

2. Live Streaming Video Broadcasts: We have created a . . . YouTube channel whereby we will live broadcast:

- Sunday worship services
- Sunday bible classes, and
- Wednesday night bible classes”

Congregation #5 continued:

“3. How: Within a few hours of our regularly scheduled worship services (Sunday at 9:30 AM and Wednesday at 7:30 PM), we will send to each member the specific link for each broadcast by text and email.

4. What's Included: Our video broadcasts will include the entire worship services and bible classes:

- Prayer
- Singing
- Lord's Supper
- Sermon, and
- Sermon and Bible Class Power Point Presentations
- Please note that these broadcasts are also recorded for later viewing.

5. Lord's Supper:

- To partake of the Lord's Supper, each of us will have to obtain the bread and wine.
- The church purchased 300 individually wrapped cups and bread. They are on the foyer table on a first come and first serve basis.

Congregation #5 continued:

- “• Grape juice is now generally available at the grocery stores.
- Unleavened bread may not be available. If not, we have given you a very easy unleavened bread recipe below at the end of this announcement along with the scriptural support for it.

Finally, if you continue to have difficulties in procuring the bread and the wine, reach out to other members, or the deacons, or the elders, and we will figure out a way to provide the Lord's Supper elements to you.

6. Assembly: If possible, contact other members—perhaps those who live in your area—for the purpose of worshipping together in groups of ten or less. In this way, we will worship together, pray together, study together, sing together, reflect together—even as we are each with our families or small groups at home.

Your elders have made the decision to comply with the President's guidelines in order to protect you, our church, all those who may come in contact with us, and our nation. It would be irresponsible to do otherwise. Please pray for each other, our church, our loved ones, our community, and our nation. Also, as requested last time, please throw in a little extra prayer for your elders so that God will give us wisdom in the making of our decisions at this difficult time.

Thank you,

Your elders” (<https://www.bellairechurchofchrist.org>, retrieved 3-21-20)

Congregation #6:

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Worship Services

Due to safety precautions relative to CoVid19, physical gatherings are cancelled until further notice.



See Streaming Schedule

- Perhaps Satan is hard at work to create fear and unbelief in entire congregations
 - Rev. 21:8—“fearful/cowardly and unbelieving”
 - No wonder Paul said, “besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the congregations” (2 Cor. 11:28)
- Just as when a congregation of God's people ceases physically to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, when a congregation ceases physically to assemble together on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), the congregation will immediately be in a deep state of spiritual depression
- According to the Scriptures, for the spiritual health of a congregation, worshiping together in each other's presence is not only a command of God but is a spiritual necessity
- Some brothers and sisters have redefined for themselves “forsaking” and “the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25) to mean that we can assemble together on a website due to “the present distress” (1 Cor. 7:26)

- What does God say about our assembling together?
 - Five times: “come together” (1 Corinthians 11)
 - “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25)
 - “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)
- Let us pray to God for strength knowing that “we should carefully consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Heb. 10:24)
 - “Carefully consider”—first and foremost spiritually, as we seek first God's kingdom and righteousness (Mt. 6:33)
 - “Provoke/stir up”—“a provocation which literally jabs (cuts) someone so they 'must' respond” (<https://biblehub.com/greek/3948.htm>)

- The faith of Esther
 - “Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14)
 - And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” (Esther 4:16)
- “Trust in the Lord with all your heart”
 - Prov. 3:5-8
- Pray for ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ to do God's will no matter the cost—doing God's will is always the right thing
 - 2 Chron. 7:14

- How often do we view individuals (or perhaps our jobs or the coronavirus) that may cause us pain as undesirable obstacles to be removed?
 - In view of Scripture, we should see the possibility that God is trying to use them in our lives through the suffering they bring upon us
 - Remember Joseph (Gen. 50:20)
 - God can help us turn trials into triumphs and conform us to the image and character of his Son in the face of suffering
 - Rom. 5:4; 8:29; 12:2; Jas. 1:2-4
- What is more important—our earthly comfort, or the forming of Christ within us?
- The fact that God detests the wickedness of Babylon and will certainly judge it does not prevent God from using it to accomplish his purposes in our lives

King of Kings & Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16)

**“Faithful and True”
(Rev. 19:11)**

**“His name is called
The Word of God”
(Rev. 19:13b)**

**“He was
clothed with
a robe dipped
in blood”
(Rev. 19:13a)**

**“He has on His
robe and on
His thigh a name
written:
KING OF KINGS
AND
LORD OF LORDS”
(Rev. 19:16)**



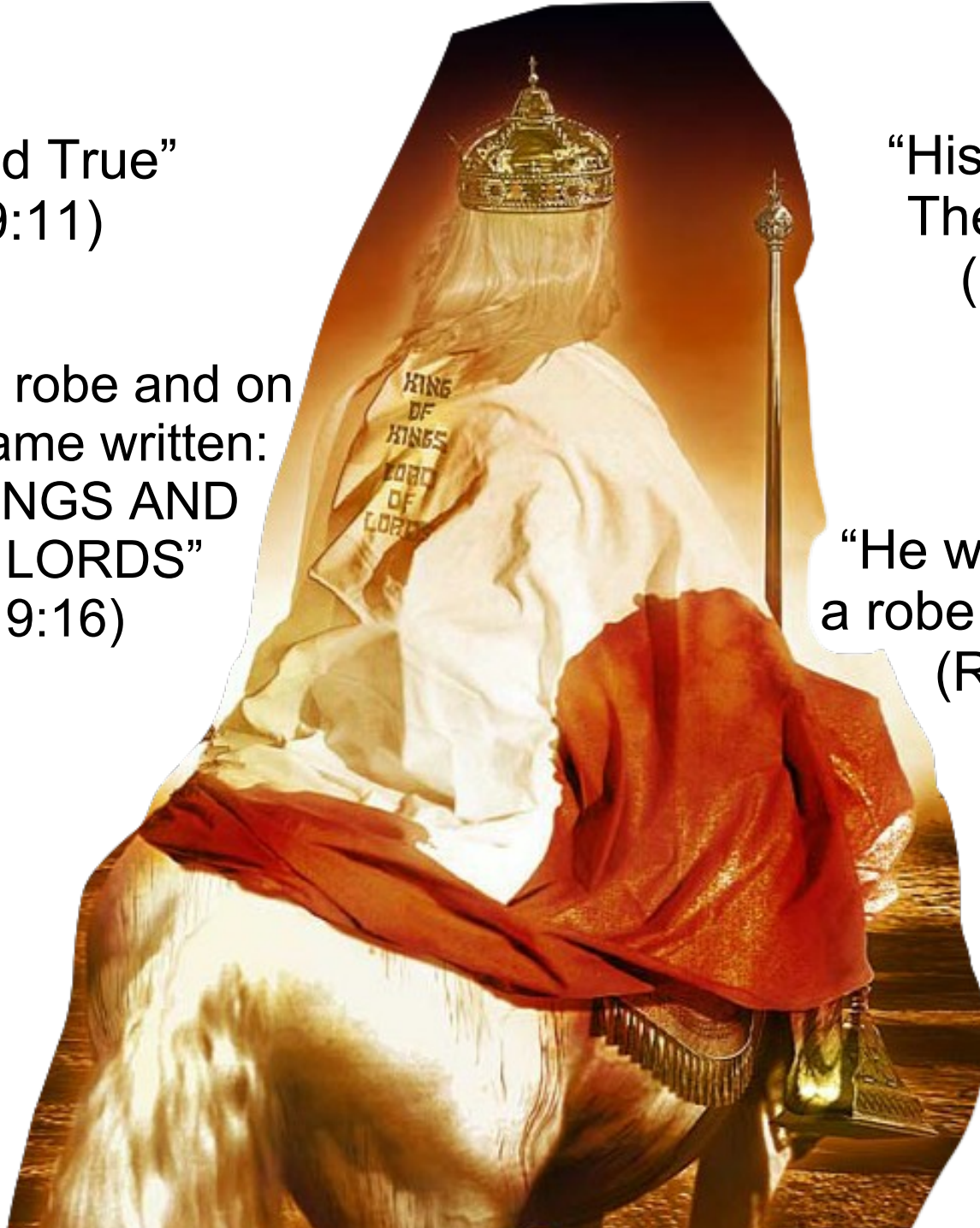
King of Kings & Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16)

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“He was clothed with
a robe dipped in blood”
(Rev. 19:13a)



King of Kings & Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16)

“He Himself will rule
them with a rod of iron”
(Rev. 19:15b)

“Out of His mouth
goes a sharp
two-edged sword”
(Rev. 19:15a)

“He has on His robe and on
His thigh a name written:
**KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS**”
(Rev. 19:16)



Bird Feast (Rev. 19:17-18, 21)



“Come and gather together for
the great supper of God”
(Rev. 19:17b)

The Two Beasts Cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20)



Revelation 19:11-21

- Jesus will reveal his supreme reign and faithfulness to his promises by judging Babylon's former allies in order to vindicate his people (19:11-21)
 - This is the final conclusion to the section on Babylon's fall beginning at Rev. 17:1
 - It is the broadest description of Jesus' judgment and defeat of the ungodly forces
 - First, the description of Jesus with his heavenly armies in anticipation of defeating their enemy (vv. 11-16)
 - Next, the declaration of the imminent destruction of the enemy (vv. 17-18)
 - Last, the defeat of the beast and false prophet along with their followers (vv. 19-21)

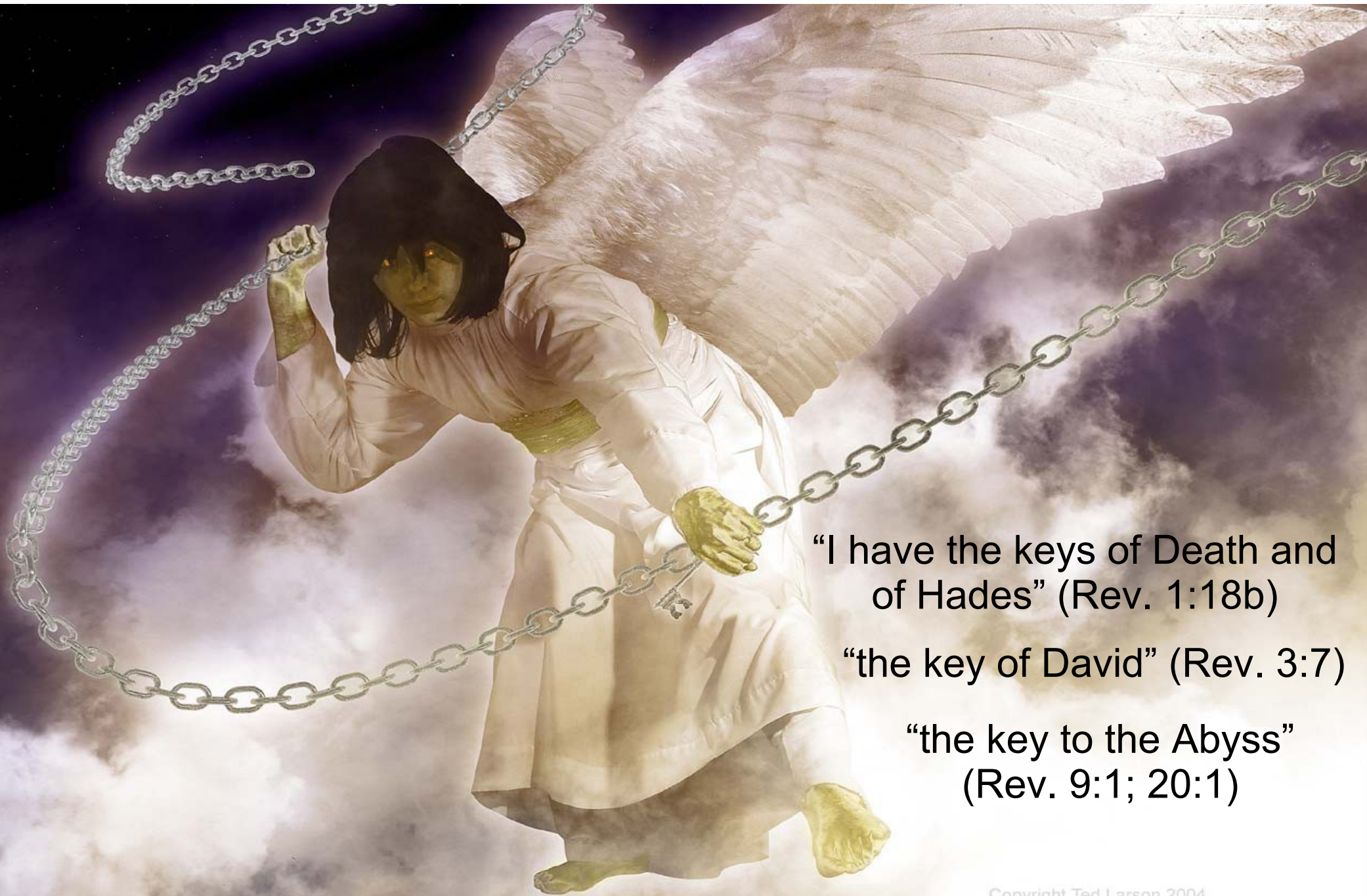
Revelation 19:11-21

- The destruction of Babylon recounted in 17:1–19:8 was not a complete defeat of all the forces of wickedness
 - Rev. 17:16-17 reveals that God’s agent in defeating Babylon was the beast and his forces
 - Therefore, for the victory to be complete, these forces must also be destroyed
 - Above all, the “testimony/witness of Jesus” (emphatically mentioned twice in v. 10) must be seen as true
 - The judgment of Babylon, followed by that of the beast, the false prophet and their followers, demonstrates that those who proclaimed this testimony were in the right after all and that the testimony is true

Revelation 19:11-21

- That the actual weapon of judgment is Jesus' message of truth suggests that the purpose of this section, together with that of vv. 1-6, is to serve as a foundation for the marriage supper of the Lamb in vv. 7-10
 - This emphasizes the basis of the saints' vindication and provides a demonstration of the truth they proclaim (“the true words of God,” v. 9)
 - We are reminded again about the importance of our collective evangelism—engaging together to do the work God has given us to do
 - “Your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus”
 - “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10)

The Angel With the Key & Great Chain (Rev. 20:1)



“I have the keys of Death and
of Hades” (Rev. 1:18b)

“the key of David” (Rev. 3:7)

“the key to the Abyss”
(Rev. 9:1; 20:1)

Binding & Casting the Dragon (Rev. 20:2-3)



The Angel Sealing the Abyss (Rev. 20:3)



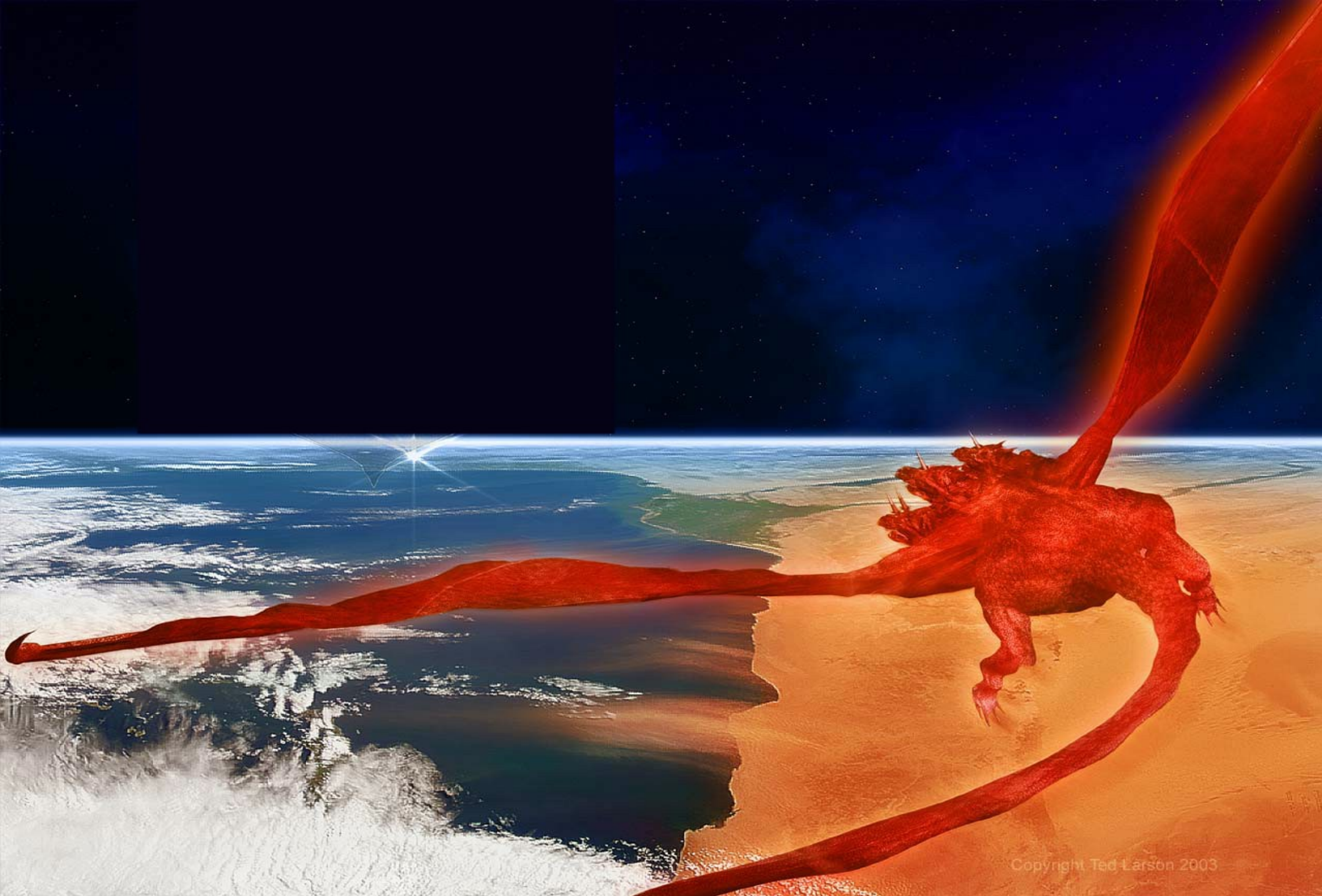
The Dragon Bound (Rev. 20:1-3)



The Dragon Released (Rev. 20:3c, 7)



The Dragon Deceiving Nations (Rev. 20:8)



The Devil Cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10, 15)



The Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10, 15)



The Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-12)



The Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11)



“And Books Were Opened” (Rev. 20:12)



The Dead Judged According to Their Works (Rev. 20:12)



The Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14)

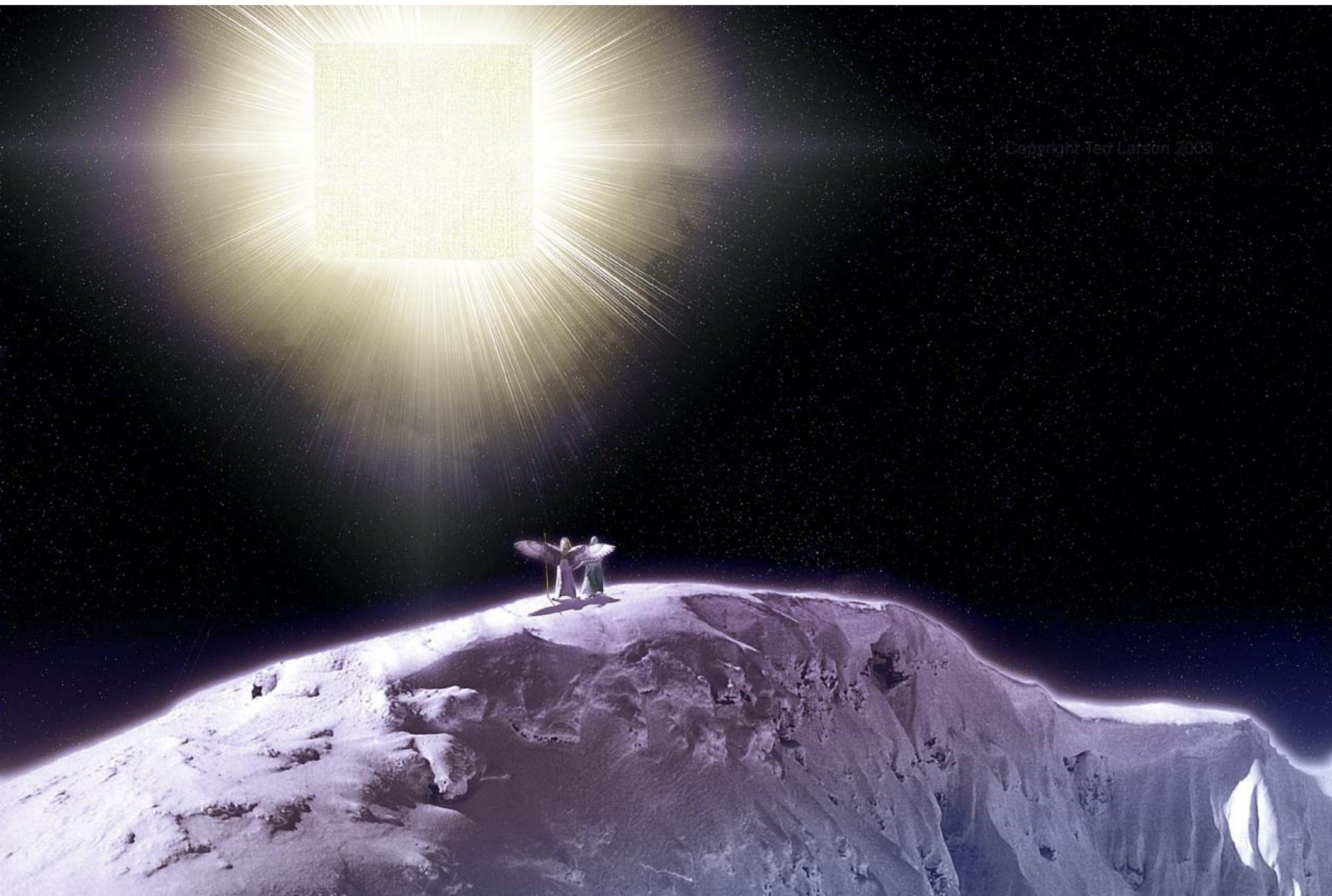
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The Holy City, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10)



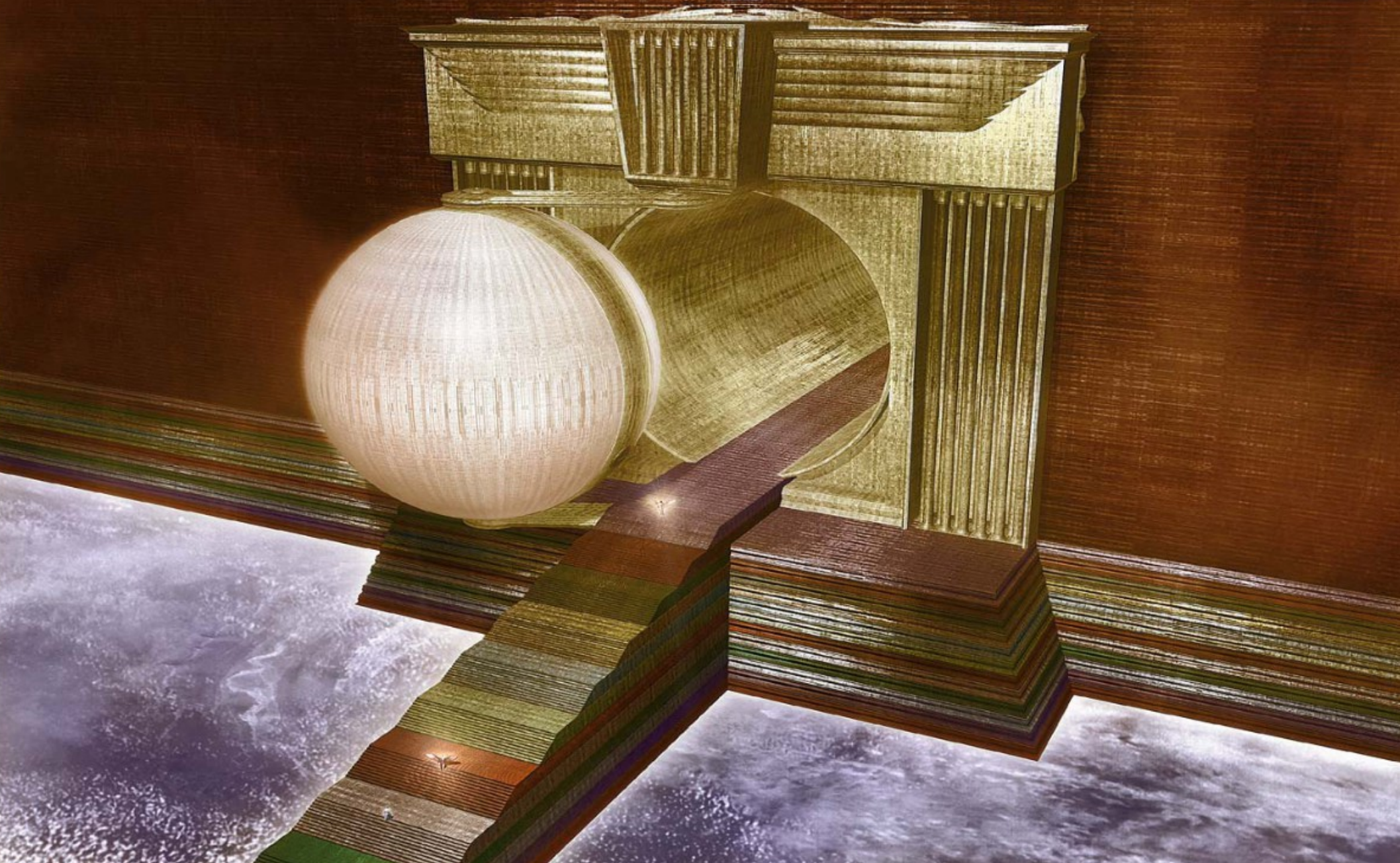
A Great and High Mountain (Rev. 21:10)



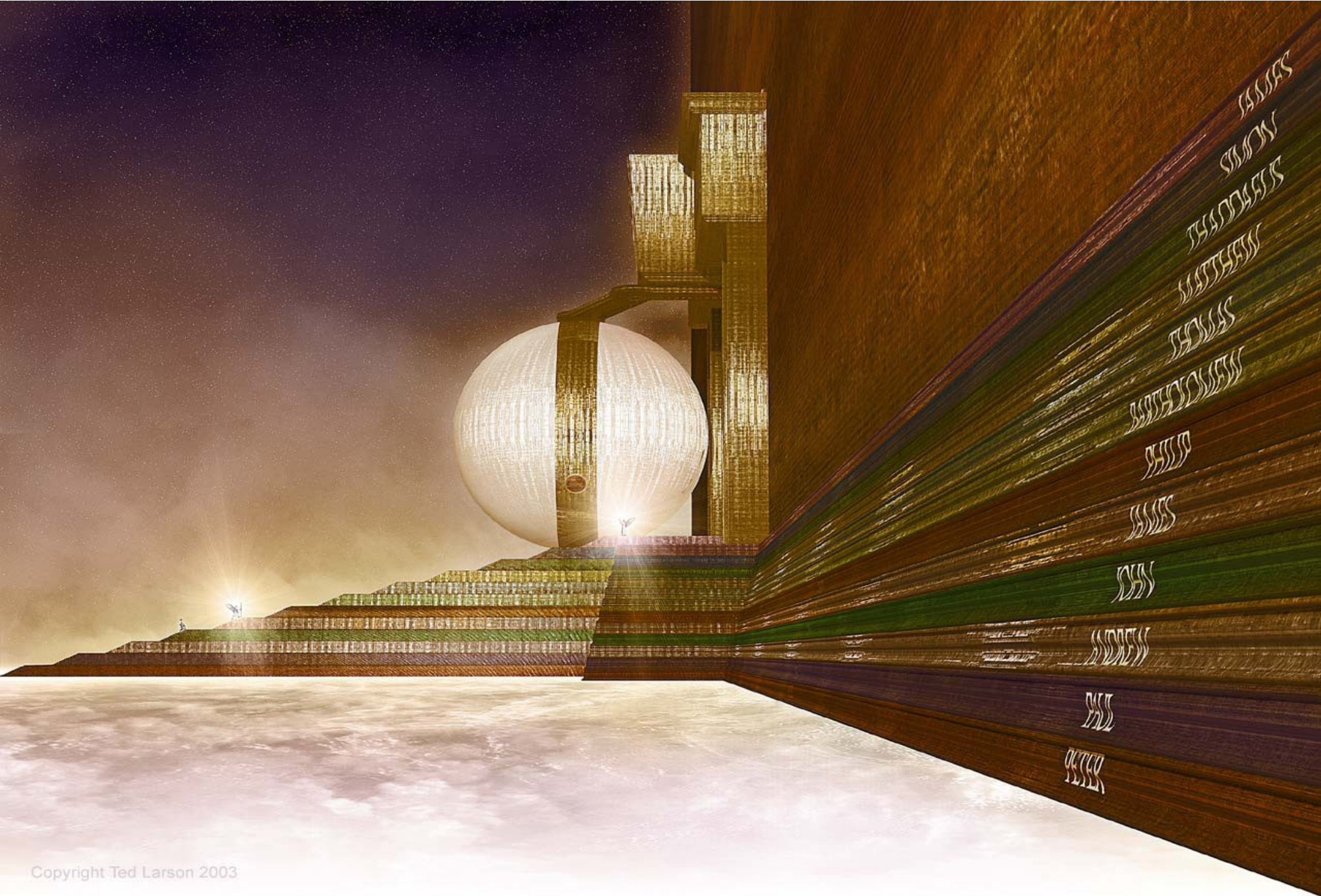
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The Great and High Wall (Rev. 21:12)

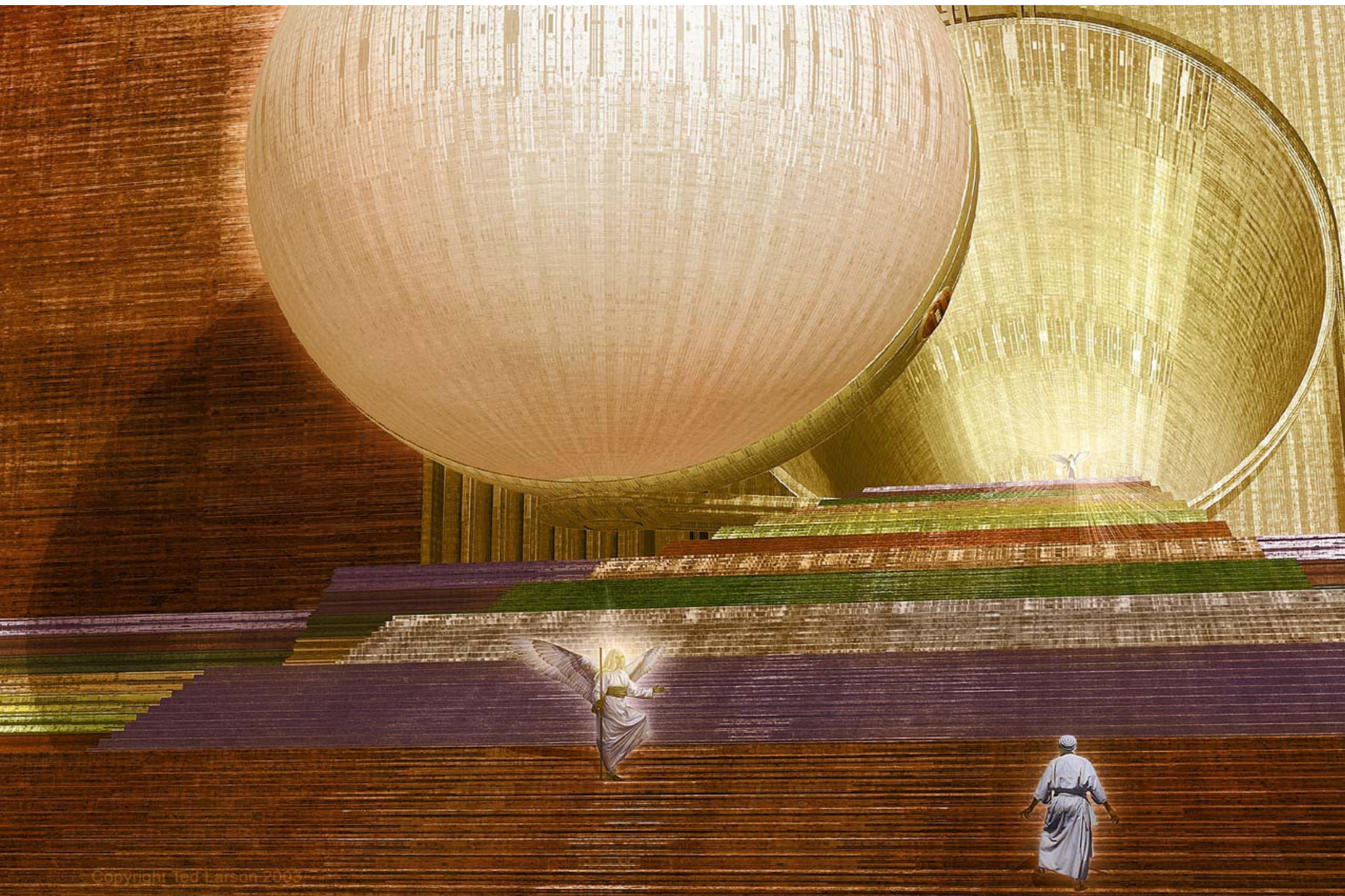
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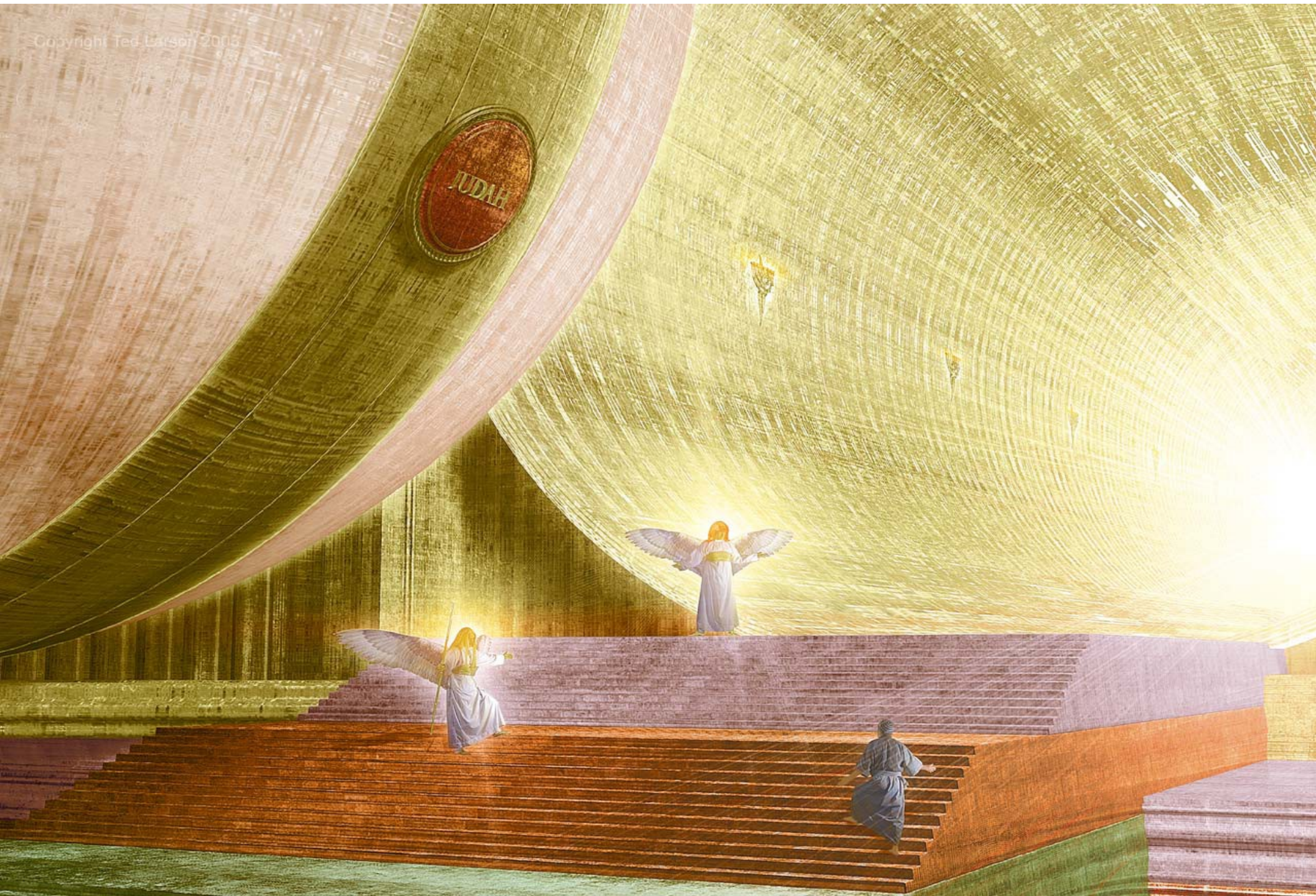
The Names on the City Wall's 12 Foundations (Rev. 21:14)



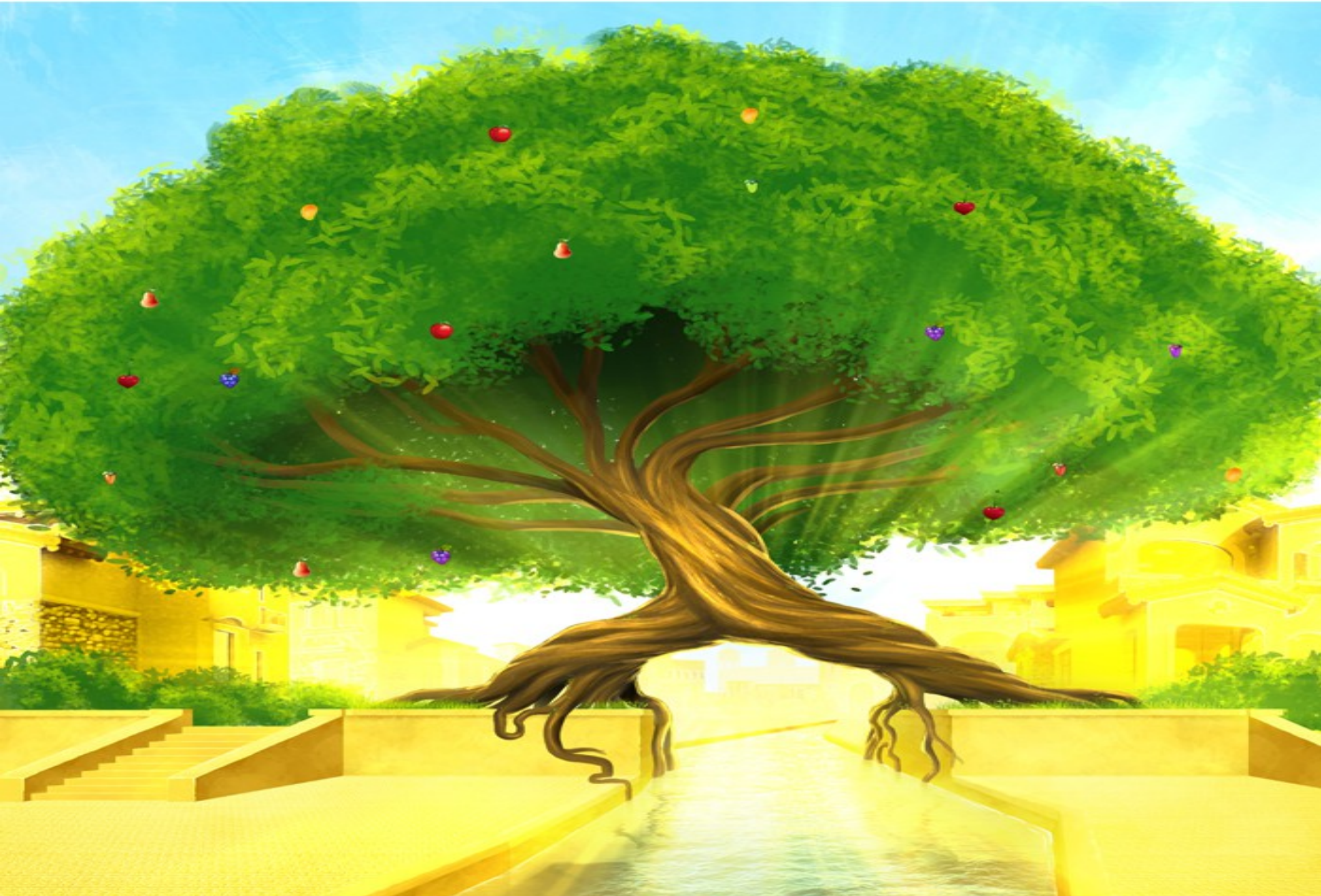
The Angel with the Golden Measuring Rod (Rev. 21:15)



“Its gates may not be shut at all by day” (Rev. 21:25)



“The Tree of Life” (Rev. 22:2)



“The Tree of Life” (Rev. 22:2)

Background:
Ezek. 47:7, 12



“The Tree of Life” (Rev. 22:2)



“I am the A and the Z” (Rev. 22:13)



“The Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16)



“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’” (Rev. 22:17)

