

REVELATION VOL. I

METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

Let us come to our first lecture, and begin with Revelation and Chapter 1 Reading from the first chapter, first verse:

The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to show to his bond-servants the things which must shortly take place, and He sent and communicated it by his angel to his bond-servant John who bore witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ even to all that he saw. Blessed is he that reads and those who hear the words of the prophesy and heed the things which are written in it, for the time is near'. Verse 9, 'I John your brother, a fellow partaker in the tribulation and Kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus was on the Island called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

As we come to this first lecture of the Book of Revelation, I want to start out by noting one or two things that I believe are important, especially for those of you who have not heard anything that I have said on the Book of Revelation before.

First of all, let me warn you in advance that the interpretation that we are about to indulge in, in the book of Revelation is radically different from any other interpretation that I know of on the public market today. Now, if you are a theologian or a student and if you buy books from some of the more reputable booksellers, you will know this because it has been in the Church for the last thousand and some years. But on the popular book market, the view that I am about to give you is quite unknown and, therefore, if you are a reader of the popular Christian books, the interpretation which I am about to give will be totally different from anything you have ever heard before.

Now, it could be that you have settled down in your particular view of the Revelation, which of course includes your view of the Second Coming and things to do with the end. And if you have settled down into that, then it could be that you will be threatened by what I have to say from the minute I open my mouth.

Now, I am warning you, therefore, in advance before anyone decides to disagree with any one word that I say, please allow me to speak without stopping for twelve hours and when I have done my 'thing' for twelve hours, then you can state whether you agree, or disagree. The very nature of the course is a gradual unfolding, laying down first of all the foundation and principles and then a building upon that. Therefore, to disagree at the very beginning is to be very unfair. Please, even if you feel I am totally wrong, hold

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your 'peace', love me anyway, and allow the Spirit of God to tell you whether I am right or wrong.

You are going to have a million questions if you have any other view of the Revelation, and so please do not come to me, or, if you are listening on tape do not go to the person who loaned you the tape. Just wait and, as the questions occur, write the questions down. Have a special page in your notebook just for questions, and, as soon as the questions occur, write them down. And if they are not answered by the twelfth lecture, then you can come to me and I will do my best to answer them.

As you write those questions down, don't write them down as **big** questions, just write them down as a note, because if you write them down as a **big** question you are liable to think of them as a question and not hear anything else for the next twenty minutes.

I'll warn you that if you believe there is a seven-year tribulation to come, sooner or later you will write down in your book, "*What about the seven-year tribulation?*" Just write it down as "*what about the seven-year tribulation?*" and forget it until we come to such an answer - or you may say, "*Well then, What About the Millennium?*" and again, just write it as a casual note, "*What about the Millennium?*"

Do not get all hung up on one question. Rather, just note them down, and, as the interpretation unfolding answers them, cross them off with the answer. I believe that 99% of your questions will be answered by the twelfth lecture. They certainly will not be answered by the first, or second, or third. So, kind of 'hang in' there and do it that way, and even if, at the end of the whole course, you totally disagree with my interpretation of Revelation, (which it could well be, and it wouldn't threaten me if you did), can we agree on one thing? This course will undoubtedly glorify Jesus Christ as Lord of All, and I think whether you agree with me *basically* you will have to agree with me *essentially* that Jesus Christ is Lord of All and the interpretation that I am about to present from the Book of Revelation states that as clearly as I know how.

How we interpret the book of Revelation.

With those preliminary remarks, let us come to our first lecture proper and there ask how we interpret the book of Revelation.

I have to ask the question, "What is this book all about?" No point in plunging into the book with a preconceived idea. The only way to interpret the Scripture is exegetically, and the word '*exegetically*' means let the Bible speak

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out at you, the other way of doing it is '*eisegetically*' which means you come to the Bible having already decided what it is going to say, and you speak into it your own interpretation and say, 'There! The Bible agrees with me'.

That is not the way to hear God speak. So, first of all, I have to come, not to the first chapter to study it, but to the whole book, and to say 'What is the whole book about?' I must come to that whole book as if I had never read it before, know nothing about it, and I come as a simple child to sit at the feet of this Book in the Power of the Spirit and say, 'What does it mean?'

Now the first consideration must be to remember that it *is* a book. This, of course, can be applied to every book of the Bible. It is not just miraculous words hanging there in space. When the men who wrote the Bible - wrote the Bible, they did so in terms of the Book - a book that began. It began with normal, earthly, human grammar and syntax. It was written in a certain place by a certain man to certain people in a certain historical context. Until I know *that*, I have absolutely no way of finding out what it has to say.

Supposing I wrote a letter to you, and let us suppose I wrote it (shall we say) from Washington D.C., and I mentioned just in passing certain things which had to do with the Carter administration. In four thousand years' time they found that letter, I think both you and I would feel that we were cheated if the people 4000 years from now picked up the letter and merely read it as if it had been written four thousand years from now.

In order to understand it I would expect them to research whoever this 'chap' called *Malcolm* is. I would want them *at least* to find out who this person was who lived in the 1970s. They may not find out, but at least I'd hope they would try. Certainly, I would expect them to discover what Washington is, and I would expect them to find out what "Carter Administration" means, and I would expect them to find out who you are.

Only then would they really find out what that letter was about. Do you appreciate what I am saying?

Now, when I come to the Book of Revelation, I can't just say, '*Ooh, prophecy, it must be for us*'. Why should it be? I can't say that until, first of all, I have gone to ask questions of it as a book. Who wrote it? To whom was it written? When was it written? Why was it written? What was the historical context? And, that is quite easy because it is not 4000 years ago, it is a mere 1970 years ago, which is not very long ago, historically speaking.

So, *when was the book written?* It was written approximately AD 95. That tells me a lot right there, as we shall see in a moment.

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Who was it written by? It was written by John, and, traditionally John the Apostle. He was very much alive in A.D. 95 even though he was a very old man. He was the very youngest of all the Apostles. When he began to follow Jesus, he could have been no more than 16 or 17, and he was the very last of the Apostles. This old, old man who had been banished to the Island of Patmos, which is an Island in the Mediterranean, wrote this book after he had received the Revelation from God.

He wrote it to seven real churches that were on the mainland, over which he had been the pastor and overseer. Seven churches... there were many more churches on the mainland, but these seven were very strategically placed churches, so that when they got a copy of this book, having read it themselves, they could then pass it on to those that were around them. In most cases, these churches stand at the head of a valley, or a pass beyond which were many other churches, and so when they got this book, they could pass it on. So, here is a very real, historical situation.

Let's get the book out of the clouds, and draw it down to earth!

John wrote it from a real Devil's Island called Patmos, and he wrote it to seven strategically placed churches who were going to pass it on to others. We gather that from the verses we have just read together. John said in verse nine that he was on the island of Patmos, and he goes on to say in verse 11, *'Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.'*

These were very real churches. At this point in time, I just want to underline that because there are many interpretations of Revelation that immediately assume that all seven churches are symbolic. I have to say, *why should they be?* If I wrote to the church in Morristown, why should that be a symbolic name? Of course not! It is a real, historical place, and so we take that as it stands.

Now, why was John on Patmos and, what was the condition of the churches in that day?

It was pretty rough! John was on Patmos because he had been banished there. His crime was that he was a Christian. We know from Roman history that in A.D. 95, there was an emperor who was reigning over the Roman Empire. His name was Diocletian. Diocletian was a fanatic in emperor worship. In the Roman Empire, it was more or less there all of the time, depending on the emperor. But, it was sort of always there that which held the empire together was emperor worship.

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Now, by *emperor worship* I mean that, once a year, every member of the Roman Empire would have to go downtown, stand before the City Fathers, raise his right hand, and say, 'Caesar (that is the Roman Emperor) is Lord, is God'. He would then take a pinch of incense, drop it into the flames in front of a statue of the Caesar, and there admit he's God. Now, depending on the emperor, that was 'enforced' or 'not enforced.'

Diocletian was a fanatic. Diocletian began every one of his letters, or each of the bills passed through Senate with the words, 'Your Lord and your God Diocletian speaks'. Whenever he gave a speech, he always began it by saying, 'Thus says your Lord God Diocletian'. When he entered a theatre, everyone had to stand and worship him and state, 'Our Lord and Lady, our God'.

(Editors note: Malcolm has since stated that he was actually referring to *Domitian* (A.D. 81-96), rather than *Diocletian* (AD 284-305).

Now, he had a thing about Christians, because Christians would not stand before a statue of an emperor and say, "He is Lord." In fact, many of them would simply say, 'Jesus Christ is Lord'. That was the whole issue. Do you remember, when the disciples went to Thessalonica? That was even the issue back in the (book of) Acts. The whole thing against them was they are preaching another King, even Jesus. That was the whole issue. Who is Lord and God, the Caesar of Rome or Jesus? That is the whole issue. Some emperors could care less about it, and the Christians had an easy time. When Diocletian came, all the pressure was on, because Christians resolutely stood firm: **Jesus Christ is Lord and God.**

Now, that was not enforced all over the Roman Empire. Again, not only did it depend upon the Emperor, it depended on his officials in the far-flung empire. But, you see, if we trace the history of emperor worship, where did it begin? It began in Pergamum - a long time ago, but it began there.

You see, the Roman emperors had done so much good for these uncivilized people! Let's face it! They brought them roads. They brought them civilization, and the response of the populous was to worship the Caesar that had done it.

It was right there, in the middle of those seven churches that John was overseer of, that emperor worship began, instituted by the populous. The very first temple that was ever built in honors of a Caesar, was built right there within the seven churches. It was the most fanatical area for the worship of the Emperor.

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Therefore, when John refused to bow to the Emperor, he was banished to the Island of Patmos, which is a very small rock island in the Mediterranean, and there he worked in the marble mines, hacking marble out of the rock. He was an old man in his eighties at least, probably on the edge of his nineties, and he was hacking rock with great chains around him. The particular banishment that John had meant that he was in chains for the rest of his life. He was manacled around his wrists and around his feet, and he lived on bread and water, slept on the ground, and he had done that for a number of years at this point in time.

On the mainland, because of their refusal to bow to Caesar, there were many of the Christians that lost their jobs. Today we have unions. That is nothing new. Unions are as old as the Bible and the Unions that the Roman Empire knew always had a patron deity, and, over the patron deity was the Emperor. When you joined the Auto Mechanics Union, (I doubt whether they had one in Ephesus, but it will do!) the patron deity was, shall we say, *Venus*. Now, if you are going to join the Union, it means that, whenever the Union meets, you have got to worship *Venus*.

The worship of *Venus* included all manner of immorality and sexual orgies, so Christians said, "I can't join the union," so they said, "You are out!" Even if you got past that, you had to worship the Emperor to belong to the Union, and so you couldn't get a job. So, Christians were known on the mainland of Asia at that time as being jobless.

If you were a Christian, it meant you had no right to your own home. If the people in town wanted to come and take your furniture, they could come and take it, the police would not stop them! You were less than a dog! You wouldn't even worship the Emperor! It is as if someone today stood and refused to pledge allegiance to the American Flag for Emperor worship was that which drew many nations together making them 'One nation under the Emperor.' To pledge allegiance to the Flag was the same as pledging allegiance to the Emperor as Lord and God.

The Christians would not do it, and so they were called *traitors*, they were called *third citizens*, and were lower than slaves. If anybody wanted to come and take your house, let them take it! The police would never stop them. And so, Christians were those who were bullied by everybody, and thrown on the streets. They lived in caves on the outskirts of the towns many times. Most of them did not have jobs, and those who had jobs lost them. Many of them lost their lives too, that was not always first on the list, but it came to that many times when they were brutally murdered because of their Christianity.

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I think that it should be noted in that first verse where it says God gave this to John, "to show to His bondservants." Who was this letter written to? Well, that was the historical context. In the middle of that context, it was written to *bondservants*. *Bondservant* means a "slave out of love". I love Jesus, and I love Him to the point where I am willing to stand up and be counted. I am His slave forever.

We have commented before on the origination of the term "Christian". If you were my slaves, all you in the front row here, it would be quite a mouthful in Greek to say 'the slaves of Malcolm', and so you would be called the 'Malcolmanios'; 'anios' on the end simply means 'the slaves of'. *Christians* got that name because the pagans heard them talk about someone called Christ and they kept saying that they belonged to Him exclusively, that they were His slaves, and so they nicknamed them the '*Christianios*' - *The slaves of the Christ*. If you are going to take your stand in the middle of such a historical situation as we have just described, you had better be the 'slaves' of Jesus.

There is nowhere in the Bible, certainly, nowhere in this book of Revelation where you can even smell the idea of 'Bless God, I have been saved out of Hell'. They did not even think in such terms. You did not become a Christian in order to be happy when you die! There was no such thing as an appeal as, '*Would you like to go to Heaven when you die?*' Rather, "*Would you like to become a Christian and come to Heaven with us tomorrow?*"

To become a Christian meant probable death, and it was very real. You will notice also the word that comes here in verse 2: It talks about *His angel to his Bond-servant John*, so John includes himself with them, the designation of a Christian, one who was totally surrendered to Jesus Christ. Then, it says, "*Who bore witness.*" (I want you to notice that word "*witness.*") Then, it goes on to say, "*the testimony of Jesus Christ*". Notice especially that word '*witness*' and it is linked also to the word '*testimony*'. The original Greek word there that describes that is the word '*martyr*'. The word '*witness*' there, in Greek (and it is linked to the word '*testimony*'), the word is '*martyr.*'

Of course, in our minds we have separated that. Over the years, the word '*witness*' has been degenerated. It has lost its value. There was a time when, if you opened your mouth to give witness to Jesus Christ, the strong chance was that you would pay for that with your life. Therefore, they never separated the idea of *martyr* and *witness*. A *witness* was one who had a *martyr* mentality.

Now, you will need to remember that. We are going to come across that throughout this book. It is one of the themes; so let me repeat that: **As far as**

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these early Christians were concerned if you are going to give witness or testimony to Jesus Christ you have a martyr mentality.

That is, you have already faced that issue.

If they suddenly burst in on you, and arrested you in order to *martyr* you, that is 'kill' you, that would not be altogether a surprise, because you had faced that when you had walked into the waters of baptism. When you were baptized as a Christian, you really did say, "*I am exiting this world and it just could be I will be dead before sundown.*"

It was a martyr mentality. The way we look at it today is, "I give testimony to Jesus. I witness about Jesus, and are some people in the world who are martyrs."

No! There is no difference -- not in the Greek, and not in the minds of the early Christians. A martyr is a witness; a witness could well be a martyr. It is all tied in together there.

Now, any interpretation that we have of this book of Revelation has to be with all those facts in mind. I think I can prove that as I go on. But I cannot, morally, honestly come to this book of Revelation and disregard that. This book was written to people under persecution of such a degree that, if they opened their mouth and confessed they were Christians, they had better already have faced up to martyrdom, because that is what it took. A martyrdom either of real bloodshed and death, or a martyrdom, which was living martyrdom, a banishment like John or loss of home or loss of job. But, you could not just 'sing' through life if you were going to be a Christian.

That is the people this book was written to. Hold every one of those points in mind as we consider the interpretation.

Fanciful Interpretation

I think it is very obvious that this book invites a lot of very fanciful 'soulsh' interpretations, and so, right from the beginning, we must surround ourselves with guards. Whatever it is we say this Book means, I have to be careful that I am not running off with a fanciful interpretation.

Let's face it! When I say 'fanciful interpretation', I believe that a great percentage of those persons who have produced those fanciful interpretations have done so in utmost sincerity. In the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers saw this Book full of Roman Catholicism. I have read their writings, and I do not believe that they were deliberately going off in left field.

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In utmost sincerity, they saw many things that were apostate to Christianity, and they said, "*It is in the book of Revelation.*"

Also, if you read certain interpretations of this Book, you will find that they saw Napoleon, and Mohammed. *It is all there! It is in the Book!*

If you read the interpretations of the Mark of the Beast, it is unreal how many people have come under the Mark of the Beast! There was Hitler, Mussolini, and we could go to the Library of Congress and bring all these books out. They were written.

Charles Price, one of the greatest Pentecostal Evangelists of the 1920's wrote a book that *absolutely and conclusively proved* that Mussolini was found in the book of Revelation, and then he died. But, as Charles Price said the day after Mussolini died, he just "*thanked God he had sold all of the books before he died.*" Then, he offered an apology to the world that he was wrong.

The latest I have heard is that poor Henry Kissinger is in the Book of Revelation! And, so it goes on, and I am sure that each one is quite sincere in what he says, but as the years unfold, we just have to drop them all one by one and say they were *fanciful*, they were *popular*, and they sold a lot of books! But, they were *soulish*, they were wrong. So, as we come to this book, we have to be very careful that we know the mind of the Holy Spirit.

First Rule of Interpretation: Consider the Christians it was written to

Now, the first rule that we must apply in interpreting the book is that we must take into account the Christians that it was written *to*. I will never understand this book until I can get, at least in part, inside the heads of the people it was written to. Once I can hear this book read to me through their ears, then I will be 'Step One' towards understanding it.

Now, just supposing... (And, this is only a possibility at this point; we are coming like little children to this book! We don't know what it means!). But, just supposing that this whole book is either for the 1970's, or maybe for the 1990's, as yet totally unfulfilled. Just supposing that this Book awaits a future time before it is happening.

Very well! If that is the case, then I have got to find that plainly stated to those first-century readers. *They must understand that. When they read this book, having read it they will have to close it and say, "we understand that there is nothing in this book for us, it awaits another 2000 years before its fulfillment"*, and so shelve it away.

Do you follow what I am saying there?

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If God wrote this book to the 1970's or to a time yet future to those 1970's and did not tell those first-century readers, then He is cheating them, because they thought it was for them!

It says, *'Write to the Churches in Asia, and Write it to them.'*

Supposing I wrote you a letter, really I did not tell you, but I wrote that for somebody who has not even been born yet. But, I pretended to write it to you, and I made great big promises to you in that letter, but I did not really mean them for you, it was all really a trick. It was for somebody who had not been born yet.

Well, that would be *low*, it would be *cheating*, unless of course I put in the letter, *'this is not for you'*. Are you with me?

So, we will find out if that is what it says, but if it does say so, it must say so very plainly, because the first people who read this book were first-century Christians. In fact, I would go so far this: *The only way I read it is by reading it over their shoulder, right?*

(If you have not been to one of these schools before I do like you to nod, because I will go over it again if you don't understand it.)

Do you see what I mean?

This was written to seven churches in Asia. Two thousand years later, I am looking over their shoulder and saying, "*Oh is that what it says?*" It was written to them, basically - and not to me. It was only written to me in that the whole Word of God comes to me. But, I will never understand it until I first understand what it meant to the first receivers of the letter, or the book. Right? And so, we must understand that very plainly.

Second Interpretation Safe Guard: It promises blessing to all readers

The second great guard that we put up in our interpretation is, that the Book promises a unique blessing to everyone who reads it. Notice that in verse 3, *'Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy'*.

Now, that is suddenly taken out of the context of the first century, because it does not say, "*Blessed are all the first century readers.*" That means, (a) It was written first of all, for the first century; but also (b) Anyone who reads this book will be blessed out of his skin. If a first century Christian reads this book he is going to be so *blessed*, I would suggest more than any other way 'blessed,' because there is no other blessing like that attached to any other book in the New Testament.

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So, here is a special blessing to any first-century Christian who reads that book.

Secondly, if anyone in 1300, or 1500, or 1900, or the year 2000 -- if they read this book, they will be blessed with the same unique blessing, because it is an open-ended blessing. Do you see what I mean? Although I say, Number One -- we must take into account the people it was written to, I say, Number Two -- we understand that the blessing is for all people of all times who will ever read the book or hear it being read.

Third Statement of Interpretation.

That leads me to a third statement of interpretation. I doubt very much that those first-century Christians (I'm trying not to be facetious) under the persecution that they were, I don't think they were interested in whether Mao-se-Tung is the Anti-Christ! I doubt very much whether they were interested in the movement of the Common Market of Europe.

You see, these people were under such a persecution that they needed sustenance. They needed the comfort of the Holy Spirit. They were not people who were vaguely curious about the future. I don't think you could have gone to these people and said, "*We are going to have a prophecy crusade.*" They weren't interested in prophecy crusades! They might be dead tomorrow morning! Certainly, Dad lost his job last night because he confessed Jesus as Lord. Who is interested in an era of history that hasn't even come yet?

If God says you are going to read this book, but it is all about a far distant future, then God mocks them when He says you are going to be blessed out of your skin. When I come home having been beaten up and my wounds are still bleeding, and I come home and find they have ransacked my house, and I find my children living in caves, who gives a 'fig' who the Anti-Christ is? If I am going to read a book that is going to bless me, then it has got to meet me in my pain, and it has got to meet me in my despair. As I look around and see what has happened to the Church and say, "Where is it? I am the only one left!" This book has got to meet me where I am.

So, whatever interpretation we find in this book, it must be *intensely* practical to people under persecution. It must meet the man under persecution in A.D. 95, or in A.D. 1540, or in 1970. Wherever we find ourselves in history, God says, "*Here is a blessing!*" and He gave it under the worst situation, so wherever you find yourself above that, it would give you a blessing.

That is merely a principle of interpretation. Where you go from there is between you and the Holy Spirit, but these things you must hold in mind.

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Also, when I come to any book of the Bible, I must ask the question, 'what kind of literature is this?' If I wrote to you a novel, or wrote you a book of poems, you would read my novel very differently from the way you read my poems – I hope! Because, there are certain things you do in poetry that you would not dream of doing in novels. Right?

With any book of the Bible, you must ask, "*What kind of literature is this?*"

The very first verse tells me.

It says "*He sent and communicated it by His angel.*" I don't often disagree with the translation of the New American Standard Version, but on this occasion I do. The King James' is better there, it says, "*They sent and signified it.*"

The original Greek word there is, '*He sent and made it known by signs and symbols.*' He made it known by tokens. *Signs, symbols, tokens.* So, He 'communicated' it. What the New American Standard is trying to say, it wasn't just straightforward. It was done by a certain mode of communication, which was *sign, symbol or token.*

So, whatever we find in the book, we shall see! But, as I approach the portals of this book, I must understand that, Number One, '*whatever I find here it is a symbol.*' So I shall find:

1. Cities.
 - a. I shall find a city called "*Jerusalem.*"
 - b. I shall find a city called "*The New Jerusalem.*"
 - c. I shall find *Babylon.*
2. I shall find a river called "*the Great Euphrates.*"
3. I will find a great lumbering beast.
4. I will find a little woolly lamb, and
5. I will also find another lamb as it had been slain, that is full of eyes and horns. (In fact, the more I look at the pictures of this book, the more grotesque they become! It looks like a painting of modern art.)
6. I find a woman sitting on a beast that lumbers across the desert, and she has a cup full of blood.

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Now, as I approach this book, I have to get one thing in my head. It tells me, this is not an ordinary narrative. This is not straightforward novel form. **This is a book of signs and symbols.**

So, when I meet a city called Jerusalem, even though I do not know what it *is*, I know *it is not* Jerusalem. Right? For a symbol is pointing away to something else. When I meet a place called *Babylon*, I may not know what it is pointing to, but I know it is only a sign; it *is not* the city of Babylon itself. When I see a beast in all its grotesqueness, I may not find what that beast is pointing me to, but let me *not* say it is a literal beast, because I was warned to begin with it is *signs, symbols and tokens*.

What is the atmosphere of the book? That is another question you always have to ask. I suggest all of you read through this book at least fifteen to twenty times. Before I gave the first lectures I ever gave on the Book of Revelation, I read it through the book fifty times and memorized most of it, in order to *feel* the atmosphere there! You know, what is going on? Gradually, as you soak your head in this book, you begin to feel you are in an opera. It is a cosmic opera.

There is a choir, and there is a lot of singing, and you feel (as long as you keep inside John's head) that you are sitting in the middle of a stage.

It is very important to know the atmosphere:

You are John, okay? You have gone to your cave on the side of Patmos and you are looking over the Mediterranean Sea. Above you is the bright dome of the sky. Behind you is the darkness of the cave and you are sitting there.

Suddenly! The whole lot explodes, and you see all around you moving pictures! It begins! You hear a trumpet behind you, and you turn around to see. You see something that, basically, is totally indescribable! And so, you give, in symbolic form, a picture of Jesus.

Then, He tells you, "*write*," and you grab your pen and you begin to write as He dictates the seven letters to the seven churches.

You turn around, and suddenly the whole scene changes! It is as if you have stepped into the other half of the Universe, and right in the middle there, it seems over the sea, but the sea isn't there any more.

You are seeing a great big moving opera! It fills the whole sky! Talk about outdoor movies!

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In the very centre you see a throne, and the whole thing is in symbol pictures. Then you see a Lamb appearing moving towards the throne. He takes a book, and then you see one of those grotesque creatures beside the throne, and they say, "Come." Then, galloping across the universe comes a man on a white horse. He has hardly gone before another voice says, "Come."

Here comes a red horse! You see, it is moving all the time. The whole universe, it's cosmic! Then, when you are gasping, you wonder what is going on, it seems the whole stage goes dark, and you hear a voice and it says "*Of the tribe of Judah 12000 and the whole roll call of Israel 144,000.*"

Suddenly! You look again, and you now see a multitude that no man can number, and they are all waving palm branches and they are singing. (Sigh!)

Then, you hear singing 'Worthy is the Lamb, Worthy is the Lamb.' It keeps coming all through the opera.

Suddenly, one of the actors on stage (he had been center stage at one point, but now he is sort of off-duty) comes and says, "*Come with me!*" So, you go trotting onto the stage, and you suddenly feel under foot -- it is sand, and you are in the desert! There, lumbering across in front of you is a great beast. On it sits a woman in scarlet, and *you are on stage! You are part of the action.*

Another time he says, "*Would you like to see the Lamb's wife?*"

You suddenly feel yourself going through space through the air, and you land on the top of a great mountain! You see coming out of the sky the great city New Jerusalem, and you are given a ruler and you go and measure it.

(It is all part of the action. It is a cosmic stage - involves the entire universe, choirs by the billion, solo pieces, angels blowing trumpets, and all the time you are John, and you are writing it down as fast as you can.)

Even the Greek in which John wrote backs me up on that.

You see, John was essentially a Hebrew, and he never really did think in Greek. He had a 'go' at learning it. But, you know, if you ever learn Spanish or French and you think in English and then interpret into Spanish, it comes out awful because you didn't think in Spanish. John thought in Hebrew, and when he wrote, he made it Greek so everyone could read it.

Normally, when he did anything official, he had a whole lot of people with him in Ephesus where he was the overseer and they corrected all his Greek. But, here on the Island of Patmos, (a) there was no one to correct him; and (b) he was writing as fast as he could.

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The result was that the book of the Revelation, in the original Greek, is the worst Greek of the New Testament – it is *terrible* Greek. It is obviously written by someone who is thinking in Hebrew and writing in Greek. It was obviously written by someone who did not have the time to even look at the last sentence. Whoever wrote the book of Revelation is writing it as fast as he can, following it all the time.

So, here you are! You are on a stage, which is set in the center of the Universe, and all around you action is taking place. It is changing so fast you have to keep looking.

I state that, because as we come to this book, I don't want us to come with a magnifying glass to nitpick over every tiny detail. What appeared to John was a picture (smack!) *gone!* Picture – (smack!) *gone!*

What I want to find out is *what does that picture mean?* I am not particularly concerned with some of the details. I have read books on Revelation 9 where it talks about some creatures that had faces like men hair like women, tails like scorpions and they go into such detail (i.e., the eyes of the men what did they mean?) Quite frankly, I don't know what they mean! But, I'll tell you this! When I look at that whole picture, I can sure see what it means – the whole picture! The details, I am not too sure about. I wonder if we were ever meant to be too sure about. We are supposed to get the picture as the cosmic opera took place across the cosmic stage.

What does the book say of itself? Because, if I am going to interpret it correctly, at least I should stay within what it states about itself.

It states, in the very first verse, '*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*'. There, the word 'revelation' means "*The Unveiling*." So, this book is the *unveiling* of Jesus Christ to me. I can never look at this book or read its parts without taking into account that this is an unveiling of Jesus, therefore it has in view all that He has done; that is, that He has died. As He died, He shouted, "*It is finished!*" He was buried... He has risen again... He has been coronated as King, and He has given the Holy Spirit. Unless I take that into consideration, I'll never understand the Book.

This is not a revelation of His Second Coming! It is a revelation of *Him*. There is a big difference. It is concerning what He has done, but because it is of Him, then it is *Who* He now is, His *now* relationship to the Universe – the world of men, and it also takes in all that He has in store for the future, His Second Coming and eternal reign.

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I believe this is the only way we can interpret those passages like the third verse of this first chapter, also in chapter three, verse eleven, and in a number of times in the last chapter, chapter 22. In those chapters and verses, it states that He is coming soon, or, that the *time is near*. That used to bother me a little bit because this was 2000 years ago, and still the end hasn't come.

But then, when I realize it's talking about Him: *What is the greatest thing we know about Jesus Christ?* It is that when He died and rose again, He accomplished and finished everything that there was to do. He put away sin. He completely defeated the Devil, and He rose again, carrying His Church into the heavenly places. It's finished! It's *finished!* It's ***finished!***

Revelation is built on that!

If He has finished, *finished*, and ***finished***, and there is nothing more to do, then, whatever else is to happen must be soon. Do you see what I mean by that?

It is written from the backdrop that all is done, so we are not waiting for something to be done. We are those who say, "Whatever is coming, compared with what is happened, it is here! It's here!" In that sense, we live in a tension - a hallelujah tension. It is done! And yet...

So, we are caught there between the two, but not with a despair tension, but with a glorious tension. Such has been done, that whatever else has to be is only because it has all been done. It will only be the unveiling, the making manifest of that which *already is*, and that must be soon. And so, every Christian throughout the ages lives in the soon-ness. They are not looking for this idea that 'there is a great battle coming between the Devil and Jesus, and they are going to battle it out! After 1000 years of just making it, the Devil is going to win again. Round Four.'

No! The book of Revelation says, "*It is done! It is finished - finished!*" There are no more big battles coming! It is done! There is a mopping up operation, but it is done. Therefore behold I come quickly - it is soon, we don't look for some big accomplishment, it is merely making manifest of what already is - it is done.

So it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ of Who He was, therefore Who He is and therefore what He shall do. In that sense it unfolds history to me in the (how can I say this?) *light of the end*. We don't think of history in the *light of the end*. We think of history in the light of the past, or the *now*, whereas Revelation teaches me to interpret what is happening right now in the *light of*

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the end, therefore everything that happens today is judged, not by the past nor by the present, but by the *end*.

In a game of chess, if you play chess you will appreciate this: The very first pawn you move in chess has the last move in view. If you have ever played chess, you will appreciate that every move you make, you cannot judge that move by what it does now. You might go and sacrifice your bishop, and you say, "That's bad!" Ah, but you should see what I am doing! I am moving towards the final move when I am going to get that king.

Revelation says, *don't judge history by now, or don't say 'look at this, look at that' rather understand that every move of history must now be judged with the end in view*. So, over and over again in the book of Revelation we see where Jesus Christ is in the past, understand the present in the light that He is my future, and there is no more future, *it is all Him*. So, all history is to be judged in the light of Jesus Christ.

Such an unveiling must be easy! I mean, these were not theologians, and when you are being beaten up for your faith, you don't go to a long drawn-out Bible study of even twelve weeks to try and find out what it means. You need to know, so this must be simple. Jesus does not send a message and then make it so difficult that nobody can understand it. On the other hand, it must be so difficult that no pagan, certainly no emperor, or his police force could understand it. If they understood it, it would make it even worse for the Christians. So the code that interprets the symbols that reveals to me Jesus must be so *utterly simple* that the newest Christian at least has got the key. And, the most *righteous* pagan who does not have the Old Testament doesn't know what it is talking about.

We have made it so difficult. God makes it so simple. He puts the book at the end of the Bible, gives us sixty-five books, which come before it, and then fills this book with echoes and allusions to every other book of the Bible. We shall see, as we go through, that almost every verse of the book of Revelation has a direct or implied reference to another part of the Bible, and as you go back to that other part of the Bible, you've got it: **The key.**

We have mentioned Jerusalem. Obviously, the rest of the Bible is full of Jerusalem. Find out what Jerusalem was in the Bible, and you have got the key to what is mentioned in Revelation.

Babylon? Babylon is mentioned from Genesis 10 right through to Malachi. You go back to Genesis 10 and clue in at one or two other places, and you know what Babylon means.

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You say Beasts? Well, the Old Testament is full of them.

You say, "But what about when there was blood in the sea, and hail from the sky?" That is in the OLD TESTAMENT too. All we have to do is go back. When you go back, you have the key.

What about the two witnesses? Read Deuteronomy -- that is the key! Deuteronomy tells you what the two witnesses are.

On and on it goes, God made it so simple! He said, *if you are a born again believer...* And, in the first Century they had the Old Testament, they did not have all the New Testament that we have - they had the Old Testament. He said, *if you have read the Old Testament you will know what this means.*

A Roman comes along and reads it and says, "I knew it! These Christians are stupid!" He doesn't know what it means, the code is only for the initiated, those who are born again and have an Old Testament in their hands. You will see as we go through how simple that becomes.

And so, here we have these cosmic pictures rapidly moving across this stage, and those cosmic pictures are unveiling to us Jesus Christ. They are showing us, in a word, things are not what they seem to be. God has unchanging decrees. He is unfolding them in and through Jesus Christ. Satan is behind the world. It doesn't look like it. The world seems very quiet and normal, but behind it all, there is an evil mind that is working. Revelation unveils that and says, "Don't worry! Jesus has already defeated Satan! Hang in there. It is mopping up time, and Satan is defeated before he has even started."

Suddenly, I discover that I am going to live forever, (if I didn't know that already). My eternal dimension is unveiled to me and the whole thing is in relationship to *who* Jesus Christ is. If you read this book and study it, you will discover that what you thought was a very real world out there is not such a real world at all. Behind it there is the real world, the world where Jesus Christ is the center, the demons are under His feet, and the purposes of God are achieving their end - all based on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The outline of this book is very, very simple. There are seven visions. Seven times over, God, in this book starts with what Jesus did at the cross, moves through with an interpretation of what is happening now because of that, and ends with the grand finale of what we shall call the Second Coming. Having done that, it moves back to the finished work of Christ on the Cross, moves through with an interpretation (from another view) of what is happening today, and ends with a grand end, with Jesus Christ returning to

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this world, and a whole new world beginning. Back again, start again with the finished work of Christ, moving through with yet another aspect that interprets what is going on today in the light of the cross, and ends in the final judgment and the eternal reign of Jesus Christ. *Seven times over* it does that.

1. The *first* vision, which we shall be considering in our next hour, is from chapters 1-3 which shows us Christ in the middle of His Church, which, in turn, is in the middle of the world.
2. The *second* vision is from chapter 4 through chapter 7, which portrays the Church in trial and persecution.
3. The third vision, which is chapters 8 to 11, shows that the Church is protected - it is triumphant! In fact, God avenges the Church. Those who dare touch the Church are touched by God.
4. The *fourth* vision, chapters 12 through 14. Christ in His Church opposes the satanic trinity.
5. The *fifth* vision, which is chapters 15 and 16, shows me the wrath of God, which falls on those who will not repent.
6. The *sixth* vision, chapters 17 through 19, shows me the fall of Babylon and the destruction of all the beasts that rose against God.
7. The *final* vision, chapters 20 through 22, shows the judgment of Satan made manifest, the eternal victory of Christ and the Church forever, and forever, and *forever*.

We shall cover those seven visions in twelve hours, and I believe that at the end of that time we shall know that things are not what they seem to be.

The Lamb reigns.

Amen!

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CHRIST IN THE CHURCHES

Revelation Chapter 1, Verse 10:

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet saying, 'Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and Laodicea, and I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me and having turned saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the middle of the lamp stands one like the Son of Man clothed in a robe reaching to the feet and girded across his breast with a golden girdle, his head and his hair were white, like white wool; like snow, and his eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace. His voice was like the sound of many waters, and in his right hand he held seven stars and out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and his face was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man, and he laid his right hand upon me and said, Do not be afraid, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One and I was dead and behold I am alive forevermore and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

You will notice in the last verse, in verse 20: As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.

In this first vision, and I would like you to note the visions as we go through, and we will gradually begin to see how each one contributes some understanding of the present age in which we live, in relation to the First Coming and the Grand Finale Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we come to this particular vision, I want you again to get into the head of John. He has gone to a cave, which overlooks the Mediterranean. There is good tradition on the Isle of Patmos, if ever you are traveling in the Mediterranean area, you can go to Patmos today, and the cave which they will take you to, the tradition is good, and there is every reason to believe that it was in that very cave that John went. It says that it was on the Lord's Day.

The Christians of Ephesus were the very first ones to describe Sunday as the Lord's Day, and by the time A.D. 95, they were beginning to call Sunday the Lord's Day. It arose from a Roman tradition. The Roman tradition was that, the day of the week on which their emperor ascended to his

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throne during the lifetime of that emperor, was called *Emperor Day*. And so, if the Emperor ascended the throne on a Wednesday, then Wednesday was called Emperor Day every week during the reign of that Emperor. The Christians in that part of the world began to call Sunday the Lord's Day, because that was the day in which Jesus rose from the dead and ascended His throne and was crowned the King of the Universe. So, Emperor day was put aside and the one day of the week which celebrated the Ascension of Jesus was called the Lord's Day.

How John got the permission to go to his cave and there worship Jesus on the Lord's Day, I don't know. Maybe it was because he was so old they said, "*let the old man do it.*" I don't know, but it was certainly not Roman tradition to have Sunday when you set aside time to worship anybody, let alone the God of the Christians.

But, he finds himself in his cave on the Lord's Day, and, as he is worshipping he hears a sound behind him, which he states was like a trumpet. You notice that in Verse 10, "*I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.*" I will point out two things.

We are right into the world of symbolism immediately. He did not say he *heard* a trumpet. He said he heard a voice *like* the sound of a trumpet, which immediately tells me you are looking for something else. Now my question as I approach that is, *what is the symbolism of a trumpet?* When I read of a trumpet in the Book of Revelation, if it is a book of sign, symbols and tokens, what am I to expect?

Now, I go back into the Old Testament. If you are a student of the Old Testament, you would very readily remember in the Old Testament the first time you hear the sound of a trumpet in a significant way. That would be in the 19th chapter of the Book of Exodus, and there you find that it was a sound *like that of a trumpet* that called them into the presence of God. The whole company of the Israelites are gathered there in chapter nineteen of Exodus, and it says that as the whole of Mt Sinai quaked with the presence of God, and great thick darkness on the top and the lightning was shining, it was then *like a great trumpet sounded* and called all the people to hear the words of their covenant God speaking to them. It is significant when the New Testament unveiling of the New Covenant that John is arrested by a voice that sounds *like a trumpet* calling him. It is a call to the whole covenant people of the New Testament:

"Come and hear the words of the New Covenant. Come and understand what your God has done for you. "

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As he comes, he turns and he 'sees,' which, if we interpret it literally, he sees something quite grotesque. It is a vision of Jesus. There is no doubt about that. He identified Himself we read that he said, *I am the First and the Last, I was dead, I am alive*, there is no question as to who it is! But, if I am going to say that is a literal thing that John actually saw as if that was the Jesus he saw, then I say again it is grotesque when you think about it. The white hair, eyes which were in themselves flames of fire, out of his mouth a great sword sticking, and feet that were glowing like brass in a furnace. The whole thing is grotesque. To think of Jesus with a sword coming out of His mouth! If that is a literal thing that John actually saw as the physical person of Jesus... No! John saw Jesus, but what he saw was beyond words! And, the only way he could describe what he saw was by the symbolism in which Jesus chose to present Himself.

And so, he sees this One who is girded with a robe, Who has the white hair, Whose eyes are as fire, Whose voice is like many waters, Whose words are like a sword, Whose feet are like burnished brass, and Whose whole person is shining like the noon day sun. What does all that mean?

I think just a little consideration, without going too far at all will tell us what it means. First of all, the robe as it is described, the long flowing robe with the belt around the breast. That was the robe of the ancient judges. In fact, this whole we shall see has much to do with the judges. A judge in the ancient world was dressed in that fashion, and so, here, the person who John sees is One who is the Final Authority among men. He is the One who is man's Final and Ultimate Judge.

His Hair, It Says, Is As White As Snow.

Now again, a symbol among judges is white hair. If you go to England, the judges there still wear white hair. As soon as you become a judge, you are given a white wig that comes in nice curls all the way down onto your shoulders. When you are a mere attorney, you have a little toupee wig with a little thing hanging down the back -- but it is white just the same. Every judge has a white wig. All attorneys have white toupees. If you can't go to England, go to Bermuda and you will see it there, too, because the English left their mark in wigs. Why do they do that? Why is it that white hair is always associated with a man who is able to discern and to judge?

You notice that in the Book of Proverbs, it talks about white hair being the sign of maturity and wisdom. I think it is a small thing to think of. As soon as you think of it, you have got it! White hair always speaks of someone who has been around a long time. They have found out all the answers and they

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can discern and can judge, except in this case it says His hair is as white as snow.

In Daniel Chapter Seven, you read of One who is called the Ancient of Days and His white hair. This one is not merely one who in 'times' language has been around a long time. This is the Eternal One whose hair is white as snow: Here is ultimate wisdom; here is ultimate discernment, and here, in this person, is met the wisdom of God.

If you would really understand this Person, one could stay with that hair for a long time. You will find him in Proverbs Chapter Eight, where Wisdom personified speaks of His eternal relationship with God the Father.

You will find him in I Corinthians 1:30, where it says *Christ is made unto us Wisdom*, or in Colossians 2:3, where it says that *in Him there is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. The ultimate wisdom of God is focused in Jesus Christ. So, when I see Him, He is the Judge of all men, Who judges and orders the affairs of men in absolute wisdom, which is achieving the most perfect end in the most perfect way, the Glory of God.

What About His Eyes?

His eyes were '**as flames of fire.**' Fire that burns through all of our masks; Burns through all that *appears* in order to discover what really *is*.

Remember in John, Chapter Ten, Jesus spoke of Himself as the Shepherd (which would fit this)? The eternally wise shepherd, the final authority in His flock and He says, "*I know my sheep.*" I don't know you, and you don't know me, but we both stand before the Ultimate Shepherd whose eyes are as flames of fire to burn through all the facades and masks, and we are known better than we know ourselves.

I think Paul stated that when he says that no man judged him, and he didn't judge himself either. He says, '*there is one who judges me.*' He says, '*if I went by the judgment of men I would be a dead duck long ago. If I went by my own judgment sometimes, I would be a dead duck, because if I am in despair I judge myself without mercy. I prefer to place myself beneath the gaze of the eyes as flames of fire. He knows me perfectly.*'

Of course, this is a terrifying experience as well as a glorious experience. When Isaiah met this One whose eyes were as a flaming fire, (of course, it does not state that in Isaiah Chapter Six, but the intimation is there) he suddenly met with One who knew him perfectly, and he said, '*I am undone.*' When Saul of Tarsus was *known even as he was known*, he fell from his horse

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and said, '*Lord, what would you have me do?*' It is that coming into the presence of that One Who knows me perfectly.

His Voice

It says that voice was like the *sound of many waters*. When I was studying this book and trying to fathom what that really meant - I knew what it meant, but what did it really mean? I was in Buffalo at the time when I was studying it, so I took a trip to Niagara Falls, and stood by the *sound of many waters* to hear what it sounded like. The sound of many waters is the sound of majesty. You stand by Niagara Falls, and it is the sound of majesty. It is a sound of awful, frightening power, yet there is a harmony there when you think of all the water that is going over those falls, and yet it sounds as one sound. It is a sound of perfect beauty, perfect harmony, awesome, frightening power and a majesty that strikes wonder in the heart.

Said John, '*it was the sound of many waters*. He says that His voice reduced me to fear, and yet at the same time, it exalted me to worship such beauty such harmony. It struck awe. It struck wonder! *I will never forget His voice*, he said, *and the words that were in that voice they were like a sword coming out of His mouth: A sword that defeated all enemies that would attack the Church, but at the same time, a sword that pruned His own Church.*

Remember the Scripture says that the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Remember in Hebrews 4:13, he says that the *Sword, God's word, is able to divide asunder the soul and spirit*. That is the only Word that can. So, in that majestic, beautiful, awesome, and wondrous voice, the words defeat every enemy, and at the same time, cut away all the excess growth, all the undergrowth that is hurting His Church.

His Feet Like Burnished Bronze in the Fire.

Those of you that were with us in the Exodus Leviticus and Numbers series will remember that *brass* is that of judgment. Wherever you find brass in the Bible, if it is a symbolical context, it is speaking of judgment. So, the judgment is in His feet. *He walks*. He says that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church*. Wherever He goes, all His enemies are judged before Him.

Remember when they took the Ark in the Old Testament? Every time the Ark moved, Moses was to bring the whole camp to say the words '*Let God Arise and His enemies be scattered*'. When David wrote a Psalm to that effect (is it Psalm 60 or is it 68?) where he begins the Psalm with those words. It was

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written on the occasion of the Ark being taken into Jerusalem. And it begins, *"Let God Arise and His enemies be scattered,"* then He goes on to say, *"let them melt like before Him like wax melts before the flame. Let them be blown away like smoke before the wind."* You get the picture of the enthroned God marching...marching! And, as He comes with feet like burnished brass, His judgment scatters His enemies! They melt like wax and they disperse like the wind! Nothing can stop the onward march of the Church of Jesus Christ. His feet burn like brass.

The Face that Shone Like the Sun

The *face* sums up the whole person. If you were to get a photograph of me, I don't think you would appreciate if it were a picture of my knees! I could say, *well that's me!* You would only appreciate a front view of my face, and if I gave you a front view of my face, even though it is a limited part of my body, you would accept that as a picture of me. No other part of me would do to describe me, but my face would do. When you look at the face of Jesus it describes His whole person. And it says that *it shone like the sun.*

There are references throughout Scripture to this 'shining like the sun.' Remember in Malachi 4, it says that the Sun of Righteousness would rise with healing in His rays, and the result of His touching us with the rays of His Sun is that *you shall and dance like calves in the stall.* Then do you remember in Corinthians Chapter Four, it says that *'the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?'* In the whole person of Jesus, there has burst into the darkness of our world the full Sun of God's love, and God's grace and God's mercy the finality of God's plans.

So now, remember what we said. We are not looking for details. We run through those details to get the whole picture. *What did John see when he turned around in that cave?* It was as if he was looking into the face of the sun. Someone was speaking, and their words, he said, *"I'll never forget them! Such majesty, such beauty, such harmony, so terrible, so wonderful! The words cut me, and at the same time they defend me. I see as He walks nothing can stand before that One. Oh! He is so wise! He is the Wisdom of God! He is the Ultimate Judge of all men!"*

He saw Jesus, and when he saw Him he fell at His feet as one dead.

His Name

There is a great difference between the Jesus who walked among us in the flesh and the Jesus who is Ascended King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

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When John was with the Jesus who walked with us in the flesh, you remember he laid his head on His shoulder and whispered in His ear. Such intimacy!

But, when he saw Jesus as He is *now*, he fell at His feet as one dead: Paralyzed with fear, wonder, and love, but unable to move. I think in the book of Revelation, we are going to catch a glimpse of such a Jesus, and you will lose your taste for many songs that are being sung.

Understand me. I don't want to get off on a hobbyhorse, but in the book of Revelation, we are not dealing with Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth is now *Lord*. I think we must constantly take into consideration Philippians Chapter Two. It is the key to the Christian understanding of Jesus. '*Jesus*' is the Name of His humiliation. When I say "*Jesus*," I am talking about God in coveralls. He is God come among us. '*Jesus*' - that is His human name. Even His enemies called Him Jesus. '*Christ*' is His title. Even demons called Him 'the Christ,' but God '*has highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every Name that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow and confess He is Lord!*' No man can say that 'Jesus is Lord' but by the Holy Spirit, says I Corinthians Chapter 12. What is that *Name* that God gave Him which is *above every Name*? **That Name is LORD!** And, from the moment that Jesus rose from the dead, they always addressed Him as the *Lord* Jesus Christ, *Lord* Jesus Messiah.

When John met this One in the cave, he did not go and put his head on His shoulder. He fell at His feet as one dead! You can put your face on the shoulder of 'Jesus of Nazareth' for He was God completely clothed in flesh among us, but upon ascension, He is man who has fully realized Godhood!

He, who eternally was God, fully realized manhood, and when He had totally accomplished His Father's purpose as man, He was man who totally understood Godhood.

That little baby: I am not awestruck by the little baby! I don't believe anybody fell on their faces before that little baby. I certainly do not believe that the little Jesus running around had a halo anymore than I believe that the adult Jesus had a halo. Only at times, when they saw a miracle did they say 'you are a wonderful person!' But, after He was ascended, *he fell at His feet as dead*, for there he saw the Fullness of Deity expressed in glorified manhood!

Here is the Author of this book: *Jesus, glorified Lord!* Here is the subject of the book: *Jesus glorified Lord unveiled*. He describes Himself: "***I am the First and I am the Last.***"

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That is, *I am before all history!* When you have added up all the 'Firsts' of earth, then put Me next. ***I am the First before all firsts!*** All beginnings are because He is the Unbeginning Beginning! All 'first' things on earth are because He is the Unbegun First!

I AM! ***I AM!*** Not, 'I was,' for *I was* would be a simple statement of time. But, I AM is Unbeginning and Unending! It is the Ever-Present, and so, eternally *I am First*. Therefore, wherever time says 'first', you go back into Unbeginning and He is always First - Unbeginning First! He says, *I am the Last*. Therefore, everything of the future finds its consummation in Him. All began because He is the First, and the only meaning and purpose of all that *is*, is to find its consummation in Jesus Christ.

There is no meaning to history unless Jesus Christ is the key. I say that, not as a raving charismatic! I say that as a student of history, that there is no meaning to the history of the nations of this world, unless you find that focused in Jesus Christ. He is the First; He is the Last. That is the Great Confession of the Church.

I think that it is about time the Church began to confess something about history, instead of merely confessing things in an auditorium like this where we all agree with each other: *Out there on the streets, and out there in the forum of the marketplace*. When we talk about history, and when we talk about what is going on in the world, we do so with the smell of God's Son on our tongue: That people know where we stand, that there is a First in our life, and there is a Last.

In the world today, you have the Eastern philosophy where history is an endless circle of rebirths and reincarnations, around and around and around. Or, you have the existentialists where there is no past there is no future: history is the throbbing now. Then, you have the Christian who says, we began *there* and we are moving *here*, and we are going *there*. We are those who believe that history is an on-going line toward a grand consummation, which is the Final, Ultimate Unveiling of Jesus Who said, ***I am the First and I am the Last***.

He says, *'I am the One who was dead and I am alive'*. This book is the unfolding of history, or shall I say, it is the THE interpretation of history in the light of the First and the Last. It tells me *this* is happening today, and *this is likely to happen* tomorrow. But, it is because of where we are going, because of where we came from. It says the whole thing sums up in a Living Person. *He was dead, but He is alive forevermore!*

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Symbolic Pictures of Christ and His Church

There then follows a symbolic picture of Christ and His Church. You can't talk about the Christ who ascended without, in the same breath, talking about His Church. The Christ who ascended just does not hang there in time! The Christ who ascended has joined Himself to millions of people, so that speaking of the day of His glorious ascension, He said, *'In that day I will be in you and you will be in me'*. In that day, the Day of His Ascension, you cannot speak of Jesus as just being *there*! In that day, He is always joined to His people.

There follows a very beautiful picture of Christ and His Church. As you are taking notes, I would like you to try and draw it, because it would help you to see it. Remember, we are trying to see what John saw.

You have seen, I am sure, pictures or models of the candlestick that was in the Temple. It has seven branches: one, two, three on either side, six, and the center one, seven. And, there are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven lamp stands on the top. All of the arms of the lamp stand join to a central stem, so every one of the six come to the side of the stem and the seventh (the one in the middle) goes into the top of the stem, but all join to the stem. Now, take a look at what John saw! He said, *I saw this One and He stood in the midst of seven candlesticks or lamp stands*. I am proposing to you, because I have tried to get into John's head and see this. This what I saw as I continued to read that. He saw Jesus in that glorious picture that he saw of Him and, He (Jesus) was the central stem, and he saw all seven lamp stands all connecting directly to Jesus. Do you follow me?

In the last verse of this chapter, which is the first Vision, Jesus Himself gives us the interpretation to that Vision. It is almost to sort of get us started. It is going to be a whole book of symbols, but this is the first one and He tells us what it means. He said the seven lamp stands are the seven churches. And so, you have the center, the glorified ascended Jesus and, vitally united to Him are seven churches. Not only is He the Lord of the Church, which we have just seen with His white hair and the robe of the judge of authority! Not only is He Lord of the Church, but He is also the Life of the Church for out from Him is going the life of those churches. Do you get the picture?

What does that say to us? It tells me there is only one candlestick there! It would be absolutely ridiculous to say that there were seven. There is one. Ah yes, *one, yet seven -- seven, yet one!*

And so it is! He was writing to seven distinct local churches. There were *seven* of them, yet they only made up the *one* total expression of the Body of

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Christ in that part of Asia. And so wherever you find a local body of believers, they are 'the light' of that area. They are a distinct entity, yet because they are connected, vitally, mystically to the risen Christ, they form the part -- the one, whole body of Christ, all over the world.

Take it further: I think it very interesting in that symbolic picture that not one church was joined to another church. (Well you might look at me like that!) **Not one church was joined to another church!**

Can I go even further and get myself beheaded before the evening is over? It says that He held in His hand the stars, which were the pastors or elders of the churches. I don't read that the stars were sitting on top of the candlesticks. They were in a very special position, in His right hand of power. But, they were not 'lording it over' every one of the lamp stands. The only Source of Life, the only source of authority to each distinct local church was the Person of the Ascended Jesus Himself. There was no star lording it over them, and certainly the middle lamp stand did not have an 'in' over the sixth one. Each was equal. Each found its own mystical union with Christ, and I make bold to say that denominationalism, as we know it today, is an abomination. The politics, the dictatorships, the *lording it over* the flock of God by a hierarchy, all is an abomination to God. The rise of denominationalism that we see coming like a snake inside of this charismatic renewal is just as abominable.

If we had the time to go through these seven churches one by one, you would see how it was creeping in, how men were trying to dominate the Church of God. And the very first Vision of the Book of Revelation says every church with all its members have a vital union -- *not* to one leader, nor to any other church or to any other hierarchy outside of that local church! But, each member is directly linked together to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything less than that misses the point of this Vision! ***It is to Him and to Him alone.***

If anybody outside of the local church away in Timbuktu is trying to tell a local body of believers what to do, they have no right to do that. If they are trying to tell you that next Sunday is 'Baby Day' and you have got to preach on babies, tell them -- Go Fly! You get your message directly from the Lord Jesus Christ, not from a headquarters. If someone is telling you that you can't think and that you can't read the Bible until they tell you what it means, then they are doing what I Peter 5 deliberately says they must not do which is *dictating* and *lording it over* the flock of God. Our union is mystical, but it is directly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Notice that every church is described as a 'light-bearer.' Notice this, when John as a representative of all of the believers saw Jesus, he saw Him *shining as the Sun*. Right? When he saw the Church, he saw it as a candle or flickering light in the darkness. Sun is for the daytime. Candles or lamp stands are for nighttime. When you and I look at Jesus Christ, we see Him as the Lord Jesus Christ, ascended in all the Sun of Righteousness risen. The Church only sees Him like that! As Ephesians says, '*You are the children of the day*'. We are not waiting for the dawning. We are *children of the day!* The Sun has already risen in the face of Jesus Christ, but as far as the world is concerned, they have not seen that, nor will they see that until they come into the Church. The only light they see is the Church, so the Church is depicted as a light in the darkness.

Do you remember the words of Jesus Matt 5: 13-16, when He spoke to the Christians, those disciples? He said, '*You are the light of the world*.' The Greek there is intense, emphatic, and so could rightly be translated 'you and you alone are the light of the world.' That is an awesome, solemn thought! '*You and you alone are the light of the world*.' They do not see the ascended Christ.

Isn't it a wonder to you that Jesus never showed Himself to Pilate? Quite frankly, and I speak facetiously but I'm trying to say something, if I had been Jesus, after I was risen from the dead, I would have got the greatest kick out of appearing in Caiaphas' bedroom! Why didn't He? In my study of the Bible, one of the questions I always ask is, *why doesn't it do or say what I thought it would say?* Really, it would have completely finalized the whole issue. If Jesus had... I mean, why appear to Peter and John? They are going to believe it anyway! Let us start where the action is! Let's go to Caiaphas, Annas, and Pilate, convince them, at least only to show them that they are wrong, the rest is easy. But, not one unbeliever saw Jesus after He was risen. Only the believers saw Jesus after He was risen.

The unbelievers only saw the Church in action. All the Church could ever say is that '*By what Name do you do these things?*' All the Church could say is, '*that you have filled all of Jerusalem with your doctrine*'. All they could say was, '*We command you never again to speak about the resurrection or about this man named Jesus*'. The Church could smile. They had seen Him.

The world was threatened because there was a light flickering rather strongly in Jerusalem that gave them the distinct impression that that Church had seen more than they had seen. The world will never see the beatific vision of Jesus. **That** you and I have seen, our spirits know that we know that we know, we walk out into the world and we act in such a fashion, we speak in

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such a way, there follows us certain signs of such a fashion, that they get the distinct impression that we have seen the Sun, and the result is that we are a 'candle in the darkness.' Do you have it? I believe that is what it is saying.

Of course once you are a light in the darkness, the result is darkness hates light. If you spend two days in intense darkness and someone puts all the neon lights on, it is going to hurt your eyes. And, for the people who have been in the darkness, and the light comes on, suddenly that hurts. *Turn the lights out!* I was in some very deep caverns, the name of which escapes me, and part of the tour of those caverns is that, when you are underground very deeply where there is not one ray of light, they extinguish all the lights. I think for the first time I knew what darkness really was. You could not see your hand whether it was in the front of your face. Then, they asked one person to strike a match, and I didn't know one little match could give so much light. It seemed all the lights came on when one little match was lit in that deep dark cavern.

The one person out there in the world seems like all the light of God has been turned on, and there rises, from within the darkness, a hatred of the Church. For, you see, the fact that we are united to Christ is that we are shining in the world, and therefore the world's hatred of Christ is taken out on us. That is why Jesus said, *"you are going to be persecuted for my sake, you are going to be thrown out of the synagogue, and you will be put to death for my sake."* Because, if it was not for Him, we would not be touched, so that is why Jesus accused Saul of Tarsus, *'Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?'* He wasn't really touching the Christians; he was touching the Christ he saw in the Christians.

That is why He speaks to the seven Churches. This Vision is the peculiar message of Jesus to His Church. The rest of the book will deal with the world too. This, the first introductory Vision, is Jesus talking to a Church that has been beaten up, losing their jobs, thrown out of their homes and living in caves, dying for the sake of the Gospel, banished to islands! You are hurt, you are beaten, and you are persecuted. Of course! You are lamp stands in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't like you. But, understand the honor, understand the dignity that is yours, for they would never touch you except you that you are vitally, you are mystically united to the central stem of the candlestick who is none other than the Sun shining in all His brightness.

So here, you begin to see the picture. Here are the seven churches, seven real churches. And, from the outside, there is coming at them a very real devil with very real persecution through very real governments. Within them, there is the working of the world, and the flesh, and here the central

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stem of the candlestick is reaching into this one and saying, *'Ephesus, I have something to say to you'. 'Pergamos, I have something to say to you'. 'Now look Philadelphia, don't worry, I know they are trying to shut doors but I have got doors that are open and no man can close them.'*

The Message to the Seven Churches

And so, He goes from church to church. He, Who is their central stem, their life, their Lord. He says, *'there is Satan coming at you, don't worry.'* *'Now watch it you, because if you are to carry on as you are I am going to take you away.'* And so it unfolds. It is the message of the Stem of the candlestick to all the lamp stands.

He is telling them it only *looks as if* the world is triumphant. It isn't really so. Things are not what they seem to be. All that He asks of the Church is that they maintain that mystical vital union to Him, and as long as that is in correct order, nothing from the outside can ever move them. It is as if He is saying:

"I am going to give you a Vision, and show you that Satan is already been defeated! So you can relax about that, don't get all uptight about the Devil. He is already defeated. It's all over. I know it doesn't seem like that, but I am going to give you a great big long movie to show you it's over, it's done, so don't worry about him. I know the world is ferocious, and the world is breathing fire all over you now, poor little candlestick, and you just feel that you are melting away. Now, don't worry! The world is already defeated. When I rose from the dead I said, 'Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world.' It's all right! It's all done! Don't worry about the world. I will handle that. I have swords coming out of my mouth, and I have burnished feet. Don't worry about that! We will handle the world. What I am really afraid of, is that woman on the beast - the world, the seductress, from the inside. Now church, you had better take account of that. Watch and pray. Watch that that mystical vital union is kept fresh and real at all times."

That is the message of the seven churches.

I personally do not see anything symbolic in these seven churches, for they were seven real churches to which this Book was sent. He is telling them, *now you had better shape up! Ephesus I want you to remember, you have lost your first love. You are becoming very formalistic, very legalistic. In fact, you have fallen into ceremony, and you tend to be pharisaical.*

It is amazing isn't it? Acts Chapter 19 -- They so loved the Risen Lord, and so lived in a fervor of love towards Him! Do you remember they burned all their magic books and paraded through the streets? It was there that the

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great riots of the goddess Diana occurred, it was a furor of revival. When was that? About A.D. 55 – Forty years before this. Forty years! *Ephesus you have lost your first love. Repent, or you are going to have your church removed.* Forty years! They had not become apostate; they were still in their first charismatic renewal.

Really, forty years, not very long, and it was at that same time, while Paul was preaching every day in Ephesus that all these other churches were founded. They all came out of that, so all of them are in the same condition.

1. *Smyrna*—they were under heavy persecution because they would not join the unions, and so it is a word of comfort.
2. *Pergamum*—they had yielded on the inside to the world system and the flesh as had Thyatira.
3. *Sardis*—was being attacked on the inside by false religions.
4. *Philadelphia*—was quivering under heavy persecution.
5. *Laodicea*—had its bingo parties and rolled in its affluence and said, “we are the best and the biggest, you should have seen our Sunday school roll last week. And to those, Jesus said, “I have excommunicated the entire church, there is no more church in Laodicea. However, if anybody should hear my voice, above all your committee meetings in there, I am on the outside of the church. I am standing on the outside of the door knocking, having excommunicated all of you, and if you want to start a new church, come and you and I will sit down and sup together.”

It is quite a list of seven real churches. Every one of them that existed in that day in the conditions that are spoken of that time can be found among us today. I do not believe it is true that you can find seven ages of the church history. I believe that at any time in church history you can find an *Ephesus*; at any time in church history you can find a *Laodicea*. I believe it is a slander upon 20th Century Christianity to say that we are living in the Laodicea age. I object. There are some who are still living in Acts 19. It is an absolute slander on the church to say that we are living in the Laodicean Age. I can take you to plenty of Laodicean churches, however, I can take you to some Philadelphia churches. They are all here today, and I don't have time to measure your heads, so if the cap fits, *wear it*.

God is speaking to the Church. Remember the blessing is for all ages. Wherever I find myself, the Book speaks to me, and right in this room, there are people and you come from this body and that body, and you know that you, as an individual as well as along with other Christians, you are mystically

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vitality united to Jesus Christ. It is a great sense of relief that God did not give us a hierarchy to lord it over us. It is also an awesome responsibility that He is the Lord who lords it over us, and His words are a sword, and He comes and finds us where we are. He warns us that outside influences have all been dealt with! Don't worry; you are going to get enough visions to make you laugh for joy.

"We had better deal with you first," said He, *"because that is where you have something to do."* And so, He gives us those seven letters, and, at the end of the letters, He said those words: *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."* That doesn't mean to say *if you have something hanging on the side of your head.* Those ears are physical ears; they pick up physical vibrations. Not everybody has 'inside' ears, though. That is why He says, *"If you have ears."*

Jesus said *'My sheep hear my voice.'* Only sheep in the Shepherd's flock have spiritual ears. That was something God gave you when you were born again -- you grew ears on the inside. And, the mark of a born again person is the ability to hear what the Spirit is saying. *If you've got ears,* said Jesus, *use them.* See, with those inside ears, you hear things you don't want to hear, and as with all listening, you have to choose to hear it, even as you are choosing to hear what I am saying to you now. My words are falling on your ears, but it's up to you whether or not you choose to 'hear' it. And, with 'inside' ears, we hear the voice of God.

I would not like to have been the pastor of the Laodicean church. Can you imagine that wretched document coming for a Sunday morning service? I've got to read it to them! *'Unto the Church, which is at Laodicea: Fasten your seat belts, this is for you, and he who has ears to hear, let him hear.'* Only a percentage of that Laodicean congregation would choose to hear what the ascended Christ sent to them. So, down through church history, only a percentage have chosen to hear what the Spirit says. The awful warning to those churches was that, unless they repented, He would remove their candlestick from its place. If ever you tour the East, visit Ephesus. The ruins are still there, but you will not find a strong Christian church. In fact, over the centuries, it has been removed. Go to Thyatira. Go to Pergamum. The ruins are still there, but the candlestick was removed, for where you have a company of people who are not vitally *now* united to Jesus Christ you do not have a church. It's gone.

Our land is a garbage dump of buildings, and on all the garbage cans it has got written 'Church.' But, a can with the sign *'runner beans'* on the outside, if it is on a garbage dump, it does not mean to say there are any runner beans left inside. The can meant that, once upon a time, there were beans inside. But

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the existence of the can does not prove the beans are still there! Do you follow what I am saying?

Up and down the streets of this very town in which we are standing, there are a lot of cans, and the very existence of those cans and the words "Church" written on the outside tells me that, 'once upon a time,' Christians were in there. The place would not have been built if that were not so. That does not speak in any way to the present moment! The candlestick many times has been removed. A church is constituted by a company of people who are vitally, mystically, through the new birth is joined to Christ, and anything less than that is not a church.

So, solemnly, the risen Lord came to each one of the candlesticks, and though in the condition they were, yet they still had *spiritual ears*. They are going fast, the avalanche has begun, but they still have ears, and He said, *he who has ears to hear, let him hear*, or the awful result will be that there will be no candlestick here soon.

To some in this evening's two lectures, we are presented with a symbol. But I think it speaks very well for itself. It is a solemn symbol; it is a glorious one, even as the central figure of that Vision is solemn, awful, glorious, and beautiful. It is the only time in the book, the only Vision in the book that makes the Christian cringe. All the others make you dance for joy. But this one makes you cringe. This is the first Vision. Because, without this one being heeded, the others mean nothing. The beast is overcome! The world is already defeated! Satan is already done! But so *what* if the Church is not vitally linked to the ascended Lord? So what?

And so I finish with the words,

'He who has ears to hear, let him hear'.

Amen.

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THE LAMB ON THE THRONE

Revelation Chapter 4:

After these things I looked, and saw and behold! A door standing open in Heaven, and the first voice which I had heard like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me said, 'Come up here and I will show you what must take place after these things.' Immediately I was in the Spirit and behold a throne was standing in Heaven, and One sitting on the throne and He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and as sardias in appearance, there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance, and around the throne were twenty-four thrones and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting clothed in white garments and golden crowns on their head and from the throne proceed flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder and there were seven lamps of fire proceeding from the fire which are the seven spirits of God and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass like crystal and in the center and around the throne four living creatures full eyes in front and behind. The first creature was like a lion and the second creature like a calf and the third creature had a face like that of a man and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings are full of eyes around and within, day and night they do not cease to say 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty Who was and who is and who is to come'. And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne and to Him who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne and will worship Him who lives for ever and ever and will cast their crowns before the throne saying "Worthy art Thou our Lord and our God to receive glory and honor and power for Thou didst create all things and because of Thy will they existed and were created.

We will stop there for the moment, though we shall proceed to Chapter Five in a while.

I want us to understand the great importance of these two chapters, Chapters Four and Five of Revelation. We shall, tonight, in these lectures be considering this second Vision. You may recollect that last week we dealt with the first Vision of the Book of Revelation, which was the Vision of Christ in the middle of the churches. Now, we deal with the second Vision, and in a very real sense, this is the pivotal Vision of the whole book. If I can understand Chapters Four and Five, basically, I have got the book. It is in those two chapters, Chapters Four and Five that, if you don't understand certain

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elements there, you will find them cropping up all the way through, and there will be a problem there. So, we shall deal with this first Vision. First of all, in the First Vision, we shall deal with Chapters Four and Five which are, I say again, the pivotal two chapters of the book, and then we shall move on to what is called the 'six seals, the 144,000' in our second hour. That is still part of the First Vision, but we will deal with it in two hours.

I wonder what you saw when we read that chapter? To understand the Bible, you should be always listening for *echoes*, for the Bible is one book and not a lot of books all stuck together. It is one book, and they flow together. Certainly, in the book of Revelation, as we saw last week, the key to the book is everywhere else in the Bible. If I want to know the code of this book, then I look in other parts of the Bible for it.

I wonder if you heard anything as we read Chapter Four? You remember when Moses went up on the Mount (Exodus 19), and he received the Law of God, he also received a pattern for the Tabernacle. Do you remember that? Those of you, who were with us in our Exodus class, will full well remember that.

He goes on to the Mountain and he received a pattern, and notice it stated that he was to make the Tabernacle according to the pattern that he saw on the Mount. So, get the picture. Moses goes up a Mountain. He goes into the presence of God. In fact, he was summoned into that presence by a trumpet sound, if you recollect Chapter 19. As he goes into that living presence of God on the Mountain, he saw something. God sent him back down the Mountain to make a model of what he saw. We call that model the *Tabernacle*. Now, do you recollect what the Tabernacle looked like?

We will start where God starts, which is at the center of the Tabernacle. If we were to make this room into a Tabernacle, and, if we put this part where I am standing the center, then here would be the Ark of the Covenant. Remember that box that was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Inside of it there was placed the tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments, the Law of God. That box, the Ark of the Covenant, on its top a slab of solid gold, and it was called the Throne of the God of Israel. At the end of that slab of solid gold, there came two strange creatures that were called *cherubim*, and there in the center on top of the gold slab, between the cherubim there was an uncreated light. It was the Presence of God. It was the true King of Israel.

Immediately in front of that Ark, there was a very thick curtain, and on that curtain there were inscribed pictures of the *cherubim*. So, the cherubim were around the throne of God, and they were on the curtain in front. That

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curtain was a separating curtain. You could not get to that presence of God. You were separated from it by the veil.

Immediately in front of the veil, and therefore almost *up against* the Ark (right in front of the Ark), but separated, there was the golden altar. And the golden altar was where the Israelite in the person of His priest would worship God. Ascending at the golden altar, there was an everlasting song of praise and worship right in front of the Throne. Are you getting the picture?

And over here, to my right, there would be a seven-branched candlestick. Do you remember? We talked about that last week and that was always burning there in the Holy Place. Just on the right hand side, as you are looking from the Ark, it would be on the right hand side of the Golden Altar.

On the left-hand side, there was a table and there were twelve loaves on the table, standing each one of them for one of the tribes of Israel. So, one loaf for each tribe of Israel, and there was also a goblet of wine which spoke of the joy of the Lord that they had.

Now you move outside and you come way out to the courtyard to a laver, something full of water with which to wash the sacrifices and make them clean.

Then, right at the door over there, straight opposite me and at the end, would be the altar of brass where they killed the animals, where the blood was shed.

Okay. Do you have that picture now? You have?

One time in the year, the time was called the Day of Atonement, the animal was slain at that altar, and its blood was brought right in and it was sprinkled onto the top of the mercy seat -- that golden slab. Because the blood was sprinkled, the Israelites may come into God's presence, and he stood, the Israelite, any Israelite, right in front of the Throne of his God and King, because (a) an animal had died instead of him and its blood was sprinkled, and (b) that blood was brought there by a representative, the High Priest. In his representative, in his substitute, he could stand before the Throne.

Now Moses saw all of that on the Mountain, and when he saw it, he had to come back and he made the scale model.

Now read through, at your leisure at one sitting, Chapters Four and Five of Revelation, and you will see, I believe, immediately that what John saw is what Moses saw -- only John now sees it taken to its total fulfillment. Moses saw it as a *forecast*. He saw it in picture form; he saw it as it would be. But now Christ has come! It is no longer in picture; it is in reality.

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You will notice, even in John's coming into this, there are many parallels to the book of Exodus:

- You notice there, to begin with, that there is a *door* open in Heaven. There is no Mount Sinai, but there is a door open in Heaven.
- There is a *trumpet voice* calls him through the door into the invisible half of the Universe, and there to see the way the Universe really is. You will never understand the Universe from the physical end. You have to go into the invisible, immaterial, spiritual side of the Universe to understand how the physical side works. What is happening around us... all that happens around us are only *effects*. The *cause* of those effects is in the invisible half of the Universe, and John was called out of the physical half of the Universe to see the world of causes. In the invisible half of the Universe, he must now see what causes the world history to be what it is. What is the *cause* behind what is going on? That is what the whole Book of Revelation is about. Understanding the causes behind this physical world, and what he saw was the Tabernacle in cosmic size. In fact, he realized that in one sense, the entire Universe is a cosmic Tabernacle. He came into the invisible half of the Universe, into the Holy of Holies. He stepped into the Ultimate Holy of Holies.
- The first thing he saw, he said, '*behold a throne*'. He came into the Holy of Holies and he saw the Ark of the Covenant, only he sees it in cosmic proportion, and he says, '*Behold the throne of God*.'
- But then, he said, right in front of that Throne, there was something like a *sea of glass*. You can't readily get to that throne; there is a great sea of glass separating you. That is the veil that separates man from the throne.
- He says that right around the throne there were these strange living creatures, and we shall see in a moment that they are the *cherubim* and so the real cherubim now, not embroidered on a curtain or made out of solid gold, but the real cherubim. John sees them surrounding the Throne of God.
- He saw *twenty-four elders* on thrones. That answers, as we trust we shall prove in a moment, to the twelve loaves of showbread. The twelve loaves stood for the tribes of Israel, and the twenty-four stands for a far higher Israel, and a far greater Israel.
- He said, "*I saw seven spirits ever burning before the throne*." That was the seven-branched candlestick, a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

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Do you follow what we are saying here?

He walked into this and realized, that what was a little tiny model on earth, was the reality. That is the way the whole Universe works. Of course, when we come to the Lamb as it had been slain, there is no priest, for the priest is the Lamb. The Lamb has shed his own blood. And now alive, He brings His own blood, and He comes right up to the Throne with his own blood, and in Him, the whole Church is there. Then, beyond that, there was the whole world, and so you get the picture that at the very Center of the Universe, there is the Throne; there is the Spirit of God; there is the reality -- the Church is what it is all about. Beyond that, there is the world of mankind.

Okay, do you 'feel' this now? Do you get the feeling of it?

Let us take a look at some of these things, then:

The Throne

First of all the Throne. It's a tremendous feeling of peace to know that this is the very first thing John saw in the center of the Universe. He says, '*Behold a throne*'.

Remember what we said last week of how the Church was being persecuted bitterly. It seemed, in fact, from some viewpoints, that the whole thing was a failure. If you were a Christian, you were pretty well signing up for some kind of martyrdom, you certainly had to have a martyr's mind. They would not have gotten very far in those days with '*If you want joy, peace, health and healing come to Jesus*. It was rather '*If you want to be thrown to the lions, lose your job lose your house, come to Jesus*.'

It was a very different approach; it was the real approach. And, under that sense of persecution, you could lose any feeling that God is in control. And, the very first thing that John saw is he says, '*Behold a throne!*' There is someone in control! At the very center of the Universe, God has it all under control. So Domitian, the Emperor, you remember him and spouting out 'I am Lord and God' and everyone must worship. No, no, no, says John. "*Behold a Throne far above the throne of Domitian, far above all the wars, far above all that Rome will ever do, there is a Throne and God is ultimately in control.*"

In these two chapters that we are looking at tonight, the *throne* is mentioned seventeen times. That kind of gives me the impression God wants me to understand that He is in control. *Sovereign God*. He rules His Universe. God did not make a world and then wind it up and say, '*Now I will meet you in glory, perhaps*.'

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The Jasper Stone

God is now active in His Universe; He is now the present governing King. It says the One 'on the Throne' (who sat on the throne), is like a Jasper stone and Sardias in appearance, and there is a rainbow coming out of the Throne with lightening coming out from it.

What does all that mean? A jasper stone is crystal, crystal clear, shining radiant crystal. John says when I looked at that throne it was just as if that whole throne was filled with flashing, radiant, blazing crystal.

That was the simple presence of God.

He who says He is Light, the God who had appeared above the Mercy Seat in the Old Testament, the Shekinah Glory. God in utter pure crystal. It speaks of the absolute holiness of God.

Sardias is a fiery red, an angry red. John said, "When I looked, it was the radiance of crystal, but also mixed in with that," he said, "when you look at it one way it was crystal, when I looked at it another way it was a Sardias, a fiery red." He, Who is utter Holiness, utter Purity, He must, of necessity at the same time be Anger against Sin. Do you follow what we're saying now?

The Rainbow

The rainbow - that gives me great hope, because if I were to look at the utter holiness of He Who is Crystal, and to take in the fiery angry red of Sardias, I would say there is no hope for me. But, around the throne there is a rainbow.

Do you remember the first time the rainbow was mentioned, when Noah stepped out of the Ark and, of course, for the very first time in his life he saw a raindrop? It had never before rained in his lifetime. And now, the sun was shining because now there was no cloud covering and the sun shone on the raindrops and then a rainbow appeared. It was the first time a human eye had first seen a rainbow. God said, "*That bow in the sky is the sign of my Covenant.*"

The rainbow... From that day, even in other nations, for remember every nation on earth is descended from Noah. So, every nation has that idea in the back of its head. You come across it in many histories of many nations. The rainbow speaks of the Covenant God who will keep His Word. We are speaking of that word *loving-kindness* where God is bound to act in love and kindness. He has sealed it with a covenant, and around the throne, the throne that I would shy away from in horror. But, as I come to the throne, I see the

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Covenant seal. God welcomes man. I can approach the One who is Holy, because He is the God of Mercy, and the God who has made covenant with man, and bound Himself to man, even though man does not deserve it.

The Lightning

The lightning? Let, the echoes keep coming... We are still on Mount Sinai. Do you remember that one of the characteristics of Mount Sinai when the Ten Commandments were given was lightning? Do you recollect that? It says that the whole mountain thundered and rocked and quaked and there was lightning. The giving of the Law was a horrific, fearsome thing. It told man how wrong he was, and the lightning and thunder was an apt backdrop for such a time.

And now, John sees the Ultimate Throne, the real throne of which that one was just a shadow. They kept the Ten Commandments inside the Ark. Do you remember that? Now he sees the Ultimate Throne and the flashings of lightning. They him that the God who gave the Law is Himself the Law-Giver, and He Who sits on the Throne demands the absolute keeping of the law. Any infraction of it is sin. He is the One who is fiery red Sardias.

Understanding the awesome Picture

John sees this awesome picture.

No, remember how we are looking at Revelation. We are seeing Revelation as a picture. I am not overly concerned with the details; I want to get the impression.

What was it John saw?

John saw the *awful* Holiness of God. I use that word carefully. God is awe-inspiring. There is a very real sense in which to say God is frightening. In fact, if you have never really been frightened at the thought of God, I wonder whether you have ever really looked at God.

When I see God in His Holiness, the law of God that demands rightly and beautifully, there can be no infraction of it. When I see that, and when I see that God, because He is Holy, must punish sin, that he does not punish sin by a choice that He makes but because of Who He is -- the necessity of His Nature. He must punish sin! That is awe-inspiring. God is the awful Other.

And then, there is a rainbow thrown around the Throne, and John realizes there is hope. There is hope! *There is a rainbow of covenant.*

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The *sea of glass* was the reminder that, because God is Holy, He is separated – He is *Other* than me. He isn't a creature. He is the Creator, and every time I come to God I realize that He is *Other* than myself. I began; He is the Unbeginning One Who *began* me. Just to think about that I realize the great distance. God doesn't need me! God was self-sufficient before anything was made. God is totally self-sufficient in Himself. *I am just a heap of needs*. I need God. I need air. I need water. I need you. So, I come, the 'needy one,' to One the Who has no needs, the one who is totally dependent to the One Who is totally Independent. There is a *sea of glass* between us, a Sea of Holiness, a Sea of *Other*.

Do you see what I mean now?

The Twenty-four Elders

Who are the twenty-four elders that are sitting in the presence of such an awesome Being?

We come to numbers. I don't mean the book of Numbers. Numbers in Revelation have nothing to do with arithmetic. Numbers in the Book of Revelation *give ideas, not figures*. If you can get that, you won't go running around with a little calculator trying to work out when the Tribulation will be here. Numbers, in the Book of Revelation, are describing *ideas, not figures and facts*. It's the study of numerology, and I don't go much into this, you can get very 'wild' on this and get some whacky ideas, and I am not going into it in great detail. But just where we come to numbers that need explanation, we shall stop and do so.

Twenty-four elders, what does it mean? You come in the figure, *twenty-four*, to an idea which is basic to the whole Bible. That idea is the number *twelve*. If you are a Bible reader, you will have picked that up. (I don't think you even need to be a Bible student.)

You will recollect that there were *twelve* Tribes of Israel and *twelve* Apostles. There is a basic idea: Old Testament – New Testament. The number, *twelve* in the Bible is an **idea**.

Now, what does that idea tell me? Well, how do you make *twelve*? *Twelve* is made out of two numbers that you will again come across very often: The numbers are *three* and *four*.

- $3 \times 4 = 12$. Notice also, (and don't let me confuse you here, we shall be coming to it), that $3 + 4 = 7$. The number, 7, is another number that is basic to the Bible.

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- 3 and 4. This time it is multiplied. $3 \times 4 = 12$.
- *What does '3' stand for?* Three (3) -- The Trinity, God in His Tri-Unity.
- *What does '4' stand for?* Four (4) -- The totality of the world, the 4 corners of the Universe
- God in Trinity (3) working in the totality of the world (4).
- $3 \times 4 =$ God working His purpose out in the world

Three times Four Equals Twelve. When God was working the totality of His purpose in the Old Testament, you have the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel in the Old Testament was the unfolding of God's purposes to man. In the New Testament, when God was working out His purposes, He did it through His twelve (12) Apostles. So the Bible often speaks in the New Testament that the Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles -- the twelve (12) Apostles. All that we know of Christianity came through the teaching of the twelve Apostles.

- *Twelve* = God at work in the World: That idea is often signified by the number 12.
- You have here 24 (Elders).
- $12 + 12 = 24$. The 12 of the Old Testament, and the 12 of the New Testament. *The 24 Elders are a symbol of the Church of all ages* -- The church of the Old Testament and the Church of the New Testament. John says they are sitting in the presence of the God who, if seen without His covenant mercy, is an awful, frightening God.

Do you get that picture?

The Twenty-Four Elders. It says that these Elders are clothed in white garments. White, throughout the book of Revelation, consistently speaks of righteousness. In fact, in Revelation 19:8, it does speak specifically of fine linen (which is not exactly what it says here), but it actually states that that is "*the righteousness of the Saints.*"

Jesus is depicted as wearing a white robe, and wherever Jesus is seen in this book, the description of His clothes is *white*.

Therefore, these Elders, the picture that represented the entire Church (the Old and New Testament), can sit in the presence of a Holy God. The Law says that they must die, but they live! They sit in His presence; the covenant mercy of God has given them His righteousness. They are seated in the presence of God in His righteousness.

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Notice that they are seated. Now, I know we read that they fell down and worshipped, but notice that basically, their position is that of being seated. That is quite a statement when you think about it. In the presence of such a God, one would expect them to be groveling in the dust (if there is any dust in Heaven)! But, they are not. They are seated! Seated!

Doesn't that give you a few echoes? In Ephesians, Chapter 1, Verse 3 where it says *we are seated in the Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

That we, through the covenant mercy of God, have not only been clothed in God's righteousness, but we have actually been brought into Heaven itself! We now experience life in a Heavenly dimension.

You know how much I am opposed to those insane, wretched choruses that talk about one day we are going to make it to Heaven. Out of the cotton patches of Louisiana, we are going to make it to Heaven one of these days, and put on our shoes and walk all over God's Heaven. That is a ridiculous theology that was born in slave days, unfortunately believed by so many.

We are **now** seated in the Heavenly places. That is what the Bible teaches. Heaven in the future? Yes, I do believe in that, of course I do! But, that is not the message of the Bible. That is a P.S. of the Bible. The message of the Bible is that **now**, at this present time, the picture of Revelation tells me that you are *now seated in the Heavenly places!* And, you are seated, *seated!* You are not sprawled out on your face – you are seated. That means that you have some rights with that God. To be seated in that Presence, you must be somebody. And I remember in Romans 8.17 it says, “*we are heirs of God, joint-heirs (co-heirs) with Jesus Christ.*”

Do you understand when I say that you are part of the 24 Elders? Would you understand me if I said that? You are part of the 24 elders. The 24, you see is not really 24! It is a picture, a symbol of you, plus all the other Christians in the world, plus all the other Christians that have ever been, plus all the believing Israelites that ever were.

It is the Church of all ages! You are part of the '24', and so, you and I on the inside of us in our spirits, we are seated in the Heavens. We have the righteousness of God because of Jesus Christ and His covenant mercy, and we are seated because we are heirs of God, joint-heirs, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ.

It says we have *crowns on our heads*, and we are going to come to that often during this Book (of Revelation). The true rulers of the Universe under the only Ruler of the Universe, is the Church. In fact this Book is going to tell

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me that the whole of history, all of time can only be explained in terms of the Church. We are the final and true rulers of this world, which is a statement, which would take this entire course to fully understand.

But, you have got that pictured. Do you really understand when I say we think in pictures? You do you not have a problem when I say we are not really thinking of 24 elders? It is only a picture! It is the reality we are searching for underneath the picture.

Very well, it says there were these strange *living creatures that surrounded the throne*. I don't want to get into great detail with them. I know that they are Cherubim because of Ezekiel Chapter 1 through Chapter 10. You can read it (*I won't say, 'at your leisure,' you'd better be wide awake when you read it*).

It has those weird and strange visions that are another Bible study all by themselves. There we find the identification of these strange creatures, and they are the Cherubim. The little we know about the Cherubim, tells us that they are the highest order of angel, that they are the ones who bring to pass among men the purposes of God.

You remember, way back in the book of Genesis when man fell, and he was expelled from the Garden of Eden, and it says that the Cherubim with the sword that was always turning, kept or guarded the way to the Tree of Life. Do you remember that? That tells me right there what the Cherubim are doing. They were 'keeping' the way. It was not so much to keep Adam out from the Tree of Life, the idea more is that they are guaranteeing that the way to the Tree of will be kept so that one day, man will be able to go the Tree of Life. Do you follow that?

That is why they were on the veil of the Tabernacle. They were the guarantee. God says that among men, the Cherubim were working out His purposes and bringing His Will to pass. The Cherubim were the living guarantee that, one day, man would be able to go back inside the veil and right there at the throne of God partake of the Tree of Life. It is very fitting that, at this finale Vision that explains history, we are surrounded by Cherubim. They have guaranteed that man can enter the presence of God. When nations have risen and fallen, according to the Scripture, behind the physical rising and falling of nations, the angelic beings have been at work, bringing to pass God's will on earth, guaranteeing that, one day, man will be able again to enter to the Tree of Life.

That is Chapter 4, and it is the prelude to Chapter 5.

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Revelation Chapter 5

Having given us the description of what one may call the Throne Room of Heaven, you are then in Chapter 5. John is going to be specific. He has seen the whole, and now he says, 'suddenly' he sees something. He says:

I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

A book, of course, in those days was not a book as we have with a binding. A book was a scroll, and so one could write on the inside of the scroll, and one could write on the outside too. He says that it was written on the inside and on the back, which means that it was absolutely jammed full! There was so much to say that there is writing not only on the inside but on the back too. Here is a book that is overflowing with words. However, it was sealed with seven seals. If you had a scroll, and you put seven pieces of wax, it seals it. You cannot open it, and it is sealed.

Now, he said,

I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice, saying [notice the words, exactly!] 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break the seal?

That is a rather strange word to use. One had to be 'worthy' to open the Book, so whoever could open that book had to be of a certain character. Do you follow me?

It didn't say, '*who is strong enough to open it?*' It doesn't say, '*who is knowledgeable enough to open it?*' But it says, "*Who is worthy?*" The person who opens that book must be a worthy person. It says, "*no one in Heaven, or on earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or look into it.*"

I began to weep greatly. That is of significance, too. If you read through this Book of Revelation, John does not 'weep' anywhere else in the Book. He saw some pretty rough things. There are beasts going to rise out of these pages that are worse than your worst nightmares, and John just looked at it and wrote down what he saw. But when he saw this... Now remember, he is seeing a cosmic opera. It is a thing that is happening in front of him, and when he saw that that little book -- in the movie that was going on in front of him -- that little book could not be opened, there was no one worthy, in Heaven, earth, or under the earth to do it, and at that point he is so overwhelmed that he wept! And, he not only wept, but it says wept *greatly*. So, here is a man who is so involved in what he is seeing, and that little book is so *important* that he weeps greatly.

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The interpretations of what that 'little book' means are multitude. So, I say this Vision is pivotal to the rest of the book. Whatever is in that book is the rest of the Revelation. So, if we are wrong *here*, we are wrong *everywhere!*

Of course, it has been suggested by a great number of modern expositors that that 'little book' contained the history of the seven-year tribulation, which is yet future to us now. Quite frankly, if I was living in A.D. 95, and there was a 'little book' that told about a tribulation that would not occur for at least another 2000 years, I don't think I would weep greatly! I think I would say, "*Ho-Hum! Pass the potato chips.*" I could not care less.

That to me, '*weep greatly*', is of enormous importance! He wept greatly. Whatever was in that book was vital to him right there and then to those that he oversaw on the mainland, in fact, for ages of Christians to come. That book was of enormous importance.

Notice it says it was in the hand of Him who sat on the Throne -- the *right hand* of Him who sat on the Throne. That is the right hand of power. So this book, and remember it is all symbols, was in the hand of the sovereign God of power. Whatever this book is, it is connected with God's sovereignty, His ruling of His world, and it is connected with His power wherewith He rules His world.

And, we are back again to '*no one was worthy.*'

I suggest to you (putting all that together) that in that book were the Decrees of God. The Will of God, if you will. Here was all that God purposed for mankind. Here were all the joy-filled plans that God had for man. And, at the Garden of Eden when man fell, man put on that 'seven seals' with his sin. Man had sealed up the purposes of God for himself. Man could not enjoy God's purposes.

Man was made to sit in the heavenly places. Man was made to walk with God, but man has effectively sealed up that Will and Purpose so that he can no longer enjoy God! Sin did a job! Because of the way God made the Universe and man, man must open it. That is the point.

Our other studies in Genesis have underlined this.

Man was made lord of this planet. Man was the only one on the planet that was unprogrammed. Man had a choice, and whatever man did, God said, *that is the way it will be on earth*. Man was made an under-god, a vice-lord. God said He (God) would do nothing on earth directly. He would only do it through man. Therefore, the decisions and choices of man on earth were final. Whatever man said on earth: *that is the way it is*.

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And man handed the planet over to the Devil. Man sold himself a slave to sin and Satan. If ever man is going to be free, if man is ever going to open that 'roll of God's purposes' and begin to see what God willed for him, it must be man who does it. Do you follow my reasoning there?

John was weeping greatly, for whoever can take away sin and its bondage, that person himself must be without sin. And, whoever takes away sin and bondage of sin from the human race must himself be at least equal in worth to the entire race.

Search Heaven! Notice he says, ...*there was no one in Heaven.*

Of course not! They are all spirits in Heaven. We are looking for a man! A man has got to be worthy to open the book and release to men the Purpose and the Will of God. But there is nobody in Heaven. Angels are no use, they have never sinned, but they are no use. We are looking for a man! I say this very carefully and as reverently as I know how, but God is no use for He is not a man either.

So then, he looked on earth and he says there is nobody there either, because, although we have plenty of men there, they are not worthy. Do you follow me?

There is no one in Heaven and there is no one on earth.

And it was at that point, that it says that he heard the voice behind him, and it says,

One of the Elders said to me, 'Stop weeping, behold the Lion that is of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome, so as to open the book and its seven seals, and I saw between the Throne, with the four living creatures among the Elders a Lamb standing as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth, and he came and took it out of the right hand of Him Who sat on the Throne.

John said *one of the Elders...* That is, a representative of that symbolic church came to me and said, '*Don't weep, because one was found worthy! One who was of Heaven, but is of earth*' - God, who has joined Himself to our humanity. So, He is of Heaven, because only Heaven could do it! But, only man could do it, so God had joined Himself to our humanity. He says, '*Don't weep, behold the Lion that is from the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David...*'

Echoes.... Echoes... Echoes...!

Where does that come from?

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The Lion that is from the Tribe of Judah

Do you remember Genesis Chapter 49? Jacob was blessing his sons, and he comes to his son Judah, in Verse 10 of Chapter 49. There, he says, "...you are a young lion, a crouching lion", and, it says, "you will have the scepter and the rule of staff. From the Tribe of Judah, the rulership would always come until... and remember these words carefully, "...until Shiloh comes."

The word *Shiloh* means 'He whose right it is' or it means 'The worthy One' or the 'One Who is Worthy.'

So, says old Jacob, *the kings of Israel will always come from the tribe Judah, until the only one who is worthy shall come, until He whose only right it is to reign shall come. And then, it says that unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.*

Says John, *I turned and saw the Lion, which is from the Tribe of Judah. I saw He Whose right alone it is to rule. I saw He who alone is worthy.*

I think it is very significant that, as he took the book out of the hand of Him Who sat on the throne, immediately the whole of Heaven said, 'Worthy is the Lamb'. They were confessing in the word 'worthy', this is Shiloh! This is the One spoken of in Genesis Chapter 49, Verse 10.

What does it mean, 'of the Root of David'? It says he sprang a root of David.

This One designated the Lion of the Tribe of Judah - His roots are David. Do you remember what God said to David in II Samuel Chapter 7, Verses 12 and 13? David would have a descendant, that is David would be a 'root' and, out of that root of David, out of David's humanity, David's flesh and blood and bone, there would ultimately come One: It says a descendant of David. It says He would sit upon the Throne of David, and He would rule forever and ever, and 'of His Kingdom there shall be no end.' Do you remember that? (Well... you know it now!)

David was the root - Jesus was the flower. He was the Lion that was spoken of to Judah. David, who was the first young 'lion' of Judah, he was the first King of Judah's tribe. To him was sent a descendant, a flower. That is why you have that miserable first chapter of the New Testament: Abraham begat, Isaac begat... what are they trying to tell you? You notice what it tells you - it goes all the way back to David! They are trying to tell you that this One, who is the subject of this book, is descended from David. David is the root, and it goes way back to Abraham, which is included in the fact that He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

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So, at that point, I do not need to interpret what does the Lamb mean. Actually, at this point in our interpretation of Revelation, it is amazing, everyone agrees with me! Nobody ever agrees with me about anything else, but they agree with me about that. Nobody has a problem when you read of a Lamb in the Book of Revelation. Everyone immediately says, "*But, of course, that is Jesus.*"

Now you use that same logic for every other part of Revelation, and it is a very simple book to understand. *Of course it is Jesus!* It tells us it is Jesus!

A Lamb -- Didn't John the Baptist describe Jesus as the *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?* And, of course, a lamb summed up all the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament. They had rams, they had bulls, they had goats, and they had pigeons, but the one animal that in the mind of a Jew summed up all the animals that were offered to God, it was the lamb. A 'lamb' is almost theological shorthand for the sacrifices of the Old Testament. And so, here is Jesus, the one spoken of in prophecy, and He has come! He is God, but He is man! And, He has come to break the seals and to shower the blessings upon the human race.

And it says, *He was a Lamb as if slain.*

Incidentally, the word 'lamb' in the Book of Revelation is a very special Greek word. It is not just *lamb*. The Greek word is 'little lamb,' or you might even say that it is 'dear little lamb'. It is the idea of a 'fluffy little white lamb.' It is not just the word for a lamb.

And so, here he says, *I saw coming to the throne a little white lamb as if slain, slain in sacrifice.*

They killed the lambs for sacrifice by slitting their throats, and so here is a Lamb coming up to the throne and He has a bloody gash of sacrifice on his neck, but He lives! I do not have to think too far for that! He has only just finished saying to John, *'I am He that was dead but behold, I am alive and alive forevermore'*. This is the risen Jesus. The Greek word for 'as if slain' is 'As if freshly slain'.

Here is the little Lamb who looks as if it has just been slain, yet it lives.

I suggest to you that what was seen here is exactly what happened after Jesus left Mary Magdalene at the tomb. Do you remember that? Mary clung to Jesus and said, *'Never leave us again.'* Jesus said, "*Do not touch me - do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to your Father and my Father to my God and your God.*" It is as if He had just risen from the dead, and checks in with Mary to let her know that it is all 'okay,' but, *I have yet to ascend to my Father*

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and your Father. And with that, He is gone, and He ascends into the invisible half of the Universe.

I suggest that this picture in Revelation 5 is a symbolic picture of what happened: His coming into the Throne Room. Where did He come from? Remembering our picture of the Tabernacle, He had just been to the *brazen altar*. He had just been slain at the cross, the blood has been shed, and now He, Who is the offering and the Priest at the same time, brings His own blood into the presence of the Father. And it is because of that blood, because He is worthy that He can take the book. He has ascended into the presence of His Father -- *the finished work of Jesus Christ*.

Notice it says that He has seven horns. Again, the moment you say that, obviously, we are not looking at a reality. We are looking at a symbol: *A lamb with seven horns*.

Horns, in the Bible (in fact, universally), speak of power. There are many Scriptures that are so obvious with that.

Seven: That is the number of God (God in perfect action, 3+4). So, here is the perfect number, God -- God's perfect power. That is a thought you could run with for another hour! God's perfect power, omnipotence: A Lamb, a dear little Lamb, as if it had just been slain. Man laughs and says, "*A Lamb, that is power? A lamb is the epitome of weakness! Slay it, and you have double weakness.*" God says, "There is my power: The Lamb who died for His enemies."

And, it says He has the 'seven spirits of God.' You only know the power of the Holy Spirit because of Jesus Christ. Therefore the Christian... It says *if any man has not the Spirit of Christ...* We know the Holy Spirit only through Jesus Christ. There is no knowing of the Holy Spirit until I know Jesus as Lord, the One who died and rose again.

And this Vision, which introduces me to the Jesus of the Book, will become the main Vision of Jesus. He is the one in the middle of the candlesticks. He will appear as the One upon a white horse; but basically, the picture of Jesus in this Book is of the Lamb as it had been slain, and I believe that we have got that picture. I don't think it is a hard one to get.

Notice how these visions move. First of all, we saw Jesus in the middle of the candlesticks and we understood we had to have a vital relationship to Him. Then, we see Him seated upon the Throne, coming to take the Book that controls the world.

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First of all, I come to a vital union with Jesus. After I have that vital union (that is Vision 1); then (Vision 2) I begin to realize there is more to this than 'meets the eye.'

When I first came to Christ, I just thought it was 'on the Jericho Road, just room for two, just Jesus and me'? Ever sung that ridiculous little 'ditty'? Well, it was just me and Jesus... Me and Jesus... Me and Jesus. The Second Vision dawned upon me; it is not just me and Jesus! Good grief! It is the whole universe! It's the past, present, and future! Everything! All of History! And, He is at the very center, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb as He had been slain, and He took the book. That is the moment when you could shout through out all history and all ages, 'It is finished! It is done!'

The One who was 'worthy' to take 'the book' and break its seals and, it says, upon that, the whole of Heaven burst into a *new* song!

The song they sang.... We shall be dealing with some of these songs as we go through the book... but...

That word 'new' in Greek, meant new in kind; that is a song that had never been sung before. A new kind of song!

I might buy a new suit. It's a new suit, but it is not new 'in kind.' I have had new suits ever since I can remember. But, if I turned up here in an Indian Sari, that would be a covering of a new kind. I've never had it before! Do you see? That's different.

And the new song is a song that is new in kind. It's never been sung before, and that new kind of song is, 'Worthy is the Lamb'. *Shiloh*, You have come! You have redeemed us with your blood out of every tribe and tongue and nation. And the whole paean of praise, as it says, is under the earth, in the sea as well as humans on land. And all of heaven circled around and worshipped! That is what took place, I believe, on Resurrection Morning.

It is the key to history. Understand where Jesus is, and you will understand what history is about.

We shall take a break and come back and see how history begins to unfold from the Throne of the Lamb.

Amen.

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THE SIX SEALS

Revelation Chapter 6-7

We now come to the results of the Lamb being crowned. It takes the form of the Seals being broken. That is, He breaks one of the seals on the little book, and then you can see something. As he breaks another, you see something more, and, gradually the scroll unrolls.

I want us to go through these seals. We are still in the Second Vision. We still have not moved. This is the natural follow-up. The Lamb is crowned! Now what happens? It unfolds in history, and so, we shall follow through.

I want you to understand that this is not any particular time in history. (If you are not really grasping this, hang in there it will begin to get through to you.)

We are not looking for a date. You may have heard the 700 Club the other day when one dear sister on camera asked me if the droughts in the Midwest had anything to do with the Fifth Seal of the Book of Revelation. My answer was, "No," of course, but I want you to understand that we are not saying that the First Seal began in A.D. 50, or that we can find the Napoleonic wars in the Seventh Seal! No!

Here are principles! Okay? They are *principles*.

I am asking the question of this Book now, "*What happens when the Lamb reigns? What happens when the King is coronated -- crowned?*"

And, there comes to me a series of visions, and those visions can be found at anytime in history, anywhere! They can be found in any and every geography, wherever the Lamb is proclaimed as the Ruler, the One who was slain and is risen again. Where that One is proclaimed as King, certain things inevitably begin to happen. And, it doesn't matter whether it is A.D. 95 or 1975 -- it doesn't make any difference! Inevitably things take place.

That is why this book is a blessing to anyone who reads it, because it is not for this people or that people, it is for *all people*. Wherever I find myself in time or geography, I can find the principles of this book are applicable to where I find myself. Okay? Do you understand what I mean now?

What we are going to look out is the inevitable results of the declaration that "the Lamb rules."

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First of all, as soon as it was proclaimed that the Lamb rules, a white horse came galloping across the cosmic stage. *He who sat upon the horse*, Verse 2 says, *he had a bow and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer*. You may have one of the various editions of the Bible where the translators and publishers have taken too much into their own heads. A translator should stick to Greek. A publisher should stick to dollars and cents, and when they meddle and mess with the Bible they are translating or publishing, it makes me very angry. I thought with the New American Standard Version, we had finally got a Bible that did not do that. But wouldn't you know the latest editions start meddling, and if you have that edition, one of the later ones, it says, "The book opens -- the First Seal -- a 'false Christ'." That is rubbish! If you have a Schofield Bible it is even worse. You will find they stick these little titles to the paragraph and they have the audacity to try and tell you what it means. Just disregard them, okay? Ninety-nine percent of the time they do not fit with the whole truth of Scripture.

The One Who Rode Upon a White Horse.

There is more than one white horse in the book of Revelation. If this is a code that is ever going to be interpreted, then the code must be consistent. If a white horse means something in Chapter 6, and something else in Chapter 19, then my head is spinning. This was written to simple slaves, and in Chapter 19, I have no problem at all.

It says that *One was riding on a right horse and on Him it was written King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*. I know who that is! The very first thing that happens... The Lamb has been crowned! Now, what must be done?

This must be announced to the whole world. The Gospel must be preached. The white horse gallops across the Universe proclaiming that *the Lamb has risen, the Lamb has been crowned*. It is the preaching of the Gospel.

You might take a careful look at Matthew Chapters 18-20 at your leisure, and you will there find that Jesus says, '*All authority has been given to me in Heaven and upon earth*'. I think that is a plain statement of the symbol vision that we saw in our last hour.

All authority! The Lamb reigns, '*all authority has been given to me in Heaven and upon earth*.' The next word of Matthew 28 says, "Therefore... therefore go, make disciples of all nations, teaching them, baptizing them..." That is *because* the Lamb reigns! *Because* He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, *therefore* you go and proclaim it.

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The very first thing that must happen after the Lamb has been seen as the reigning Emperor of the Universe is that His ambassadors must go! So, Christ is on a white horse.

The imagery has changed. We are not bothered with that. We are dealing with symbols, which change rapidly, and the Lamb is now under the symbol of a *rider on a white horse* but it is as 'the Lamb' the proclamation of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and it says He is given a bow and arrows. You can go back to Psalm 45. It is a tremendous Psalm to read in the light of this. Psalm 45 speaks of the king being crowned. In that Psalm, it has the quotation that is used in Hebrews 1, which speaks of Jesus Christ as God. And there it says that *His arrows stick fast in the heart of his enemies*.

It is a very vivid picture, and, I think most of us know what it is by experience: We were in the path of the Rider on the white horse and His arrows stuck fast. We were His enemies, and there came right into us the arrows of God. When God belts an arrow at you, it is beautiful afterwards. It is the *conviction*, or as almost the same word is used, actually in Acts 9 where Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus, *'it is hard for you to kick against the goads'*. The point of an arrow and a 'goad' is much the same imagery. The preaching of the Gospel, the hearing that *there is One who reigns*, to me is like the jabbing of a knife. It's a 'goad!' I do not like it. But it sticks and they stick fast.

And as the Rider of the white horse goes by, He lets fly his arrows, and it says, that *to Him was given a crown* - the crown that had been given to Him at His ascension! He now rides bringing men under His rule.

Rider on a Red Horse

However, always following that is a Rider on a red horse. And, to the rider on the red horse there was given a sword. The word for 'sword' is a special kind of sword; it is a short kind of sword of *sacrifice*.

Again, the Bible that I have the New American Standard, which has its additions, says, "Second Seal -- War." *Rubbish!* You don't conduct a war with a sword of sacrifice. There is another sword, a great big sword that was used in war. The short one was used specifically for sacrifice. The bloody horse comes galloping after the white one.

Every time the Gospel is preached, there comes hard on the heels of that Gospel the sacrifice of the Saints. This has nothing to do with war; it has everything to do with persecution. We are sacrificed. In fact, further down, in the Fifth Seal you might notice, it says, speaking of martyrs, *they have been sacrificed upon an altar*, and the world sacrifices the saints.

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To me, this chapter and, in fact the whole of Revelation is so thrilling because I can speak to you who have receive the Gospel, and in receiving the Gospel, suddenly people who you got along with so well are now hating you and you wonder what on earth has happened! You go to pieces, and say *I didn't expect this!*

That is exactly how the Churches in Asia were, and God says, "Here! Look! It's okay! It's okay! The Gospel was preached, the Lamb reigns! And it says that the bloody horse that comes afterwards, is all under the control of the Lamb. It's all right. It looks as if that bloody horse has got complete power! He hasn't!

It states there very carefully: *it was granted...* He was given a grant to take peace from the earth. He did not come galloping in and push the white horse out the way and take over. This one was given permission. *It was granted to him.* The persecution that follows in his wake is granted by God. I can tell that to you and you can absorb that principle wherever you find yourself. I am also certain that these tapes we are now making will be heard in the jungles of many missionary countries and there will be many missionaries who are listening to these tapes on top of some Himalayan mountain, or out in the Philippines. The persecution there will be very real, and '*blessed is the one who reads this book and hears it*' because they will understand that the red horse follows the white horse. Don't be bent out of shape! The Lamb still reigns! He has got it all under control.

Rider on a Black Horse

The red horse is followed by a black horse. Again, my Bible says '*Famine*' and, again I say, '*Rubbish!*' There is no famine here! There is plenty of food here. Notice it says,

He broke the third seal and I heard the third living creature say, 'Come' and I looked and behold a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand, [something for weighing in]. Then I heard as it were a voice in the center of the Living Creatures saying, "a quart of wheat for a denarius."

Now, that was a day's wages, so, for one day's wages, one man could buy enough to feed himself. A quart of wheat would just about feed you for a day and for one day's wages, one man could feed himself. Or, (you had a choice) you could buy three quarts of barley for a denarius. That is, one day's wages could buy the coarser stuff. Barley wasn't so fine as wheat. And so, you could buy three quarts of barley to feed three people for a day's wages, if you wanted to go for the coarser.

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Then, it goes on to say, "*But do not harm the oil and the wine*". The oil and the wine were the luxury items. So, there's plenty of wheat, there is plenty of barley, there is plenty of oil and plenty of wine if you've got the money for it. That is not famine! What is it? It is another form of persecution. Remember what I told you last week of what these people were going through. They weren't all killed and they weren't all banished. You just lost your job - that's all! For the sake of Christianity where the Lamb reigned and the white horse rode through, you may meet the red horse; you may meet the black one.

It may be you lose your job. *Lose my job? Is that what it means, that Jesus reigns?* Yes, that is what it means. The world hates you. You lose your job, and suddenly you are in a position where you are scraping a whole day's wages just to buy enough. It is an economic kind of persecution. The food is there but you can't touch it. Luxury items are there, but you never get to them. You know the persecution that comes. Sometimes, one would feel it would be better to have died under the red horse than to have eked out an existence without a home, without shelter.

There are many places in the world today where to become a Christian means you've lost your job right away. There are many places in the world where you cannot even buy or sell if you are a Christian. I have lived in such a place, where I bought \$300 worth of goods, and as I passed over the check they discovered I was a Christian, the name of the church was on the check. They immediately took all of it back, they said, "We do not sell to the likes of you." And, living in that particular country where I was, I knew what this was talking about. It is there, but if you are a Christian you cannot get it. We are going to come on this as the Book of Revelation opens up. We are going to hear about not being able to buy or sell because you are a Christian; it is another kind of persecution.

Rider on a Green Horse

The black horse was followed by a sickly green horse. Of this one it states:

I looked and behold an ashen horse, and he who sat on it had the name 'Death' and Hades was following with him, and authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword, famine, pestilence, wild beasts.

I see there that God is telling me He has control over what we might call *natural disaster*.

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A Christian is not isolated. The Book of Revelation upsets a lot of teaching going around in America these days. The idea that *'if you are a Christian you will never hurt or harmed, there is never a famine, there is never a pestilence. All tornados go over your roof; they never hit you! You are a Christian!*

Health, happiness, wealth and riches: It sounds good in the American society, but it stinks anywhere else in the world, because that is not true. It just is not true! Do you realize that most of our brothers and sisters in this world are suffering brothers and sisters? Do you realize that? There is just a little handful of us in America, and we think that America is the whole world, but most of the world of Christians is presently under the hooves of the red horse or the black horse.

An, mingled in with all of that, is the ashen, sickly, green horse. It is 'natural' disasters. We call them that, and the Lamb that reigns is just telling us, *"I have control there too."* There are certain troubles the world goes through, and Christians go through them just the same. Do you follow what I am saying? But, as the Christian goes through them, he goes does so with hope, because he knows that this couldn't happen but for the Lamb who says, *'unleash the seal'*.

The blessings of God, the purposes of God, the unrolling of that little scroll -- those purposes are taking place in a fallen world. That is what it is saying. It is taking place in a world of sin and a world of men, and as they unroll, there will be the *red horse* of men, rising up to kill the Christians. It will be with the *black horse* of social, economic pressure. Also, the world is a fallen place, and so, you will still have all the so-called natural disasters going on around. Okay? Do you understand?

Do you see that is a principle? I am not talking about any point in history. It is a principle that unlocks all of history, wherever I happen to find myself.

It was then followed by a vision of souls under the altar.

Verse 9: He broke the fifth seal, and I saw under the Altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God.

So, here are the people who have been slain by the red horse. Here are the people who have already died. They have been martyred. The imagery there is very vivid. It says, *"...the souls under the altar."* Remember, we were talking about the brazen altars where the animals were killed. There were little gutters on that, and, as the blood was shed, the blood ran down underneath the altar.

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Do you remember in Leviticus 17, it says that the *soul, or the life is in the blood*? So, the picture here is of a sacrificial altar, the blood has run down, and it says, *I saw the souls under the altar...* It is the spilt blood of martyrs, and notice what they are saying:

They are saying with a loud voice, 'How long oh Lord, Holy and True wilt thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

I had a lot of problem with that when I first read it. Mean bunch! They have died, and now they are saying, '*How long oh God before you get that bunch down there.*' But, then I realized there is a far greater context. A God who is not just is no God at all. We say God is Good; He could never judge. That is the whole point! If He doesn't judge, He is not Good. The justice of God, the absolute necessity of His being to judge sinners, is part of God's goodness. If God looked upon sin and smiled, would He be holy? Would He be good? If God saw the Nazi regime of Germany and did nothing about it, just 'ho-hummed' it, would that be a good God?

When you think about it, you cannot live sanely without the wrath of God. Sanity demands the wrath of God, for if God does not punish sin, He is not a good God.

And these who cried under the altar, in one sense they are summing up this whole Book of Revelation. This is almost a key verse of the book: *How long oh Lord?* Is the Lamb really the ruler? Is He really? Or, is some maniac sinner the last word. Does sin have the last word or does the Lamb?

They have died. And one might say, "Well, I have died. I have gone to Heaven. Glory to God! It is all over!" No, no! They died and they still said, '*How long?*' For salvation cannot be understood as absolutely complete until the final judgment takes place. Only when sin has been finally judged, put away and Satan been eternally bound, only then can we say, '*It is done.*' It was accomplished at the Cross, but no Christian can rest easy until it is finalized. There is no doubt about its finality. ***It shall be!*** They did not say, "*Would you do it Lord?*" They just said, "*Lord, how long?*"

In Psalm 52, one of the most amazing psalms, David had gone to the tabernacle, and Saul had one of his men there called Doeg. Doeg reported that David was helped by the priests and that maniac Saul commanded the death of every priest. Do you remember that? Not one of his soldiers would do it, and so Doeg, the man who reported it, said, "*give me the sword, I will do it.*" And he butchered every person in the village, including the dogs and cats and

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animals. It was a total wiping out, all except one man, Abiathar, and he went and found David.

David looked at Saul from his mountain hideout and he looked at Doeg, and he was looking at absolute, merciless, senseless cruelty. My first reaction to that, if I were in David's shoes, would be to say, *God what are you doing? Why do you allow that?* But David didn't! When he wrote Psalm 52, he said, *"Why do you boast in evil, oh mighty men?"* He didn't say, *God, why?* He turned to the man and said, *'Why?'* He is saying, *'Man, do you think you are going to get away with this?'*

David could look at that merciless, senseless, cruelty with sanity, because he knew the man would not get away with it. He also knew that he was saved from bitterness and resentment against the man, because, if God is going judge, then I can safely leave the man with God.

In his Psalm, he is looking at the man and saying, *'Why, oh man, are you so foolish?'* To think you could do that and get away with it! There is justice in Heaven. *"Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Vengeance is mine, and I will repay,"* says the Lord.

You should read that Psalm (Ps. 52) and also Psalm 73, where he looked across the street and saw the rich men that had gained all their riches in sin. He says, *"My feet had almost slipped, I was almost gone,"* and, he said, *"When I saw the prosperity of the wicked, then I went into the House of God, and I saw their latter end.* He said, *'I got all my perspective straight. Man doesn't get away with anything! The judgment of God.*

The Church is being persecuted. The Church is being crushed - martyrs! And, the martyrs can well pray for their persecutors, *'God forgive them, they know not what they do'.* But they also appeal to God that justice will be done. And we are going to see, as this book unfolds, that the way the world treats the Church is the way history is going to unfold for those persecutors. Do you follow what I am saying? We shall come back to that in great detail as the Book unfolds.

Then it finalizes with that sixth seal. There is a great earthquake; the sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair. The whole moon became like blood. The stars in the sky fell to earth as a fig tree shakes its ripe figs.

Remember, we are still dealing with massive pictures. Obviously this is not literal. If it was (literal), it couldn't be! Many of the stars are much bigger than the earth, so how could they fall to earth? Do you follow me?

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What he sees here is a gigantic, horrific picture! The whole universe seems to cave in. The very earth, on which men have their rebellion against God, is caving in underneath them. The sky is being rolled together like a scroll. Again, that couldn't happen literally. It is a great picture, and the picture shocks me -- horrifies me! I see just exactly what it is saying.

It says, *"They are crying and screaming and saying 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him Who sits on the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.'"*

Have you ever seen an angry lamb? The two things don't seem to go together. For people to think in terms of the wrath of God, people find it very hard to bring the two together. But, basically that is just what we have been saying: God is only good because justice is part of His goodness.

So, the whole picture is put together: The persecution in its various forms; the persecuted martyrs are saying, *"Lord how long before justice is done and your Church is vindicated?"*

The Day of Wrath

And then, the finale, is the Wrath of God: It is the day of Wrath.

Now, it is not the 'final' Day of Wrath. That awaits the Seventh Seal; this is only the Sixth Seal. In fact, in this Vision, it is not even going to speak about that final wrath. There is a wrath that comes into the world of man every so often. There is a real sense in which this Sixth Seal has happened in many places down through history, when the whole world bemoans the fact that their whole life has caved in.

It would be almost true to say that, for some characters of the Watergate affair, they have lived their Sixth Seal. Their world caved in, their sky was rolled up like a scroll, their stars fell to earth, and it was all over. It was not "The End" - there is a *final*, final judgment! It is spoken of in the Book of Revelation. But, there are also judgments here, there and everywhere. God is active among men, bringing worlds to an end. Okay?

Just before the final (judgment), having the Sixth Seal, it now says that the final judgment has come.

Right at the beginning of Chapter 7, it says:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, [Okay, this is universal now - the four corners of the earth!] And they are holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind should blow on the earth, or sea, or tree.

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Here are the 'winds' of God's judgment, the tornados of wrath, and they (the four angels) are just about to unleash them. This going to be the Seventh Seal - The End! *The Finale!*

Then it says, "*Stop! Stop! We are going to protect the Church.*" The Church, in the middle of all this, is going to receive the 'seal' of the Living God. There is a holding back of God's judgment. The Church will be protected. It is the idea that God's judgment holds back for the sake of the Church. You would be surprised at what judgments do not come because of the presence of the Church. I am impressed with God's mercy in the holding back of judgment.

Enoch, in the Old Testament, wasn't such a man of God until he had a little baby and God said to Enoch that when '*this baby dies the final judgment will come.*' That whole sentence, '*When he dies, the judgment will come*' - That whole sentence is one word, "Methuselah." Enoch called that little baby *Methuselah*. In his name he carried the promise that, when he died, the judgment of God would come. Methuselah was the walking patience of God. Wherever a man saw Methuselah, he said, 'When he goes, judgment comes.'" Methuselah died just immediately before the Flood. *Judgment came.*

Isn't it interesting that, when the patience of God walked in flesh, that man was the man who lived the longest that ever man has ever lived? *The patience of God!* The man who was its embodiment lived nearly a thousand years.

God holds back His judgments, and the Church walks in the midst of the world. Because of the Church, the judgments of God are held back, and the Gospel is preached.

The Remnant

It tells me the number. Again, please, *PLEASE*, my Bible says ('bless its heart'), '*the remnant of Israel, 144,000.*'

Now, I think by this time, we do not have to apologize for what we are doing. Numbers are ideas, not arithmetic. So, here is an idea that is summed up in the term '144,000'. I know that a mere translator/publisher put that in, because any Bible student would know that is *not* a listing Israel! If that is Israel according to the flesh, Israel - natural blood Israel, then that is the most messed up list in the whole Bible. Right to begin with, they go absolutely wrong because they got the first two mixed up. You see, whenever there is a list of a natural list of Israel, certain things have to be.

Number One: It has to begin with Reuben, because Reuben was the firstborn, and he might have been a slob but he was the first one, and he was

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as weak as water says the Scripture, and he never did anything, he just assumed the place where he was. But, *weak as water* though he was, he was firstborn, and so Reuben should be first. He is not.

Number Two: Ephraim is left out! That is almost like saying, *here is a list of States*, and you leave out Washington D.C.! Ephraim was the most important next to the tribe of Judah. Judah was the head tribe, in that the kings came from Judah, but Ephraim was so important, that many times Israel is called 'Ephraim.' It is a shorthand term for Israel, and they have left out the tribe of Ephraim!

They have also left out the Tribe of Dan. You just can't just write a list and leave out things like that. Obviously, we are not dealing here with a real listing of Israel. Reuben is in the wrong place, and Ephraim, the most important tribe next to Judah, is left out, so is Dan. And, Levi is included! Levi was never included, because he was a tribe very definitely, but he had no inheritance. His was the tribe of Priests, so he didn't have a place there.

Also, there is tribe there that *'isn't'* - *The Tribe of Joseph*. There is no tribe of Joseph! Joseph had two sons. His two sons were Ephraim and Manasseh. And, he did not have an inheritance; he gave it to his two kids. So, you have the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, but no Tribe of Joseph! There is no such thing! So, one of his sons is left out, Ephraim, and *he* (Joseph) is put in. Oh, this gets very confusing! If this is a list of Israel...

No! No! No!

This is not a list of Israel at all. In fact, you had better go right back to the beginning and say, *if the first-born comes first*, and it always is so, *who is first one of this listing of Israel?*

Aha! The first one mentioned is Judah. We have just got through seeing the Lion who comes from the tribe of Judah. This listing is a list of persons. The first, the leader of this list is the Tribe of Judah. Okay?

This is a company of people, and they are the True Israel, and their first-born is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. You know the word *Israel* is important. The word *Israel* means 'one who is conquered by God'. You can call yourself an 'Israelite,' but unless you are conquered by God, you are no Israelite.

Here is a company of those who are conquered by God, and their Lord is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

It says they were numbered. If you took our course on the Pentateuch, you will remember in Exodus Chapter 30, Verses 12-15, it states that,

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whenever Israel had to be numbered, every man had to give atonement money. Do you remember that? You couldn't just be numbered; you had to give atonement money, recognizing that *I belong to the God of Israel. I am not my own. I belong to God and I atone. I pay with atonement money, a piece of silver.*

Do you remember that Peter in I Peter 1:18 picks up that idea and he says, "*You were redeemed not with silver or gold but with the precious blood of the Lamb.*" Do you remember that? So, here is the company and every member of this company is a redeemed person, redeemed with the blood of the Lamb because they are numbered. The idea of numbering to an Israelite would be synonymous with the idea of being redeemed. Okay? Do you understand? Here is a company headed by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah -- every one of them redeemed.

What about the number, though? We are back to those 12s again. Do you know what 144,000 is?

- $3 \times 4 = 12$, (Old Testament)
- $3 \times 4 = 12$, (New Testament)
- $12 \times 12 = 144$, right?

So we are back again to the *12 of the Old Testament, 12 of the New Testament*, and 12×12 gives us 144.

- But then, it is $144 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$. Right?
- Ten (10) is the 'perfection' of number. When you count, you go 1-10, and at 10, you add a '1' and start all over again. So, ten is the number for completion. It is done! It is complete!
- Time three (3) is completeness... completeness... completeness... the number of God.

The '144,000' gives me an idea. It doesn't tell me a number. The idea is of the *perfect, completed Church of the Old Testament and New Testament*. It is complete, and you will notice that it says that John *heard* the number. He didn't see them. He said he *heard*. That is very important. I have never seen the complete, perfect Church, and I don't think I ever will this side of Heaven, but I *hear it*. Do you see what I mean?

You are a struggling little Christian back there in Thyatira or Sardis or Laodicea, or Morristown. As you struggle there, and feel there is nobody here! There is no Christian around. I am the only one!

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God says, *'It is all right. I have my perfect complete Church. Not one of them shall be lost. It is all right! Things are not what they seem to be.'*

Elijah, remember his prayer? He said, *'I, only I am left'* and God said, *'Shut up, I have still 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal'*. Right? Things aren't what they appear to be. You feel you are alone, you see no one, but you hear from God, *'I have got my perfect Church. Everything's under control.'*

You don't see them, but you hear it. And, when you can't see it, that's the time you need to hear it. That there is a 'perfect Church.'

The Tribes of Israel

Notice then these tribes. Why are they there? I think there is more than one angle we could take to that. One I feel is very interesting: I haven't investigated this before, but the more I study it, the more it excites me!

A large portion of Genesis is given to *why* these tribes were called by their names. I never really thought about it very much, but it just intrigued me that there are two or three chapters of Genesis given entirely to describing why each tribe was called by the name it was. That sounds to me an awful waste of chapters, because it goes into all the details of how the mother felt the day she got pregnant, or how the mother felt when she was having the baby, and that's why she called it that name. *Who needs that?*

Then, I began to realize that those names have a tremendous significance. *The events around the birth of those boys were so arranged by God, that they got the names they got and you put them together, and suddenly you hear the whole gospel in the names of those boys.*

Now I understand why one has to be left out here, and one has to be left out there! It is because they do not fit this picture today. They had their thing to do back there. But, in this picture, you only put in what you want to put in, and because it is a *picture*, you can even put in the people who aren't in. Right? Now, you follow down that list, and see what those names mean.

1. Judah comes first.

The word *Judah* means 'Praise.' So, the very first thing I know about this company is *Praise*, and the praise is centered in the First one, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

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2. The second tribe is Reuben.

The name 'Reuben' means, *Behold! A Son!* When I look at this company of people I say,

Behold the sons of God! This is a company of the Sons of God who are noted by the fact that they are praising in Judah.

3. The third one is called Gad.

'Gad' means a *Great Company*. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, according to Hebrews, is bringing a *great company of many sons to Glory*. Do you see the code here? If you understand the Old Testament, God is saying so much to you here! Again, you feel so small! You feel so crushed! God says, No! Gad, a Great Company, a Great troupe of people.

4. Asher is the fourth tribe mentioned here.

Asher means 'Happy', 'Joy-filled'. And so, this Company of Sons who are a Great Company, who Praise, are filled with Unspeakable Joy!

5. The fifth tribe is Naphtali.

It means *to wrestle and overcome*. Does it need any explanation? One of the key words of Revelation is, 'Those who overcome'. The Church is the ultimate Overcomers! The Church is the Company that ultimately overcomes the beast and the dragon and every false thing that is on the face of the earth.

6. The sixth tribe that is mentioned is Manasseh.

That means '*forgetting*'. Joseph gave that name to his son. Do you remember when Joseph was sold down the river to Egypt, thrown in prison as a slave? Finally, after it was all over, he came out, became Prime Minister, and he married and his son was Manasseh. And he called him Manasseh, he said because:

Finally I have forgotten all my troubles, and I have forgotten all the ill that was ever done to me.

Manasseh is placed right in this list. We are the people who have a gloriously short memory! It ends at the cross. We have forgotten the misery of our unconverted days. We have forgotten the bondage. It is gone. It is a mist! It is another world. Some of us look back to those days and wonder even if we were really there -- was it really us? We have forgotten. We are a company of *Manasseh*.

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7. The seventh tribe is Simeon.

'Simeon' means *hearing*. This is a company of people whose ears are open. *'My sheep hear my voice.'* A company of people who listen and hear, which is another key verse to the early part of Revelation: *'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'*

8. The eighth one is Levi.

'Levi' means *joined*. This is a company of people who are joined to the Lord -- one Spirit, a mystical company. They are the expression of the Lamb on earth, for they are joined to Him in Spirit.

9. The ninth tribe mentioned is Issachar.

'Issachar' means, *a price was paid*. It is a company of people who have been redeemed with a price. Every member of this clan is sealed with the blood of Jesus.

10. The tenth tribe is Zebulon.

Zebulon means *a dwelling place*. This Company is the 'dwelling place' of the Spirit of God. Ephesians 2:20 says *that we have become the habitation of God through the Spirit*.

11. The eleventh tribe mentioned is Joseph.

'Joseph' means *add, fruitful*. You add to and you become richer, and richer, and richer, and become fruitful. And so, this Company of people who have added to them the Spirit of God have produced the fruits of the Spirit. Incidentally, when Joseph was given his blessing, his father played on that name, "*Fruitful*," and he said he shall be so fruitful that the boughs or branches of his tree will over the wall into his neighbor's yard.

That was speaking of the fact that, one day, Israel would not be the chosen people of God. It would go over the wall into Gentile land, and even the Gentiles would be included in the fruitfulness of God. Do you follow what I am saying?

And so, Joseph is the one that reminds us not only that we are the expressers of the fruits of the Spirit, but also that we Gentiles are included into *this* Israel. We are the ones where God went over the wall.

12. Then, there is number twelve, Benjamin.

The name *Benjamin* is very interesting and very important. He was the son of Rachel. Rachel was the dearest to the heart of Jacob, and he wanted her to have children, and she had Joseph. But then, it seems she had no more

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until she had Benjamin. But, in giving birth to Benjamin, she died. Do you remember that, as she was dying, she took the little child, and because of the horror and agony of her death, she named him "Banoni"? *Banoni* means 'Son of my deep sorrow'.

The Father would have none of it, and he changed the name of *Banoni* to *Benjamin*, which means 'Son of my right hand'. I don't think there is any more perfect picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the *Banoni-Benjamin*. He is the Son of my sorrow, and after the sorrow was over, He arose again and became the son of his Father's right hand. The proof that He is seated at the right hand of the Father, the proof that Jesus is the 'Ultimate Benjamin' according to Acts 2:33, is that *He has poured forth the Holy Spirit which you now see and hear. Peter says I can prove that He is the Son of the Father's right hand. He has been exalted! He sits now upon the throne and to prove it He has poured out this, which you now see and hear.*

The Great Company

And so, this great Company could be looked at from all those twelve difference angles. You can say, "Now that is the Company." It is the Israel of God all right! It is the Israel that Israel was always supposed to be. It is the true Company of those *conquered* by God, *lorded* by the Lamb of the Tribe of Judah, and it is the perfect, the most complete! I have never seen it. It began with Abel and who knows when it will end? But, God sees it as one completed company.

So, it is not 144,000 - it is the complete number of the Church of God. 144,000 is but an idea that lets me know that. The names of the tribes only expound to me (they exposit to me) the nature of that company.

The Seal of the Living God

Now, it says that each one of them was *sealed*. We are going to get to 'sealing' later on. At this point, it just says they were sealed with the Seal of the Living God. A seal, in the Bible and I suppose, in modern life, too, speaks of *ownership*. If you were a rich man and you wanted to buy something, you would point at it and your slave would come along and put your 'seal' on it. That was like putting a sign on it 'SOLD.' It was sealed. It is owned by someone else. Many slaves had the name of their owner stamped on to their forehead - burned into them. They were sealed; they were owned.

The idea of being *sealed* also held with it security. If someone owned you, they looked after you. You are an 'owned' person, you are secure. You

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are protected, because if you belong to someone, they are going to make sure that nobody else gets to you. So, security and protection is in the idea.

The idea of a seal also is a signature, behind which was a person's whole character. I think I have told many of you before, that a credit card in the East was your signet ring. In fact, that's where the very word comes from. A 'signature,' comes from a signet ring. You use it as your signature, you seal with it. As you seal, you leave the imprint. It was your signature. Behind that signature is your whole character.

So, it says *they were sealed with the seal of God*. God says, '*you are mine*'. When God says '*you are mine*,' He's going to look after you; He's going to protect you! No one can touch you. Behind the seal of God, there is the whole character of God.

And what is that 'seal?' Again, another part of the Bible tells us, Ephesians 1:13 says; you *have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God*. The Holy Spirit has been *sealed to your spirit*. That Spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are born of God. That Spirit is the living guarantee within you that God owns you and God will take care of His own property.

You walk in a world of persecution and economic struggle because of faith. Not because of government inflation, but because of faith, you walk in a world of very drastic straights. You are also in a world where there are natural disasters, and sometimes you feel, *is there any justice left at all?* You feel like you are one under the altar crying to God. You look around and you see judgment and you understand it, but you walk in the middle of it unscathed, and untouched. Even if the hurt touches you, it cannot touch *you*, because you know Who rules. You are one of that perfect Company, the true Israel of God, sealed with the seal of God.

The Innumerable Multitude

He then saw an innumerable multitude. He saw that multitude.

So, we are at the end of Chapter 7, and we do not have time to go into that tonight. But, we shall come across it again, for all these visions run parallel. When we come to the next vision, we start at the beginning again and work through, and we find that these things keep cropping up.

So, although we are not dealing with that 'innumerable multitude' tonight, we shall get to it in another vision and refer back to this.

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I want you to mull over this very deeply. I want you to begin to apply it to where you find yourself, for; in the chapters that we have discussed tonight, there is the key that will unlock your situation *where you are*.

That is why, "*Blessed is he who reads and hears the words of this prophecy.*"

Amen.

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THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Revelation Chapters 8-11

Now we are coming to our further studies in the Book of Revelation. Let us begin with Revelation Chapter 8.

In our first hour tonight, we shall be dealing with the third vision of the Book of Revelation. You will have noted, I trust, that these visions run parallel to each other. Do you understand what I mean by that?

You don't begin at the beginning of Revelation and then move on chronologically. There is no chronology in the Book of Revelation. You have *principles*. You can't say this happened at such and such a time, or that will happen at such and such a time. The only specific time that each vision moves towards is the Grand Finale, the Judgment of God, and the Coming of Christ.

The rest of the visions are principles. They are principles that occur (they work, shall I say) during the period of time between the first coming of Christ and the Second Coming. In that period in between, these principles work.

So, if you want to take a look at that age, that period of time, says Vision Number One: Well, to look at it one way, it is Christ walking in the midst of the Churches, and that whole period of time right up until today and tomorrow and endless tomorrows until *'the end shall come'* you will always find Christ walking in the midst of His churches, and you will always find churches that fit the description of those seven churches.

But then, says the Second Vision, if you want to look at it a different way: Well, you go back and say this all really began with the exalted Lamb of God, sitting upon the Throne and unfolding the purposes of God for mankind. Then, if you look at it like that, then you see the white horse of the preaching of the Gospel, the persecution, the economic persecution and all that follows because of that. In fact, as that Vision rushes to an end, it says the world of men have got to face up to the wrath of the Lamb! In fact, everything is shaking and collapsing, the world is falling in, and -- (Clap!) it *finishes!* 'Well,' it says in that last part of the Vision, - *'that's the end. But we won't get there yet.'* It says, *'there was silence in Heaven for half an hour.'*

Now you want to look at it another way?

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Vision Number Three

Well, Vision Number Three! That is where we are tonight, and in a sense it begins again with the First Coming of Christ, only on this occasion it doesn't really bother too much with it. It is there by implication, but this Third Vision is seeking to tell us something.

We have seen, as the Visions unfold, that the world has rejected the Lamb of God. God has enthroned His Lamb upon the throne, and the world has rejected that Lamb. You may remember that one of the most important prophetic pieces of the Old Testament is Psalm 2. In fact, you should study and memorize it because it is one of those keys. It is a focus point of prophecy in the Old Testament. And it says there, that even although the nations are raging against God, God has said, *I will place my Son upon the Throne.* At the end of the Psalm, the Psalmist turns to all those raging nations and says, *"Be warned all you kings of the earth, kiss the Son lest He be angry."*

That is, *Come and worship before the Lord's anointed. God has set His King in the Heavens, and you would be well advised to kiss the Son to worship Him, to acknowledge, and to agree with God.*

That really is what we are looking at here. The Son has been exalted, the preaching of the Gospel has gone forth, and what has followed is anger, men rising against that Lamb upon the Throne, and they have persecuted the Church. Do you remember the cry of the martyrs under the altar, *'How long oh Lord, How long?'*

Justice must be done. We can never say salvation has finally been manifested until justice has been done.

'So,' says our Vision, *'do you want to have a look at that? Then, come back and look at it.'* For, even as men have rebelled against God's Son, they have rejected the Lamb on the throne, they have persecuted the Church: Men do not get away with that!

Trumpets blow: Men face God!

What do we mean by these trumpets? We find them there in the eighth chapter. We won't take time to read them, but we will refer to them as we go through.

What do these trumpets mean? We are looking, of course, for symbols, understanding that this is a coded message. We have said that wherever we find the code, we find that it is broken for us by a reference to the Old Testament. The Old Testament is full of trumpets. Especially in the early part of the Old Testament, you have all the keys you need to unlock the 'trumpets.'

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You may remember in Exodus Chapter 19, Verse 16 that, at the giving of the Law on Mt Sinai, there was the 'trump of God' sounded. We've already come up against that earlier in this Book. The trumpet of God that sounded at Mount Sinai called all men to hear what was God saying. And, what was God saying at Mount Sinai? It was the giving of His Law. That is, it was a manifestation of His holiness. *Hold that in your mind.*

- When a trumpet sounded, men were called to hear a manifestation of God's holiness. They were to bring their lives up to the awesome Ten Commandments, and to realize *this is absolute*, and all men must be judged by that. The trumpet called them to view the Law.
- You will remember in Joshua Chapter Six and Verse Five, the trumpets blew when the children of Israel went into the land of Canaan and they confronted the city of Jericho. Jericho had heard the word of the Lord, and had been confronted by the Lord these many years, but had consistently rejected Him. When the trumpets blew, it was a warning to all those inside Jericho that judgment was about to fall upon them. So, again the trumpets were associated with the holiness of God, calling men, in the light of that, to 'repent' and understand that God will not hold back His judgments forever.
- In I Kings 1:34, (there are many other references to this idea, but specifically there) the trumpet sounded when a King was crowned. The sound of the trumpet announced to all who heard it, *The King has been crowned*. Only a few persons could be there when the crown actually lighted upon the head of the King. Only a few people witnessed the coronation.
- But, so that everyone should know when that moment had happened. **HE'S BEEN CROWNED!** The trumpets blew, so that all those could understand what they could not see. They understood that *the King has been crowned*.
- In Numbers 10:1-2; it was a call to worship. When the trumpets sounded, all were called to worship God.
- Similarly, in Numbers 29:1, every New Year at the Feast of the New Year, they were called at that time to repent, and they were called to repent by the sound of a trumpet.

All those elements are in these trumpets, if we are to put in the key and turn it and have these chapters unfold to us.

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What are the trumpets?

What is that *principle*? He is telling me that, throughout all time, God blows His trumpets. That is, God announces to mankind: *The King has been crowned!* You did not see it. It happened in the invisible. But, the King has been crowned. Because of that, God calls all men to repent. God calls all men to face up to their sin in the light of the holy law of God, and warns men that judgment inevitably must come unless they repent.

But, the King has been crowned, so come and worship Him.

Do you get the picture now? Do you understand what we are doing?

That is what the Old Testament tells us trumpets are for. John uses that as a code symbol. He is saying that all through time, God is blowing His trumpets. Men who have rejected God have got to face up to God coming among them, arresting them, blowing a trumpet in their ear, and saying, *"Stop! Stop in your tracks! A King has been crowned! Repent! Worship!"*

Now they are not exactly trumpets of nice sounds. When men have heard the preaching of the Gospel and rebel against that preaching, then all that is left is a trumpet with a very harsh sound. The mercy of God comes with a certain kind of harshness.

If you read through all of these events that the trumpets bring in, if you listen for 'echoes' from the Old Testament, I think you will immediately recognize you have read all of that somewhere before. You read it when you were in Exodus, and the plagues fell upon Egypt. You will find every one of those plagues is paralleled here. The intensity is different, but the idea is still there. Egypt is a perfect example of what we are talking about. Egypt was locked into its idolatry. Egypt defied and mocked the Lord, and, in so doing, turned upon Israel, the Lord's people and persecuted them. *Perfect parallel.*

God has set His Israel among them. God has announced that He is God, and Egypt defied that, mocked it and moved in and persecuted God's people. Why didn't God move in immediate judgment? He didn't, you know. The immediate judgment was the death of the firstborn. God said, *"Israel is my first-born, if you will not relinquish my first-born, you will have to relinquish your first-born."* That was the judgment. God did not do that immediately. In fact, month after month after month went by before He did that. He continually blew a trumpet in their ear. We call them the nine plagues. The tenth plague was, in actual fact, the judgment. But, nine trumpets sounded in their ears. Nine times over God said, *"won't you stop in your tracks and listen to me? Won't you repent, won't you worship?"* God is God. Nine times over they hardened their hearts and refused, and then came the judgment.

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You may recollect in Exodus 4:5, that God called those plagues, the beginnings of them anyway, 'signs.' They point somewhere! It is as if God slaps them around the face and says, 'Look, be arrested by what I am doing so that you may repent.'

If you were in Egypt during the time of those plagues and you saw that everything you held on to, all that you called *great* was collapsing around you, you were losing, in fact, all of your gods, you were losing all your sustenance of life -- everything was leaving you, and you would say, 'God... *doing this?*'

That was the goodness of God leading you to repentance. Do you follow what I am saying, now? They were Trumpets of Mercy. We'll get to the Trumpets of Judgment later. But these were Trumpets of Mercy: *God calling on the people to repent.* It was only at the very end, when Pharaoh and the people who were behind Pharaoh, so hardened their hearts that God said, "Well, you may have what you desire." But even then, it was still the 'Trumpets of Mercy,' but it was demons that drove Pharaoh from that point on to have the 'desire of his heart' and finally to lose all of Egypt in the sea. It was the Trumpets of Judgment before that.

And so, all through history, God comes to a people who have rebelled against Him, and before final judgment, there come the Trumpets of God's Mercy, calling them to repentance.

Do you get the setting for that? Do you understand that?

The Six Trumpets

What do we understand by these six trumpets?

Remember, we are not going over this to interpret every detail. Some of the details, we will come back to as we get further in the Book and we relate it all together. But just get the general picture in that First Trumpet that sounds in Chapter Eight.

1. The First Trumpet

It tells me in Verse Seven, "*The first sounded; hail, fire mixed with blood, thrown to the earth.*"

It speaks of the earth -- not *all* of the earth, notice! *A third.* The point is there -- *not all* (of the earth). God is not coming in a sweeping judgment. *Not all!* But, there is part of the earth that is burned up. The green grass was burned up.

You are presented there with a picture. Remember, we are getting the whole 'punch' of the picture as we look at it. You are seeing there, *sinner man*

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meeting with God upon the land that supports his life, and he is discovering all around him that his very support of life is being taken away. He is meeting with God right there on his own earth.

You might remember that in Egypt, the whole support of Egypt was the River Nile. That was the first plague that God sent upon them. He took their source of life and He turned it into death; that is, *shed blood*. Death ran by them! Their very source of life had been smitten with God's plagues.

Do you remember also that God smote the dust of the earth? The very earth, on which they walked, they realized, was under the control of God. Or again, He called for the locusts that ate up everything that was green and they were left destitute. It was God meeting them just exactly where they had their sustenance of life.

2. The Second Trumpet

The Second Trumpet blew, and it said that '*something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.*'

That great mountain that burned with fire. I will not say that everybody would know what that is, but that is a quotation that is taken from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, which immediately tells us what that 'great mountain' is.

In the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapter 51, and Verse 25, it says:

Behold, I am against you, Oh destroying mountain, who destroys the whole earth, declares the Lord and I will stretch forth my hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and I will make you a burnt out mountain.

That mountain in Jeremiah Chapter 51 is the city or the people of Babylon. So, when I come to this Second Trumpet, God is going to Babylon and saying that it is going to be cast down into the sea, dispersed, smashed, *gone*, just as Jeremiah said it would. We shall be dealing for a whole hour, in a few weeks time, with Babylon and what that means in the Book of Revelation, so just shelve that -- file it.

But, just for the present, Babylon is the *world system* of the Bible. All that is behind the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and the people lorded over by Satan: ***That is Babylon***. God said that it is going to come like a burning mountain into the sea, finished and gone! We shall see how that literally takes place, and we shall come to that later.

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3. The Third Trumpet

The Third Trumpet is spoken of in Verse 10:

The third Angel sounded, a great star fell from Heaven, burning like a torch and it fell on a third of the rivers, and notice again, not on all the rivers, and on the springs of waters, and the name of the star is called 'wormwood' and a third of the waters became wormwood and many men died from the waters because they were made bitter.

The star that falls from Heaven. Remember, in the first chapter, Jesus gave us the 'key' to what a *star* meant. Do you remember? He said the 'stars' are the *messengers*, the angels that He held in His hands. So, one that 'flames, falling down from Heaven': *Here is a fallen messenger, one that fell from Heaven.* A spirit messenger that fell from Heaven and fell specifically to the waters.

What do waters mean in the Bible? That is the simplest of all, because it is in the New Testament! Do you remember? Jesus said to the woman in John Chapter Four, '*Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give shall never thirst again.*'

Obviously, He wasn't standing there with a big bottle of water. Obviously, He was speaking of that that both she and us can understand: *Where I drink is where my spirit is fed.*

Remember, He spoke similarly, '*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and out of him shall flow rivers of living water.*'

Water. A transition is easily made from 'water' to that which comes into my spirit, that which I drink from. Now, here are the '*waters that feed men.*' That is, here are the philosophies, the teachings that feed men. It says a demonic angel, a fallen spirit comes into all the philosophies that feed men, and his name is "Wormwood."

Wormwood is very bitter. In fact, in Deuteronomy 29, it is called something poisonous, deadly poisonous. Into the philosophies -- the way men think, and into all the teachings that guide the minds of men, there come ideas from the pit. I think if you look over the last few years, we probably know more about *wormwood water* than at any other time in history. It's always been there, but today, if you only step back, all the waters that are feeding mankind today are bitter, deadly poisonous! You have only to go to any bookstore. Every one of those novels and magazines on the shelves are '*waters that feed the souls of men*', and they are *wormwood*. They are bitter. They are deadly poison.

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Now notice this, in each case God allows this. The world system does not fall and collapse by accident. Man's very world on which he stands is not suddenly smashed and broken by accident, and all the filthy, putrid streams that flow into the minds of men do not come by accident. Men have rejected God, and so, as Romans 1 puts it, do you remember? It says, '*God gave them up.*' That does not mean to say he wiped His hands of them! No! Rather, '*if you want it, you may have it.*' That is the worst judgment anyone can ever know, when God allows man to have that which He craves. And so, the waters are made putrid and poisonous.

4. The Fourth Trumpet

It says in the Fourth Trumpet that '*a third of the lights in the heavens stop shining.*'

Darkness, or at least a *kind* of darkness, not total darkness, and here you have the confusion, men can no longer see. Remember that ninth plague of Egypt, when that intense darkness came upon Egypt while in Goshen where the Israelites were, it was light. So, you have a reminder here: the confusion, a total confusion in the minds of men. They wander. They bump into each other. They don't know where they are going.

It comes from God. He allows it in order that men may suddenly realize the situation they are in. From our perspective, when you look upon a world covered with confusion, when you see the putrid rivers, you wonder, *why don't people stop and realize what fools they are?* One of the plainest verses of the Bible in Romans 1 where it says, that "*professing themselves to be wise they became fools.*" When I listen to the philosophers on the radio sometimes that they put on in between newscasts, I shake my head and wonder how 1% of a brain could ever accept 1% of the nonsense that is pouring out of the mouths of 'so-called' doctors.

When I listen to what our children are taught in school in the name of *education*, I see darkness and confusion. Why doesn't someone out there realize that this is what man has got himself into? *I will turn to God.* It is a trumpet blowing in his ear, if only he could hear it.

5. The Fifth Trumpet

The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Trumpets are called 'Woes.' If that is bad, then says God, (*Listen to this!*):

"*Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!*" (At the blowing of these trumpets.)

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The fifth trumpet, which is the first 'woe,' describes a horde of creatures being let loose from the pit.

Notice, it says they were *like locusts*. Again, that takes us back to the plagues of Egypt, for they were *like locusts*.

Well, there was a plague of locusts if you recollect. Incidentally, that particular plague of Egypt was one of the most momentous of all the plagues, because it says the locusts came from far. They were blown by a wind, which was telling Egypt: *God is not only the God in control of Egypt! He controls the whole world, and He brings locusts from way over there, and they come like a great smoke pouring over the land of Egypt.*

God brought them from afar. It was a momentous plague. In this one, John sees a great smoke coming out of the bottomless pit. Out of it come these creatures that look like locusts.

But... But... But! **Hold it!**

Here are the strangest locusts you have ever seen or heard! To them it was commanded, '*do not eat any green things - you don't touch the green grass.*'

Well, what kind of locust is that that doesn't touch green? That's what a locust is! It comes upon the land and eats all that is green in front of it. So, here is a plague of locusts, but the locusts don't eat green!

What do they do then? They torment men. Here you have a picture of hordes of demon powers pouring out of the pit, and like locusts cover the land of green, so these 'demonic locusts' (if you will), they cover the land of men. *Woe*, indeed, to the inhabitants of the earth! They are led by one who is called *Apollion*, The Destroyer. It is a terrible picture as they torment men, and men scream, *but still they do not repent.*

Notice very, very, very clearly! In Verse 4 of Chapter 9, when it is speaking of these locust demons that come to torment men, it says: "*They are not to hurt the grass of the earth or any green thing...*" [That says that they are not real locusts!...] "*But only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*"

Not every man can be touched either. Many people today would disagree with me on that; argue with Chapter 9, Verse 4. It says that these hordes of demons that overshadow the world they cannot touch those who have the 'seal of God in their foreheads.' We have already seen that is the 144,000, which is the *Church of the Lord Jesus Christ*. So, although we are in the midst of a demonic invasion, and although hordes of demonic locusts

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cover the earth, **walk straight and tall child of God, you have the seal of God in your forehead, and you cannot be touched.** So says this vision.

6. The Sixth Trumpet

The Sixth Trumpet blows, which is the Second 'Woe'.

It says that *'the River Euphrates'*... There was given permission for hordes to come across the River Euphrates. What does the River Euphrates stand for?

In the Old Testament, the River Euphrates was the last barrier. The other side of River Euphrates was Babylon and Assyria. Whenever they came to invade Israel, always they had to cross the River Euphrates first. So the River Euphrates became, in the minds of the people, the barrier between them and those persons who would destroy them.

So, here comes a great force across the Euphrates. Destruction is on its way! That is what it is saying. But also, those persons beyond the River Euphrates were not just persons. They were, as we shall see, **Babylon.**

We're back to Babylon again!

What was Babylon in essence? *It was all the anti-Christian forces.* Antichrist is not a New Testament concept! It is only developed in the New Testament. Antichrist goes right back to the Book of Genesis, Chapter 10. Antichrist is as old as the Bible! For, as soon as God declared His Christ, Satan declared his Antichrist, and you have that from the beginning of the Bible. Antichrist was always the other side of the Euphrates, and whenever that was dried up or they came across, then all the powers that hated God were released.

(Again, we shall return to that 'Woe' later on in the Book.)

Now, all these things - they do not happen chronologically. But, I look across the world and I say, *'that is this trumpet,'* while *over there* I can see He is blowing *that* trumpet! These do not happen one after another, but they are happening all around us. It is for us to interpret what we see and hear in the light of what God says. *It is a trumpet - will men not hear?*

When men see the power of Satan in the world, will they not hear? God has allowed man to have what he wanted! At the same time, He holds His hand. He has His restraining hand. The devils cannot do what they want: *So far, no further!*

God is blowing a trumpet and saying, *'Here, is this what you want? Repent! The King has been crowned! Worship at His feet!'*

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Parenthetic Flash Back to the Church

But, after all of that, the Scripture says, '*men did not repent.*' Right there in Chapter 9, the last verse. It says,

And they did not repent to their murders nor their sorceries nor their immorality nor of their thefts.

They would not repent.

But just a minute! God says, "Hold Everything! **Hold Everything!**"

We are just about to blow the Seventh Trumpet. We will have moved right through the Vision then. God says, *Hold everything, we are going to have a parenthesis.*

Do you remember the same thing happened with the seals? One, two, three, four, five six, and God said, '*Hold everything?*'

What was the *Hold everything?* The 'Hold everything' was: **What happened to the Church?**

You mean, going through all that, there is still a Church left?

The 'parenthesis' of the seals was Chapter 7. God said, "*I'll show you what happened to the Church! I sealed the Church! I sealed them! Nobody can touch them! I have got my perfect Church.*"

Right? Do you understand what I am saying now?

Now! We have had One, two, three, four, five, six trumpets, and someone says, *what about the Church? You mean all that's going on?* The power of hell is raging against the Church. What has happened to the Church?

God says, "Stop! I will show you!" He says, "First of all, John you come here!"

(We are in the 'parenthesis' now!)

So, He said, '*Here is a measuring rod.*' Look! Suddenly on the great cosmic screen -- that outdoor movie that John was watching -- God says, '*walk on to the screen. Come on!*' And John walks out onto the screen. He's got a ruler in his hand!

God says, '*Now, measure the sanctuary.*'

There is a great temple. I think most of you know what we mean by the Temple and the Sanctuary: The Temple was the great thing itself; it had the courts, the Outer Court, the Court of the Gentiles, and all the massive courts of the Temple.

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The Sanctuary

The sanctuary was that, right in the center where the Holy of Holies was along with the Holy Place. That was special. That was the Sanctuary. The Greek word (that we shared with some of you before to describe that) is the 'naos.'

- The Holy of Holies

In the Old Testament, it was called Mount Zion; it was the innermost part where the Glory of God was.

Now John, I want you to walk right over there into the Vision and measure off the sanctuary that is separated. Take special note, John, the Altar is there. [Which altar was that? It was the golden altar of worship where incense rose to God.]

John, I want you to notice the worshippers that are in there - mark them off. What about all the rest of the Courts? Leave it! That is left to the world.

All those forces, which were pouring over the River Euphrates, that is, all the Anti-Christian forces, the world powers, it says that they marched on to the general temple grounds and they were allowed to trample it down. The Temple belonged to them it seemed. But, wherever John measured, they could not go in there! God said, "*That is my Naos! You can't go in there.*"

Have you got the picture?

What does it mean? The Church is not as big as it looks, you know.

The Temple looked very big! God said, '*the world can have it!*' They are called by the Name of God, but they are not of God. It is only the '*Naos!*' It is only the sanctuary! That is the real Church.

You will note in other parts of the Scripture, the New Testament, that all those that are *born again* are called by the name of 'the Sanctuary.' Do you remember that Paul addressed the Corinthians, both in 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, as well as II Corinthians 6:16. He says, "*don't you know that you are the Temple of the Living God; Temple of the Holy Spirit?*"

The word 'Temple' is this word *Naos*: Sanctuary.

He says, "*Hey you Christians there in Corinth, don't you know who you are? You are sanctuary where God lives? You are the dwelling place of God. That is who you are!*"

Ephesians 2:21 says the same thing: "*We are being built together a holy temple [naos], a habitation of God by the Spirit.*"

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That is who you are! In Old Testament days, God pleased His presence to be known, felt, and seen in that sanctuary. When Christ rose again from the dead, there is a new sanctuary where God is pleased to make His presence known, and Peter says it is made of *Living Stones*: People who have been vitally joined to the Living Jesus. *Now, we are the sanctuary of God.* Do you understand that?

“Now,” God says in the Vision, “*mark off the sanctuary.*”

The world cannot touch that! Let all the forces come. They cannot touch that. There are a whole lot of others who are called by the name of ‘Church.’ There are millions of others, for the courts of the Temple were much bigger than the *sanctuary*, and so, most of the Temple was trampled down by the world. *Most of it.*

Let’s face it! Most of what is called by the name of ‘Church’ is not *Church*. That is a solemn thing to think about. *That was trampled on by the world; that was invaded and possessed by the world* says the Vision. That is part of the “*cult church*,” which welcomes the ways of the world. Let them all come in.

Any ‘so-called’ Church: How do you find out if it is really ‘*Naos*,” or just ‘temple?’

Well, notice that John was told to look very carefully when he measured off the ‘*naos*.’ He was told to look at the altar and the worshippers. The altar, that was the golden altar where incense of worship was constantly ascending to God. Worshippers would be clustered around that, all worshipping God.

You don’t know whether a man is in the ‘*naos*’ by the fact that he goes to Church. You know he is in the ‘*naos*’ because of a living relationship between his spirit and God, and worship flows from him to God. *It is worship*, says this Vision *that tells you where a man stands*. That company of worshipping people who have been born again of the Spirit of God and are flowing unto God, that company cannot be touched.

The False Church Outside the Sanctuary

But, many others who name the name of God, and who (face it!) name the name of Christ! *But, they aren’t in the temple.* They have been invaded by the world, and they have welcomed the world, and they are trampled by the world. Solemn words!

Do you remember, in the Old Testament when David, as he was coming up to Jerusalem with the Ark? Do you remember that story? He got so

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excited, so thrilled, so joyous that he actually danced and leaped and praised God and spun around in the air and sang songs! Do you remember when he got home that night, who was waiting at the door with a look that could kill a dog dead? His wife Michal! She says, '*you have made a fool of yourself; acting like a peasant!*'

Now, what has gone wrong with Michel? She was raised in the Covenant Community! She could discuss God as well as anybody! *What suddenly threatened her?* She was 'threatened' by the sight of a man praising God. Anybody can talk about God, but let a man praise Him as if He is really there, and the 'Temple' gets uptight!

Worship also reduced King David to the level of a Commoner, because peasants praised God and David had to put off his kingly robes to praise God.

Praise reduces every man to become a creature before God. There is no hierarchy. There are no royal robes now! There are only praises.

God said, "*If you want to find the 'naos,' find the people who worship God and know He is really there, and are reduced to the level of a creature -- hopelessly dependent on the grace of God.*" You have found the Church! That true Church cannot be touched. It is surrounded by the false Church. Immediately surrounded by the false Church. That is the Temple area, and out there is the world, the 'city,' which we are going to see, that is called Sodom, Egypt and Jerusalem. We are surrounded on all sides, but you cannot be touched. Cannot... cannot, **cannot** be touched! You have been 'measured off.'

However, there is another aspect to the Church: If I look at the church as the worshipping 'naos,' the sanctuary, I don't care! Come Hell or persecution! They can't touch it!

The Two Witnesses

But, there is a side of the church that *can* be touched.

And so, the Vision suddenly changes, in Chapter 11. We see *two witnesses*. Now, bless your hearts! I have heard more about these two witnesses, and I think we know more about these two witnesses than the FBI knows about the Ten Most Wanted men!

If this is a Book of symbols, then obviously, *whatever* it means, it does not mean *two witnesses!* 'Two witnesses' is a symbol. 'Two witnesses' is an idea, and the Bible makes it very plain to me, oh, so plain. (Once you understand that the Bible interprets the Bible, the 'keys' are hanging up just waiting to be taken off the hook.)

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Look at these two witnesses – the symbol. Put it together. Look it as one symbol: Two witnesses who prophesy. They are dressed in sackcloth, fire comes from their mouth, they have the power to shut the sky, to turn water to blood, and to strike the earth with plagues. And, they are called '*the two olive trees,*' *two lamps* that stand before the Lord of all the earth.

Now, the symbolism there is so simple.

Do you know that this is one of the simplest visions of the Book?

Two Witnesses: All the way back in Deuteronomy it begins to talk about that. This is nothing new! It says that '*in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.*'

That is, no testimony is a valid testimony until it has been confirmed in the mouth of at least two witnesses. So, *two witnesses* is a shorthand symbol for saying a *perfect and complete testimony to truth*. Do you get that?

'Two witnesses' is a symbol. It is not *two witnesses*. It is a symbol. It is an idea. It is shorthand and it says, 'two witnesses' means *the perfect, complete testimony to the Truth*. The Church is not only a worshipping community; the Church also is the perfect witness of God to truth on the streets of this world. Okay? You can't touch the worshipping community, but you can touch its *public witness*. That is why the two witnesses are killed.

If you look at the Church in one aspect, it is the Sanctuary. All the powers of communism, Red China, Black Russia, where you will, **they cannot touch it!** There is a tremendous Church in China today. You can't touch the 'naos!' The Sanctuary in China is as strong today as it has ever been. Bu, they have sure done a job on the 'two witnesses.' Do you follow what I mean? The public testimony of the Church in China is silenced. But the Church isn't.

Follow this through: *Who is the Church at witness?* It says they prophesied. *What is prophecy?* Prophecy is to speak on behalf of God. Prophecy is not to foretell the future; it is to speak forth on behalf of God. (It is a *word of wisdom* that foretells the future.) But, to 'prophesy' is to speak forth on behalf of God. So, here is the Church, and its perfect witness speaking forth on behalf of God, and it goes on and says *they are dressed in sackcloth*.

A cursory reading of the Old Testament will tell you very quickly that, whenever a person repented (in the Old Testament), they always wore sackcloth. Do you recollect that?

So here is a Church, and it stands in its public witness before the world and it does so in repentance, over against a world that is very unrepentant, a

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world that has heard the trumpets. It is hearing the trumpets and refuses to repent! Standing, in the midst of that unrepentant world, is a Church whose very lifestyle says, '*We have repented. We have yielded to God, we have responded to Him and now are speaking forth on His behalf.*'

Notice that it says that their *doing that* tormented the people that were on earth. On the one hand, the world itself is tormenting the world. The hordes of demons that men wanted in the first place, and got what they wanted, are tormenting men. But, set down among them, a Church whose very lifestyle says, '*We have repented of sin,*' and we now speak forth on behalf of God. That torments men, too! Men are tormented by truth and they are tormented by lies, and still they will not repent.

It says '*fire came out of their mouth.*' The word of God is like a fire that consumes the enemy. That is an idea that runs through the Old Testament.

You will also find that they were able to '*shut the sky.*' Who shut the sky in the Old Testament? *Elijah did.* What does that mean? Does that one mean that one of them was Elijah? No, no, no.

That is telling us that, as Elijah stood in a world that had rebelled against God and refused to repent, as Elijah stood in the midst of that world, he was a man who was the very incarnation of repentance, and he spoke forth on behalf of God, and he was able to prove his words by works: So the Church stands in a similar world with similar power, and can prove what they say.

The Church, the whole Church is an Elijah in the middle of the world!

Do you follow what I am saying?

It also tells us that they are able to '*turn water into blood.*' Who did that? Moses. That doesn't mean to say that the other one is Moses! It means that, another way of looking at this Church is, that as Moses stood with a congregation of people who didn't half believe him, against a world a world government that hated him and his God, and Moses *stood there*: The testimony to Truth in the middle of lies. Even so, the Church stands, the perfect testimony to Truth, in the middle of a world that is set against God.

And, it says these are the two olive trees that stand before God in all the earth. Do you know where that comes from? Echo... echo... **echo!** Listen!

Have you ever read Zechariah? Zechariah Chapter 4: Do you remember these words? It says, '*Behold! A lamp stand all of gold with a bowl*

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on top of it, seven lamps, also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.

We have already talked about that seven-branched candlestick. That is the Church, the Church – *how? The Church in its mystical relationship to Jesus.*

Standing right beside it is another symbol: *Two olive trees*, which stand before the Lord of all the earth, *The Church in all its power and witness.* It goes on to say, (This is the Word of the Lord saying), *“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts.”*

And it says, *‘What are you, oh Great Mountain?’*

This mountain stands ‘before.’ It says here that it’s got to go! It’s got to go! For, there stands here the perfect witness of God that speaks with all the power of God, and none can resist it. You would do well to study Zechariah Chapter 4 and realize that it is telling us here that these men, who are the symbols of the Church – That the Church which is able to stand in the middle of that world and speaks with power is one that is receiving the oil of the Holy Spirit, helpless in itself, totally dependent upon the Lord, speaking forth on His behalf.

Now it says there is a Beast. You have not met the beast yet. He comes on stage in the next scene. He is just put in here, because remember, we are going along, and we have nearly come to the end of this Vision. We double back to the beginning again and discover who the beast is.

But the beast, *let me anticipate*, is ‘world power’. This world power puts the two witnesses to death. It describes the city where they were put to death as Sodom. Mystically, it doesn’t say it is Sodom, but this is what it is called to let you know what it is.

What was Sodom? Sodom was all manner of sexual perversion.

What was Egypt? Egypt was the great power, government.

It says, *also the city where they crucified the Lord.* That was Jerusalem. *What does Jerusalem stand for in the Bible?* There are two Jerusalem’s in the New Testament. One is the Jerusalem where they crucified Jesus, which is the Jerusalem in the Middle East today. The other Jerusalem is always called the Jerusalem, *which is above*, or the New Jerusalem. The one below, where they crucified the Lord, is always termed as ‘apostate religion.’

So, who put the public witness of the Church to death? All the lust and greed for immorality, government power, and apostate religion, for they are all in the same ‘kit and caboodle.’ They are all one together, and they put the

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Church to death, and they have a merry time rejoicing. The Church is still there. You can't touch the 'naos,' but its public witness to truth has been silenced. Do you understand what I am saying?

You can understand a lot of things that are happening across the world today in the light of that.

Elijah thought that when the public witness of the Church was put to death, then the Church was finished. Dear Old Elijah thought that! Do you remember when he cried "There's nobody left but me Lord"? The Lord said, "*Of course not!*"

Elijah thought he was the only remaining public witness, now he has been silenced by Jezebel. So, he said, "It's all over!" *If the Church can't talk, then we are finished!*

God said, "*Not at all! Not at all! I still have seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*" No one has touched the 'naos,' and no one can.

You look across the world. You say, '*where is the Church in Vietnam, where is the Church in Cambodia?*' Doing very nicely, thank you very much! There's nothing wrong with the Church there at all. It is probably stronger than the Church in America. Its voice may be silenced. The two witnesses are lying in the street.

As we come to the end of this parenthetical vision, it says that '*the same way the world treated Jesus, they have now treated the Church.*' They slew Him! The greatest judgment that can ever come upon a country or a city is when the Church is silenced, when the only speaking voice of God on earth has been silenced. Then man has cut himself off from the only way of hearing God speak, and they are making merry. The same way they treated Jesus, they have treated the Church.

However, God treats the Church the same way as He treated Jesus! And it says that they were raised again. Of course, the Church wherever it is persecuted, certainly lives in the mighty power of the Resurrection! That is why I say that the Church in Cambodia is probably stronger than the one here.

Also, this anticipates the final day, where it speaks of the Light of Colossians 3:4,

If Christ is our life, then when He shall appear, then we shall also appear with Him.

The same 'glory' of the resurrected Christ is the glory of the resurrected Church. Both *got* the same treatment. Both *get* the same treatment.

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You get the same idea contained in Philippians 3:21:

This vile body of our humiliation should be changed to be made like unto His glorious body.

It is the same idea as in I John 3:1:

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we are called the Sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when we see Him, we shall be like Him.

Things aren't what they seem to be. The Church seems to be battered, mutilated, shut up, and put underground. That is why this Book is a blessing to all who read it, because you might just be underground, kicked in the mouth and shut up. And you suddenly realize the 'naos' has not even been touched.

I am still alive unto God in my heart! They can't touch me!

7. The Seventh Trumpet

Then, He says, we come to the Seventh Trumpet. "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." It is the Third Woe. But, the announcement is rather old as far as the Church is concerned, because it says that, "*the Kingdom of the World has become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.*"

The Church knew that ever since the resurrection! That is what the Church has been trying to tell the world all this time. That is what the trumpets have been all about: *A King has been crowned. Worship Him!*

But, the world missed it, deliberately, by choice. So, here is the final announcement of that. While the Church is described here as moving into an ecstasy of worship, for the world, that is **woe**.

We have often heard it said... (I trust out of people's ignorance; if it is not out of ignorance, it is foolishness.) They have said, "*The only hope of the world is the return of Jesus.*" That is rubbish!

When Jesus comes, that is the hope of the Church, *not* the hope of the world. The worst thing that could ever happen for the world is that Jesus returns.

"Woe, woe, **woe** to the inhabitants of the earth..." when the world hears what we **know**, that '*the kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ.*'

The Seventh Trumpet is another story that we reserve for another time, but let it be understood that only the Church went into ecstasy of worship. The world collapsed into horrors of woe!

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And so, we come to the end of that Third Vision of Revelation.

I trust that you have seen what its Trumpets, its 'measured sanctuary', its 'two witnesses' and its 'Seven Trumpets' mean.

Amen.

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THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST

Revelation Chapter 12:

A great sign appeared in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. And, she was with child and she cried out being in labor and in pain to give birth.

Now remember (and forgive me if I continually repeat this), but we are going back again.

Look at Revelation as: A Vision - STOP! A Vision - STOP! You will continually begin with the first coming of Christ and all that transpired thereafter, and you will end with the End of all Things. Not every Vision emphasizes the first coming. They almost assume it. Not every Vision emphasizes The End. They just kind of assume it.

But gradually, each Vision takes its own view. And so, we went from the First Vision, all the way, and 'The End' was sort of fuzzy -- just assumed. The Second Vision was just emphasizing the first coming of Christ, the Lamb upon the Throne. 'The End' was a silence in Heaven for half an hour. It just 'peters out.' Then, the Vision we considered in our last hour, that got much closer. It only assumed the first coming of Christ, but at the end it told us that it was the ecstasy of those in Heaven, and the woe for those on earth.

The Fourth Vision

Now, we start all over again with the Fourth Vision. Do you really see what we are doing here?

Again, it is *principles* that we are looking at. Now, where does this Company of people we are dealing with in all these Visions (the Church) come from? Did they just suddenly 'happen?' No! They come from a long history.

The Woman

In this next Vision, we deal with that long history. We find it is a woman, *clothed with the sun in all the glory*. Who is that woman?

Again, as soon as we open the Old Testament Scriptures it becomes very, very simple. The description that is given of that woman is almost the very same that Joseph gave of an Israel not yet born. Do you remember when Joseph came down to breakfast and told his dream, and he said, *I saw the sun*

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and the moon and, he saw the stars bowing down? Here you have the very same words that are used concerning that woman.

Also, you will notice the fact that it is a woman. That is emphasized in the Old Testament many, many times. Turn at your leisure to Chapter 50 of Isaiah and Verse 1. We are not dealing with the exact exposition of that verse, but this is how it describes Israel. It says,

Raise the certificate of divorce by which I have sent your mother away
or, to whom of my creditors did I sell you?

He refers to the nation of Israel as a woman. Okay? Then, you will find in Isaiah 54:1 similarly,

Shout for joy, oh barren one, you who have born no child.

It speaks there, again that *“more numerous will be the sons of this woman than of the married woman.”* Again, it is neither here nor there what he was really talking about. The point is, He was he was addressing Israel as a woman. And so, it is a theme of the Old Testament: A woman who was glorious with the glory of God: She was the Bride of Jehovah. I think that became apparent in our first Scripture there - *the Bride of Jehovah*.

- And so here is a woman, and she is pregnant. Israel of the Old Testament is a pregnant woman. If you trace the seed, even before Israel was Israel, the promised seed in Genesis 3:15. Do you remember that? *“The seed of the woman...”*
- Then, you move on to Noah who carries ‘the seed’ through the Flood. He gives it to one of his sons called Shem, and Shem carries the promise.
- The promise is re-made or enlarged upon to Abraham, and, of course then is the beginning of the Israeli nation.
- In Jacob and his twelve sons, you have the first public view of this ‘woman’ who was to be known as the Bride of Jehovah, and right there, that woman is pregnant with a promise that God gave. The promise of the Chosen One of God, the promise that one day, a Descendant shall come through whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed.
- By the time David is King, the pregnancy is advanced, for now we know it shall be a descendant of David. He shall have a descendant who shall sit upon a throne forever and ever.
- Through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and the Prophets, the promise becomes bigger and bigger, and the Scripture refers to her as a

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pregnant woman about to give birth. Take Jeremiah 4:31, speaking of Israel, he says,

For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, the anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands saying, "Woe is me, for I faint before murderers."

So, here is Israel, not just *Israel*, but note that it says '*the daughter of Zion.*' If only we had the time to pursue that idea, but some of you have heard me talk about that. Zion was that company of people who worshipped God in Spirit and in Truth in that Old Testament day. And, here it says of Israel, the true Israel, and the *believing* Israel of the Old Testament: *She is 'crying out as a woman about to give birth to a child but she is confronted by murderers.'*

If that does not fit this passage! *A woman about to give birth confronted by a great dragon.* This is Israel of the Old Testament that it speaks of.

In the book of the Prophet Micah, you have a similar verse. In Micah 4:8-9, you can read about it, where it speaks of Israel as a woman about to deliver a child. So, the Israel or the Church of the Old Testament is described as a pregnant woman, glorious with the glory of God. That is why Israel, in the Old Testament, was the chosen nation, because they carried The Chosen One. The Church of the New Testament is the woman delivered of that child, and now living in His strength and power, as we shall see in a moment.

The Child

Who was this child that was born to her?

Again, in Chapter Twelve of Revelation, it says *she was with child, and that she cried out in labor in pain to give birth.* Now, it speaks in (verses) 3 and 4 about the *dragon.* We will come to that in a moment.

In Verses 4 and 5, it says '*she gave birth to a son, a male child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God and His throne.*'

Now really, does that need very much interpretation? We have the key to that. Just to keep to what we are saying and not guesswork, the Bible tells me who that is in Psalm 2:9, where it specifically speaks of Jesus. In plain words, it speaks of the Lord's anointed in His resurrection, and it says that *He shall rule with a rod of iron.*

So, we have the very expression used in Revelation 12, interpreted for us by Psalm 2:9.

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Notice also, in this very book itself, in Chapter Two, Revelation 2:27: *"He shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of a potter are broken to pieces, as I also (Jesus is speaking!) received authority from My Father."* So, that very verse from Psalm 2:9 is quoted in Revelation 2:27. We have got the key to this portion here. So the man-child, which Israel delivered -- Jesus, said in John Chapter 4, *'Salvation is of the Jews.'* Christianity is Jewish, real Jewish. We are not completed Jews. We are just 'Jews of God's.'

The Dragon

Out from Israel came the man-child, Jesus Christ. Standing in front of the woman the whole time, says the Scripture, was *the dragon*. Again, you don't really need too much interpretation for that.

It says, in Verse Three (of Chapter 12):

Another sign appeared in Heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads, ten horns. On his head were the seven diadems. His tail swept away the a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

Verse Nine interprets for us. There are some times in the Revelation when it is so important you know who it is talking about, He throws in the interpretation for you. Notice Verse Nine. It says *"the great dragon, the serpent of old, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."* Just in case you should miss who it is, it gives you a clear description.

Notice how he is described. It says he has *seven heads and each one was crowned*. The number seven is the number of *fullness*. It is normally spoken of God, the Perfection of Fullness, but on this occasion, it is spoken of the Devil. He had seven heads with seven crowns. It was a *fullness of royalty*. It was a royalty that could not be added to.

Ten horns? We have often discussed before that the number *ten* means *completion*. When you count up to *ten*, you have to start again with *one*... So, *ten* is for *completion*. Horns, we have also seen, speak of 'power,' or 'authority in power.'

So, here is this monster that appears in a cosmic operatic screen. It is telling us something! It is a shorthand symbol for something. It is saying that the Devil is a ruler on earth. He does not have this (power) across the Universe, but on earth. In the time that we are speaking of, he is standing before the pregnant Israel and with a *fullness of royalty*. He is the God of this world! He is the prince of the power of the air, with *fullness of royalty* and

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complete *power* over the minds of men on this earth. Behind all the nations stands the Devil.

Notice, it says that he *swept a third of the stars with his tail*. Stars, we have seen, speak of messengers, angelic beings. It says a third of the angels fell and became demons.

Notice that, those of you who may be afraid of devils. There are twice as many angels as there are demons. *Nice to know!* To hear some people talk today, you would think that there is half an angel for every three demons! Only a third of the stars, and, whatever that means, it certainly means *not all!* There are twice as many angels as there are demons.

It says that he *stood in front of the pregnant woman, ready to devour the Child* as soon as *it was born*. All history speaks of that, and, if we had time we could go right through all the Old Testament history seeing how the Devil was seeking to devour the Chosen One even before He was born.

It is a thrilling story all the way:

- *What was behind Pharaoh as he sought to throw the babies in the river?* The Devil was searching! The Devil knew that somewhere in that Company of people, there was the family that ultimately would bring forth the Chosen One. So, get rid of all the males! Finish the nation! Behind it was the dragon who was 'seeking to devour' the Child even before it was born. It comes to some thrilling moments;
- *Do you remember Queen Athaliah who went into the royal nursery and killed every one of the babies there?* Only, she missed one, and that one was the one who carried the promised seed.
- And so it goes on, it is a long study you could carry on right through the Old Testament, right up to Herod. *What was behind Herod when he said, 'kill every male child in Bethlehem?' It was the dragon!*

The Dragon Defeated

Now the Child has been born, and the dragon's mouth snaps shut! But, he missed! It says he was totally defeated. He failed! The Child was caught up to God and His Throne. So, the whole finished work of Christ is summed up in His Ascension. There is *assumed* The Cross, *assumed* the burial, and *assumed* the resurrection. Now, He ascends! In that, Satan has failed. The Man-child ascends.

You have such verses as Ephesians 1:19 through the end of that chapter where it says that He "*ascended far above all principality and power,*

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every name that is named.” Or, you have I Peter 3:22, where it says that “*He made all principalities and powers subject to Him.*”

Times have changed! Suddenly, he who *had* power has *lost* his power.

John, Chapter 12:31-33 speaks of the Prince of this World as *being judged at the Cross. Done!*

At that time, in Revelation Chapter 12, it says *there was war in Heaven.* Now, war in Heaven was at the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He who had power and authority in the heavens, in the spirit world, over the minds of men: He lost that power! Again, that is one of the things we are going to return to and look at in far greater detail later on, but let it be established that this chapter tells us that he lost his power when Jesus Christ rose again from the dead.

It says, at that time, *the Heavens rejoiced!* All those who dwelled in the Heavens rejoiced. *Who is that? Know Thyself.* If you are born again, it says that you *dwell in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Inside you, inside your spirit, you (in your spirit) are those designated as the ones who dwell in Heaven. When you realize the finished work of Christ and realize that He has cast Satan down and broken his power, then, along with everyone else in the heavens, we rejoice!

Do you get the picture?

Special mention made there that *Michael did battle with the Devil.* If you trace Michael, there is not much said about him in the Bible, but he is the highest order of angel, that is about as much as we know. But he always stood up on behalf of Israel. And so, here Israel the woman, and Michael, that magnificent spirit person who stood up on behalf of Israel, is seen in that final battle. The Devil, who had ever sought to consume the true Israel, is now cast down.

And the Heavens rejoiced!

Satan had lost all his power. He once had power, but he has lost it. His power, it was in the Law of God, for he could always point to the law and say, *you have not kept it.* That made you his prey, and you cringed before that law of God and you knew you had not kept it. The Bible says in I Corinthians Chapter 15 that *the strength of sin is the law.* Do you follow what I am saying there?

I think some of you who have not fully seen the finished work of Jesus might even cringe before the law even yet. You look at that law and you say, *I*

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am unworthy, unworthy, unworthy! And, the Devil says, 'you should belong to me,' and you say, 'That's right.'

The strength of sin is in the law. But now, he is cast down, and so the Scripture says that, "*they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the Word of their testimony and they did not love their life until the death.*"

They overcame the Devil! How did they do it? 'By the blood of the Lamb.' What does that mean? It means that I look back to the Blood of the Lamb, back to the great victory that has, (*past tense*) been accomplished. I rest upon that once-for-all shed Blood of the Lamb.

Whenever you meet anything that is Satanic, we do not initiate a battle! We recognize a battle that has been won. They overcame him, not by a fight. They overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb! (Which is a 'fought!' That's not good English, but I think you know what I mean! It means we recognize that it has been fought.) By the word of their testimony, they overcame this dragon by resting on a once-for-all accomplished fact, and their testimony to that fact.

Also, *they loved not their lives unto death*, which is very significant. It means that, sometimes, you overcome the Devil by being killed. Now, that doesn't make sense, but you might as well get used to it. Revelation is full of it. Do you remember in Hebrews 11 it says there isn't time to tell of all the mighty exploits of faith? They subdued kingdoms, and shut the mouth of lions. *That is faith, Boy! That is faith!* Had the dead raised... *Give it to us! That is faith!* Others endured mockings and scourgings, who died... *Faith?*

Yes! Sometimes faith raises the dead. Sometimes faith walks boldly into the arena to be torn apart by lions. Faith... *they loved not their lives unto death...*

*"I know that it is **done**. I give testimony to that! Even if I die, I die an overcomer, because I will not give in."*

Do you see what I am saying here?

So, here are the 'rejoicing ones,' over a Devil who is totally defeated.

The Dragon Attacks the Woman

However, what has happened?

It says that now that he (Satan) lost the child, he turned his attention to the woman who had given birth to the child. *That is the Israel of the New Testament. That is the Church.*

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We don't have time to really go into that, and we have done it elsewhere, and we've been hinting at it all along. But, the Church is the extension of the true Israel. Read Romans Chapter 11. It says the roots of the Church are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The stem, as it grew, is the Old Testament believers. And, it says those Jews who did not believe on the Messiah, they were broken off, thrown out of the True Israel, and you Gentiles who did believe Messiah were grafted back in.

And so, get used to it!!!

Your roots are Israeli. Your roots are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You are the other end of Israel and the glorious pregnant woman is the stem of the tree, and the woman now delivered of the Child is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other Israel in the Bible.

And so here is this woman, the Church, and the Devil turns his attention to her. It says that she was protected in the wilderness, given the wings of a great bird to fly there. That is so Old Testament!

Do you remember Exodus 19:14? God describes bearing Israel on eagle's wings out of Egypt: There is the clawing Pharaoh seeking to get the people of God, and by miracle power, by deliverances beyond the minds of men, God took Israel to Mount Sinai to fellowship with Him. The same idea is brought out in Deuteronomy 32:11.

Do you remember Isaiah 40:31? I know you know that! It says, "*They who wait upon the Lord shall rise up as wings of eagles.*" Why do we have such a problem with Revelation 12 when it uses that same symbolical language? But, as the Church of Jesus Christ waits upon the Lord, so the Holy Spirit becomes wings of eagles. The wilderness, in that verse, refers back to Exodus - the idea that God takes you back into His place, and there you fellowship with Him. Even though the world is hard on your heels, God handles them.

It says, "Out of the Devil's mouth there came water."

We are back to water again. We have already seen in our last hour that water is where spirits drink. It also says in Revelation 1 that, out of the mouth of Jesus, His words *were like the sound of many waters.*

Here we have out of the Devil's mouth a *spring of water.* Remember in I Timothy 4:1, it says that the Church should be ready. It says that there will be doctrines of demons. Hard on the heels of the Church comes a spewed-out river straight out of the mouth of Satan. If he can't persecute the Church, he will send a river of the doctrine of demons to trip her up, sidetrack her.

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You watch it, it is happening right now. There is a charismatic renewal, the Devil can't persecute, so out of his mouth comes the doctrine of devils. What do you look for in a doctrine of devils? You look for any doctrine that sidetracks you to a thing, a philosophy, to an idea. Any doctrine that exalts Jesus Christ as Lord, you can rest in as being okay. No doctrine of devils ever does that. But anything that sidetracks you, that gets you all bound up in rules and regulations: Fast Days, Holy Days, Little Days, Big Days, Do This, Do That, Don't Do This, Don't Go There! It is a doctrine from the Devil that sidetracks you from the main issue.

But, it says that the earth just absorbed all the water, or as the Scripture says, "*When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.*"

The Devil needs help. It is a satanic trinity. So, suddenly the whole scene changes. We are back to the cosmic stage again; only this time it is the raging waters of the sea. Throughout the Old Testament, it is established that the sea, in all its raging, is like and is likened to the nations of the world. They are the restless, tossing sea.

The Beast

It says that out from that sea there came a great beast: ten crowned horns, seven heads full with the names of blasphemy. It had a body like a leopard. It had the rending teeth of a bear, and it had a lion's mouth. *Any echoes?* Have you ever read Daniel Chapter 7 where he saw the nations of the world: one like a leopard, one like a bear, and one a great monster?

The Church is the embodiment of the Holy Spirit. We are facing here world governments, the embodiment of the Devil. If the Devil doesn't come eyeball-to-eyeball, then he will come through his body, which are the governments of this world. Interestingly enough, all the governments of the world think they are terrific. God says, "*You are a dirty, ugly beast.*"

The ten crowned horns. That is the completion of power.

The seven heads. Using the number seven again, this means the fullness of governments. In that sense, we could say this means all of the major governments of the world. And, let me say this, and please do not misunderstand me, but not only do we go far back to ancient Babylon when we say the governments of the world, we also include the British Empire and the American government too.

There is no government *under* God on this earth. If we were what we claimed to be, then the King would be Jesus.

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Every government of this world is included in the 'seven' it is fullness: All the governments of this world. Some are certainly better than others, but when all is said and done, the Devil uses them in his own unique way. Saying that, I am not anti-American at all. I am pro-American, but I have to have a Scriptural view. The Roman Empire was pretty good too. I would not have minded living during some times of the Roman Empire. They all thought they were good, and in the eyes of men they were good, but God said *when all is said and done you are part of the whole beast and you are doing the Devil's work in the long run.*

Remember: Satan wanted to give Jesus the Eighth Head. Do you remember that? He said, *"I will give you the Kingdoms of the world."* Then, he got into the heads of the Jewish people, and they came and offered Jesus a literal kingdom on earth. He turned them down, because He was not about to become the Eighth Head. He was about to establish a kingdom that was quite 'other' than all the governments of the world. Think about that! Blasphemy? What is blasphemy? It is that self-sufficiency, that arrogance, that independence which says, *"I can do without God!"* It is the establishment of self as the absolute; it is declaring that power is in affluence, rank, and might. That sounds pretty American, doesn't it? Do you see what I mean? You can blaspheme in many different ways. Taken to its extreme, it is cursing God; it is saying, *"Away with God."*

The very first government of this world was established in Genesis Chapters 10 and 11, by a man called Nimrod. I wish we had time to go into this, but Nimrod is worshipped throughout time and throughout the earth under many different names. He was the first man to declare himself as God -- over against God. One of the many names that Nimrod was worshipped under is *Atlas*. Atlas is seen lifting the Heavens. Do you know what that originally meant way back there in Babylon? Nimrod was the man who emancipated men from God. He pushed the heavens away from man, and he was worshipped as the *Atlas* or the 'great emancipator' who broke the ties of covenant and lifted the heavens away from man.

Now, that is the world: *We are free from God.* Psalms 2, Verses 1 and 2. Nations raging "Away with God!" Names of blasphemy. The whole world looks at its affluence and its might, and says, *"Who is like the beast?"* Awed! It's got to be right! It is might! It couldn't be wrong! It is so great!

John looked at it, and suddenly he saw it receive a deadly wound: *A sigh of relief.*

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We are back again. The Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ. Jesus rose again from the dead, and the nations of this world received a deadly wound! The Devil seems as though he's lost, but lo! Look! He said that the deadly wound is healed! Although the nations of this world are smitten at the cross, they are still here.

What is happening? The wound is healed? *You mean the beast wasn't really killed?*

Oh yes, hang around! Wait and see! You will soon find out that wound was for real. The kingdoms of this world are still here. In the midst of those kingdoms, over which Jesus is declared Lord now, the Gospel must be preached right **to** them, right **in** them, and right **among** them. It looks as if the wound that was inflicted upon *Anti-Christian* nations and peoples was so healed that there was no effect. Time will tell! There is a very, very deep eternal effect.

But right now, we stand among the nations of the world and we proclaim The Gospel that Jesus Christ is Lord right in the midst of those nations.

I think we have got to understand that repentance includes changing our minds about the beast as well as about God. I am personally shocked at the way we English-speaking peoples adore the beast. I left it in England; I met it in America. *Who is like the beast?* The British way of Life, you know: Stiff upper lip and all that and everything that goes with it. We worship the British way of life, best ever you know!

Come over here. Salute the flag! *America.*

Watch it. I am not saying be anti-British or anti-American. But, don't be carried away into nationalism and a patriotism that puts a nation before God. We repent of the beast! Baptism in water, according to Scripture is that I am *cut off* from my society to enter the grand Society of Jesus Christ. The Church is called a Holy Nation. We have joined an international nation, and the very first command our King Jesus gives us is to behave ourselves in the nation where we find ourselves, to obey the authorities and respect them. But, we are to understand we have one King.

That was the whole issue of the early Church. That is what it is here for. Do you say the beast is Lord, or do you say Jesus is Lord? And they were the best citizens Rome ever had, but they said, *Jesus is Lord.* Do you follow what I am saying?

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Governments that oppress the Church, governments that lead you away, and the power of force and might: When the Devil tries it, it doesn't always work! I mean... you throw them to the lions and what happens? *Everyone wants to become a Christian.*

The False Prophet

So, the big beast needs a little helper, and out of the earth came a 'dear' little beast. It looked like a lamb, spoke like a dragon, and expressed all the authority of the first beast. Ahhh! Now we have a problem. I had no trouble with the Devil when he came on bloody red -- the murderer, the liar. We know him. Great anti-Christian governments or governments that speak blasphemies? No trouble! Not really! As they oppress, we thrive.

But, a little sheep? That is what the whole book is about, 'a *Lamb as it had been slain.*'

Here is a lamb -- not as it had been slain. The Devil works through governments, but he also works through a counterfeit church that talks about Jesus the Lamb, but *not the Lamb as it had been slain*. It talks about Jesus, but if you have ears to hear, you can hear a dragon snarling. Later on in the book, this beast that looks like 'a lamb' is called *the false prophet*. Prophet is one who speaks forth on behalf of God. Here is the *false prophet*. At the very heart of it all, the word Antichrist does not mean to be *against Christ*. The word Antichrist means to be over against Him -- an alternative, if you like.

Do you know what they called Nimrod? One of his titles in ancient Chaldea was Zoroastra. You might have heard of Zoroastra. Do you know what it means in Chaldean? It means "the seed of the woman." Those ancient peoples held the promises of Genesis 3:15 that the *seed of the woman would come and deliver the human race*, and they called Nimrod Zoroastra, which means *the seed of the woman*. Here is your anointed one. Here is your Messiah. Here is the emancipator of the human race. He was an alternative to Jesus Christ. The Devil doesn't say that Jesus is wrong! He said, *look at mine*.

I don't come and throw stones through your paint shop window; I open one up next door. Do you see what I mean? I don't believe communism is the Antichrist. Communism is *against Christ*. That is the governments of the world!

Antichrist: whatever, whoever, however -- is *religious*. I think we are a lot closer to Antichrist when we go to church than when we are standing at the Berlin Wall. Do you follow me? Little lambs that bleat like dragons -- an alternative! Here is the lamb as it had been slain, the Lord's Christ. The devil

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said, "*Here is a lamb -- my alternative.*" Do you get the picture? This religious beast: In Matthew 7:15, Jesus called them '*wolves in sheep's clothing.*' II Corinthians 11:14 speaks of the Devil as '*an angel of light.*' *Anti* is the one that expresses the authority of the first beast. They are all 'part and parcel.'

I don't know which denomination you belong to. It doesn't really matter. Truth is truth, isn't it? I'll let you be the judge.

I can identify, just like that the denominations of today that are linked to that *little lamb that talks like a dragon*. Has your denomination given part of your cash to help support militants? Do you see what I mean? The religious beast and the government beast, they all work together. You say, '*Government, military action, oppression, what has that got to do with the church?*'

I say, Amen, what has it got to do with the Church? But, apparently the "churches" of today seem to be pretty tied in close together. There are court cases going on in Manhattan right now with certain members of "church" which is to do with militants. World governments, military action -- all tied in with the Church? *The Church?*

Yes! That is what Revelation 13 is talking about! Beware of this little lamb that bleats like a dragon but is in fact linked up with the second member of the satanic trinity. *Who is like the beast? It is so big it must be right.* And the little lamb goes 'baaaaaaah'. I can't go against my Church! I must do what my Church says! Then you get that other stuff that comes along and says, '*I must submit to my authority.*' Not when my authority is a dragon! The only authority I submit to is God and God's people.

Peter, who wrote more about submission than anybody else, said, "*We must obey God rather than men.*" And, whom was he refusing to submit to on that day? *His religious authorities!*

If you submit to the dragon, even if he dressed like a sheep, he will take you to dragon-fold, not sheepfold. You say, "*Well, I am filled with the Spirit.*" That was what this book was written for, to tell Spirit-filled people to watch out whom they are following.

If you follow a sheep that talks dragon words and you get dragon stomachache, don't go to a charismatic shepherd for some Alka-seltzer. You should not have gone where dragons feed. More people in my meetings have to get their heads set straight because they were fed weeds on Sunday morning by Antichrist in the pulpit. They expect one charismatic meeting a week is going to straighten them out. That is no way to live and grow!

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We have got to find out. We have repented of the dragon, we have repented of the beast and we have repented of the lamb that is not a lamb. We gave ourselves away to the Lamb as *it had been slain*, and that meant persecution. That is what is happening here. PERSECUTION! Why? Because you refuse to bow to the beast, and you refuse to bow to the lamb that was a dragon, so you are going to get persecuted for it. A lot that goes under the name of submission today is just being scared of persecution. But, stand up and follow the Lamb wherever He leads us.

The Mark of the Beast

We come in our next Vision to the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, the company of 144000 and there clawing to get at them is the dragon, and the beast, and the other little beast. It depends which camp you are in. That is what it is all about.

It says all those who follow the beast, they are given *the mark of the beast*, and it says it is '666.'

I don't think there is too much problem there. We have already seen that the Church receives a mark: the Seal of the Living God.

What is six? Seven is the number of fullness, and normally it speaks of God -- His fullness, and perfection. Six is certainly the *number of man*. Don't you remember the day on which man was created? *Day Number Six*. Man, who never quite made it to fullness in God. Seven is fullness, and he only made it up to 'six.'

Well, sin means *missing the mark*. We never reach God's Rest Day of 'Seven' except in Christ. *666: Humanism - man! You shall be as gods! I* - total self-centeredness!

And, it is also administered by the little beast that looks like a lamb.

I tell you where you can hear '666!' Where you are told that salvation is by doing your best; salvation is by man pulling himself up to God by his own bootstraps: Six-Six-Six! Do you follow me? It is not a number that you are going to see in a person's forehead! No! This is a seal upon a man's spirit. This is the way he looks at life.

Notice, in fact, that it is on his *hand* and it is on his *forehead*.

What do you do with your hand? *You work*. The way you work is '666.' You work for self, you work out of self, your whole life-style is self-self-self: **I**

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What do you do with your hands? You reach out to shake hands; that is, you make friendships. It is the community, the body of the world where man is central.

It was on the forehead. What do you do with your forehead? That's where you think. The philosophies where man is central. And, if we could go through all the philosophies, which are taught as fact educationally, we would realize they are there because man must be at the center and push God out.

We have seen in other studies that the only reason evolution comes in is because man cannot face the fact that God made him. Once man has to admit that he was created by God, he has to face God. So, he does away with God and puts man in the center, and says we evolved. The philosophies of men put 'self' at the center! And so, we are stamped with *the mark of beast*.

We are stamped with the *mark of religious beast*. I, I, I! Our hands are stamped according to the way we work, according to our friendships.

We are back again! Is it the mark of the Living God, the mark of the Lamb in our foreheads, or is the mark of the beast? If I am going to bow to the beast, if I am going to say 'my church is so right I could not offend them,' I am going along with the crowd! I am receiving the *mark of the beast*! I am doing as they say. I am yielding my money, my time, and my person to them: The beast, *the beast*, and ultimately to the dragon.

If I yield myself to the *Lamb as it had been slain*: **That is the mark!** This is not merely, that 'yes, I believe in Jesus. Hallelujah!'

In this whole book, we noticed from the very beginning, the word 'witness' was to be a martyr. They've got a martyr's mentality. And, we saw that those who overcame the dragon are those *that loved not their lives unto death*. This isn't merely sitting in a church catechism and saying, *Isn't it nice! I believe it!* This is standing up to be counted and knowing that, when you are counted, you might be dead tomorrow: The martyr's mentality.

Jesus Christ is Lord, and I follow Him. That means repentance from the world, the world church, the Devil himself as well as myself, to receive the seal of the Holy Spirit in New Birth. Amen? Good, I'm glad you understand.

If you follow this chapter through, you will find that it uses two words that are important.

In Chapter 13, Verses 9-10, it says, speaking of what the first beast will do to you, persecution, about being killed with the sword, and it ends up... Now, this is your comfort if you are under religious persecution by a government.

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It says, "*Here is perseverance and the faith of the saints.*" If you are facing the persecution of the first beast, you need patience. You need perseverance. I think that speaks for itself.

But when it speaks of the other, down here it says, "Here is wisdom..." and goes on to speak of the mark of the beast, the philosophy that comes from the little lamb. It says, "Here is wisdom..."

If you face the world governments, you need patience. But, brother of mine, when you face that second little beast, you need wisdom! There's a difference.

I am not patient with anti-Christian church. I just need wisdom. And, when I see it, to avoid it, get away from it.

So the dragon has his two helpers. If you meet the one, you need patience. If you meet the other, you need wisdom. And personally, give me world governments any day! I know where I stand. But when a little white woolly lamb comes along, I need the wisdom of God to look on its neck to see if there is a gash '*as it has been slain.*' If there is no blood in what it says, it is a false lamb. And I have got to have wisdom to discern what is coming out of its mouth! Is it the words of Him whose voice is like *many waters*, or is it the sound of a dragon? I must beware and I must follow truth.

Now these are the principles that occur, He says. The Church came out of Israel. The Church is the New Israel. They are those who in the Heavens rejoice, but while they walk on earth, they still face a very real dragon. Although the Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, yet they are still here, and it looks as if their wound was healed. And frankly, they have got a helper in an anti-Christian church. But, '*walk among them*' says the Scripture. *Things are not what they seem to be! The Man-Child rules! The end is near!*

Have patience and wisdom and you will make it through.

Amen!