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Revelation

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Revelation

A. Overview and Summary.

1. Some mistakenly call this book “Revelations”. It is one revelation of Jesus Christ communicated by an angel (1:1) to the Apostle John. The word “revelation” in Greek is “apokalupsis,” which literally translates to “an unveiling”. The book is an unveiling of “things which must shortly take place” (1:1). John is by this time an aged man, the sole remaining apostle of the original twelve selected by Jesus Christ. It was written down by John in the last decade of the first century (ca. 94-96 AD) during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian. Jesus addresses the spiritual decline of churches in chapters two and three, which also confirms a late first-century date. The churches during the time of Paul and others were strong, although they faced heretical teachings, and Jesus’ words addressed shortcomings in five out of the seven churches.
2. John received The Revelation while imprisoned on the island of Patmos, located in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus. He had been in the city of Ephesus ministering the gospel. Early Christian writer Tertullian (155-240 AD) wrote that John was plunged into boiling oil at the direction of Domitian but emerged unscathed. He was soon after exiled to slave labor in mines on Patmos. He was later freed, possibly due to his old age. He returned to what is now Turkey, where he died sometime after 98 AD, the only apostle not to be martyred.
3. John is told by the vision of Jesus (1:19) “Write therefore the things which you saw, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass afterwards”. This is a simple outline of the book. The things which he saw are the vision of chapter one. The things which are the letters to the seven churches in chapters two and three, and the things to come, are future events recorded in chapters four through twenty-two. Several theories attempt to interpret this book. The preterist approach says it has already taken place, which was in the first century. However, there are several events in Revelation that contradict this theory, as they have not yet occurred. The idealist approach says that it depicts the timeless struggle between good and evil. It fails to provide solid insight for living and hope for the future. The futurist approach is the most logical based on the details of future coming events and people. It also provides a summary of God’s intent for humanity, which began in the book of Genesis. This approach (futurist) will be used in this synopsis.

4. This book and the book of Daniel are the two books in the Bible that contain substantial prophecies of future events. It is understood that the Joshua Nations community comprises individuals who may hold different views on prophecy. This synopsis takes a pre-tribulation viewpoint of the rapture. Others may hold a mid-tribulation, post-tribulation, or even a no rapture viewpoint. The pre-tribulation view will be explained more fully in the following chapter synopses.

B. Chapter One.

1. The chapter opens with a promise: “Blessed is he that reads, and those that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written here: for the time is at hand” (1:3). This is a special blessing not given in other Bible books. John is instructed to write to the angels of seven churches in Asia from “Him who was, and is and who is to come, and the seven Spirits that are before His throne” (1:4). The seven churches are churches in what is modern day Turkey and were those to whom John ministered to. Jesus “was” in eternity past, uncreated and always existing with the Father, He “is” today and throughout all of church history and is “to come” in His glorious appearing at the end of this age. Bible teachers are in agreement that the “seven Spirits” refer to different aspects of the one Holy Spirit. Throughout the Bible, “seven” refers to perfection. Isaiah 11:2 gives seven functions of the Holy Spirit: “And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah”. The seven spirits are mentioned three more times in the book of Revelation (3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
2. John hears behind him a voice. “And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the midst of the lampstands, one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength” (1:12-16).
3. John sees a vision of the ascended Christ. This was a powerful visage of Christ, and John fell to his face before Christ as though he were dead. Christ tells him that the seven lampstands are the seven churches and the seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches (1:12-20). A church should be a testimony

upon which the gospel shines forth to the surrounding community. Unfortunately, a church can lose its testimony, and Jesus will come and take it away. We will see that warning given in the next two chapters. Each church apparently had an angel assigned to it. Some have interpreted angels as human elders in each church to which John was to write. The Greek word “angelos” simply meant messenger and is used most often in the Bible to mean a supernatural messenger from God. However, John the Baptist is referred to as an angelos in Matthew 11:10. The Apostle John was in exile on the island of Patmos, so the visions he received from Christ had to be communicated to the churches through a messenger. We do not know precisely how this was done.

C. Chapter Two.

1. Chapter two begins an address of Jesus to each of seven churches. This address lasts for two chapters. These churches were actual churches in Asia Minor, now modern-day Turkey, to which John had ministered and was familiar with. They represent churches that existed at that time in various places, as well as churches that have existed throughout church history. Some Bible scholars see church history unfolding in each of the churches. We will also present that viewpoint. Each church, except one, is praised for an attribute. All churches except two are given things which they are instructed to correct. To individuals in each church is given the admonition “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. That gives individual believers no excuse. We are all accountable regardless of the spiritual condition of the church we are in.
2. The first church addressed is Ephesus. Jesus praises the church “I know your works, and your toil and patience, and you cannot bear evil men, and did try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and did find them false; and you have patience and did endure for my name’s sake, and have not grown weary” (2:2-3). This was the condition of churches in the mid-first century. But by John’s time, their passionate love for Jesus had diminished or was even lost. Jesus gives them criticism: “But I have this against you, that you left your first love. Remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place, except you repent” (2:4-5). This can also be a criticism of personal spiritual condition. When first saved, we often are zealous for the Lord. But as time goes on and we face trials and criticism, we lose that initial first love. This happened to Ephesus, as today, the city is comprised of beautiful ruins, but the church is long gone. As

individuals, we should repent of our loss of love for Jesus and desire to do the “first works”.

3. Jesus then says this to the Ephesus church: “Yet, this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (2:6). Scripture does not explain what the works of the Nicolaitans are, nor is there any extra-biblical evidence. One theory is that it is named after Nicolaus, one of the seven deacons selected in Acts 6:5. According to this theory, he fell away from the truth and founded a sect called the Nicolaitans, which believed they were under no moral law, and this led to indulgence in the flesh and sinful activity. The other theory is that the Nicolaitans were a group that advocated for the clergy to rule over the laity. This comes from the combination of two Greek words, translated as “Nicolaitans.” One is “nike” meaning victor, and the second word “laos”) meaning “common people” or laity. This would mean the Nicolaitans favored a hierocratic structure of rule of the clergy over the laity. We see the term come up again in Jesus’s words to the church in Pergamum (2:15). Regardless, Jesus does not tolerate either condition. A pastor should be one who does not “rule” but shepherds or cares for his congregation. In fact, the word “pastor” is found only once in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11) and is often translated “shepherd”. From a historical viewpoint, Ephesus represents the first-century apostolic church. This phase ended at the end of the first century.
4. Jesus then instructs John to write to the church in Smyrna: “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death” (2:9-11). This is one of the two churches Jesus does not criticize. The church was about to suffer intense persecution. History records that the Roman emperors persecuted Christians, and there are various ways of interpreting the “ten days”; mostly, they were ten years. But Christians have been persecuted throughout church history. Jesus only encourages this church and does not criticize. The phrase “the one who conquers” is often translated as “overcomes”. Although many did and will face death by martyrdom, they do not have to fear the second death, which is being cast into the lake of fire (20:15) for

eternity. From a historical viewpoint, Smyrna represents the persecuted church from the apostolic church up to the time of the emperor Constantine or 314 AD.

5. John is instructed to write to the church in Pergamum: “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also, you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it” (2:13-17).
6. According to church tradition, Antipas was the bishop of Pergamum who was martyred for his preaching against evil in the city. Eastern Orthodox tradition relates that he was bound in a hollow bronze bull and roasted to death. The church tolerated the teachings of Balaam (Numbers 22-24), who King Balak hired to curse Israel in exchange for a reward. They also had within their church body those who held to the teachings of the Nicolaitans. Hidden manna is a metaphorical name for Christ Himself, who said in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life”. We can take Jesus, who is hidden to many today, as the bread, or manna, that nourishes. White stones were given to successful athletes, allowing them access to a victory celebration. The new name represents the transformational work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. To those who are victors, we will be given a white stone and entrance to the wedding feast of the Lamb and a new name. The historical view of this church is the period from Constantine, who made Christianity the state religion in 315 AD, to about 590 AD. Many individuals came into the church hierarchy he set up with the various levels of leadership, and brought sinful practices with them. He brought in the practice of paid church leaders, pagan worship and church buildings. None of this was present in the early church.
7. John is then instructed to write to the church in Thyatira: “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to

practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:19-29).

8. From the historical viewpoint, Thyatira represents the church from about 590 AD up to the Reformation about 1517 AD. The church could be called the compromised church in that it adopted the practices of idolatry, sexual sin, and the institutional practices of paganism. But Jesus gives a call to those who resist that compromise with the promise that if they overcome, they will rule with Him over the nations. Jesus also promises the gift of the morning star. The church was surrounded by moral and spiritual darkness, but to those who conquer, they would experience the glorious rays of Christ, the morning star. This could also be a reference to the rapture, where Christ will remove his church from the evil in the world and bring His bride to Himself.

D. Chapter Three.

1. John is instructed to write to the church in Sardis: “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (3:1b-6).

2. Historically, this could refer to the post-Reformation age up to about 1800. The Reformation was a massive shift from Roman Catholicism, where God's Word was kept from the people. Bibles were translated and printed. Pastors spoke the truth of God's Word. But what they received and heard, many forgot. They needed to repent. Jesus uses the analogy of Himself coming at an hour they do not know. This can be thought of as the condition of the Protestant churches after the Reformation, as well as mainstream denominations today. Much of the truth of the gospel has been compromised and lost. Repentance is needed.
3. Jesus talks about a few who have not soiled their garments, and they will be clothed in white because they are worthy. Each of us is accountable for the lives we live after salvation. We are in the process of sanctification, which is linked to our free will. We can choose to compromise ourselves with the world, thereby soiling our spiritual garments, or not. We will stand before Christ's judgment seat and account for the things done in our body whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). If we build our lives with inferior materials, we will be saved yet as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15). But regardless, we will never be blotted out of the book of life. Revelation 17:8 says those who do not have their names written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel at the beast (the Antichrist). Paul says that we have been chosen by God the Father to be in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). This confirms true believers will never be blotted out of the book of life.
4. Jesus then instructs John to write to the church in Philadelphia: "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (3:8-13).

5. Philadelphia is the only church that receives nothing but praise. They have kept His Word and not denied His name. Historically, this is the church of the 1800s, during which time great mission work was done. The door to the world was opened by means of travel by ship. This is the second time the phrase “synagogue of Satan” has been used, the first being to the church in Smyrna. The word “synagogue” is a link to the Jews who opposed the early Christians. We see this throughout the book of Acts and in the writings of the apostles. To those who will overcome, they are given the promise of metaphorically becoming a pillar, or strong support in God’s temple. They will never go out of God’s presence and receive the name of God written upon them. But just like all the other churches, being in such a church does not guarantee individual success. The admonition is given again to the one who conquers, and to hear what the spirit is saying to the churches.
6. The last church, Laodicea, receives nothing but criticism: “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (3:15-22).
7. Laodicea was situated on major trade routes and had become a wealthy city. This caused them to declare they were prosperous and needed nothing. This attitude carried over to their spiritual condition. The city’s water supply came from aqueducts carrying water from springs, and when it reached the city, it was tepid and not pleasant to drink. To the north of Laodicea was the city of Hierapolis which benefited from therapeutic hot mineral water. To the south was the city of Colossae whose citizens enjoyed cool, refreshing water. Laodicea’s water made one want to spit it out of their mouth. Jesus desires us not to be “lukewarm” or only tepid towards Him. He tells them to buy from Him gold refined by fire, which is undergoing the trials of life that the oversight of Jesus Himself has refined.

White garments are not defiled by the stain of sin. He further counsels them to anoint their eyes with salve so that they can see their true condition. Laodicea exported a locally made eye salve throughout the Roman Empire. The eye salve that the church needed was the anointing of the Holy Spirit so that they could see their true condition. Historically, the condition of Laodicea is prevalent in many churches today.

E. Chapter Four.

1. The chapter opens with “After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne” (4:1-2). Many view this as a type of the Rapture of the Church. He is transported up to heaven. It is significant that the church is not mentioned in the chapters that follow until the marriage supper of the Lamb in chapter 19. This supports the Pre-Tribulation viewpoint that the church will be raptured before the outpouring of the wrath of God during the Tribulation.
2. John sees a vision of God seated on the throne of heaven. Around the throne are 24 other thrones, and upon them sit 24 elders. Some think these are 24 angels, but the Greek word translated elders “presbuteroi,” is never used in Scripture to refer to angels, only human elders. Additionally, they wear crowns that are never given to angels. The best interpretation is that these are elders who have received the reward of ruling and reigning with Christ.
3. John also sees four living creatures around the throne: “the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (4:7-8). The description is similar to the creatures in Ezekiel 1 and 10 as well as Isaiah 6:1-3. These are believed to be a special form of angelic beings whose purpose is continual worship.
4. The 24 elders fall before the throne, cast their crowns before the throne and exclaim: “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (4:11). In an act of worship, they acknowledge that only God is sovereign and deserving of worship. The crowns are most likely the incorruptible crown, the

crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the crown of glory (1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4). All they have achieved in life, they express it only by Christ's empowerment.

F. Chapter Five.

1. John sees in the vision that the one seated on the throne has a scroll with seven seals. An angel proclaims, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?" (5:1-2). But no one is found worthy. John begins to weep. Then, one of the elders said "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals" (5:5). John then sees "between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne" (5:6-7).
2. Then the four living creatures and the 24 elders fall down before the Lamb and sing a new song: "You are Worthy to take the book, and to open the seals: for You were slain, and did purchase unto God with your blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (5:9-10). John continues to see a myriad of angels around the throne and all worship the Lamb.

G. Chapter Six.

1. Chapter six begins a three-part series of the judgments of God upon the rebellious and sinful people of the earth. The judgments are like a telescoping antenna. First comes the seven seals that are opened. The seventh seal begins the seven trumpet judgments. The seventh trumpet comes just before the seven bowls of judgment. The judgments become more intense with the trumpet judgments, more intense than the seal judgments, but less intense than the bowl judgments.
2. Chapter six begins with the four horsemen. The Lamb opens the first seal, and a white horse emerges with a rider with a bow who goes out to conquer. Some scholars argue that this represents Christ, but many agree that it represents the Antichrist. The Antichrist is an imitator of Christ on a white horse (19:11-16). The bow represents his waging war with all who oppose him. The second seal is opened, and a second horse, who is red, takes peace from the world with the

wars that follow. The third seal is opened, and the horseman rides out mounted on a black horse representing famine. He holds a scale measuring food at inflated prices. This symbolizes famine that will follow the wars and food at inflated prices. The fourth seal is opened, and a horse emerges, which is pale. Its rider is death, followed by Hades. They are given power over one-fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, plague, and by wild beasts. The current global population exceeds 8 billion. That means 2 billion people or more will die from just these first four horsemen.

3. The fifth seal is opened, and John sees the souls of those who have been slain for the Word of God and their testimony. "And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course" (6:11).
4. John sees the sixth seal opened: "there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casts her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (6:12-14). The people of the earth hide themselves in caves and in the rocks of the mountains and say, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (6:16-17).

H. Chapter Seven.

1. John sees four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding the winds of the earth. Another angel ascends and tells them not to hurt the earth, the sea, or the trees until the servants of God have a seal placed upon their foreheads. John hears the number, and it is 144,000, comprised of 12 thousand from each tribe of the children of Israel (7:1-8).
2. After this, John sees "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, 'Salvation unto our God who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb'" (7:9-10).
3. John asks one of the elders who they are, and he is told: "And he said to me, these are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are there before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes” (7:14-17). There will be many who come to a saving knowledge of Christ during the Tribulation. They will recognize that the events they experienced are part of this book and realize they need salvation before they die.

I. Chapter Eight.

1. The Lamb opens the seventh seal, and there is a silence in heaven for about one-half hour. The seven angels that stood before His throne are given seven trumpets (8:1-2). The first angel trumpeted: “There followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up” (7:7).
2. “And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed” (8:8-9).
3. “And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter” (8:10-11). Some see the star called wormwood as an asteroid with the destruction it would bring. More humans die, but a percentage is not given.
4. “And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner. And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound” (8:12-13).

J. Chapter Nine.

1. The fifth angel sounds “I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man” (9:1-5). Men seek death from the torment but will not find it (9:6).
2. John is shown a vision of the locusts and they “were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men’s faces. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he has the name Apollyon” (9:7-11). These are demonic locusts as they come from the Abyss, and because they have a king, where Proverbs 30:27 says locusts have no king. This is the first of three woes in the Book of Revelation.
3. The sixth angel trumpets and four angels are loosed that have been prepared to kill one third of men. The armies of these angels are twice 10,000 times 10,000. Out of the mouths of these horsemen come fire, smoke, and brimstone, which kill an additional one-third of men. This leaves less than 50 percent of the original population of the earth. But of those who are left, they do not repent of their idolatry, murders, sorceries, fornication, or theft (9:13-21).

K. Chapter Ten.

1. John sees: “another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roars: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices”

(10:1-3). John is about to write what the seven thunders said, but a voice from heaven tells him to seal what they said up (10:4-5).

2. The same voice tells John to go and take the little book from the strong angel. The angel tells him to eat it, and it will be sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach (10:8-9). He is then told that he must prophecy again over many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings (10:11).

L. Chapter Eleven.

1. John is given a reed and told to measure the temple and altar, but not the outer court, as it has been given to the nations and will be trodden under foot for forty-two months or three and one-half years. This is the beginning of the seven-year period prophesied by Daniel.
2. John is then told about two witnesses: they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. And if any man desires to hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies. These have the power to shut the heavens, that it does not rain during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them” (11:3-7). Many Bible scholars see the two witnesses as Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the prophets. The miracles they perform are similar to those they performed during their earthly existence. Jude tells us that Satan and Michael fought over Moses’ body, and Elijah was taken up bodily without dying, so this is a good possibility.
3. Then those “on the earth rejoiced and sent gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented them. And after the three and one-half days, the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour, there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were frightened, and gave glory to the God of heaven. This was the second woe, and the third will come quickly (11:10-14).

4. The seventh angel sounds and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15). The 24 elders fall on their faces and worship God. "And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail" (11:19).

M. Chapter Twelve.

1. John sees a vision of a woman in heaven "arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cries out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems" (12:1-3). Most Bible teachers agree the woman is Israel and the child was Jesus a "son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (12:5-6).
2. This prophecy is dual in that it relates the birth of Christ and the attempts by Herod to kill Him. Then it jumps forward to end times and the woman, Israel, is taken to a wilderness where she is nourished for the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation. The dragon is Satan with his angels, who fights with Michael and his angels. Satan and his angels are cast down to the earth. He carries with him one third of the angels in rebellion (12:7-9).
3. Then John "heard a great voice in heaven, saying, 'Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time'" (12:10-12). Here is a key to overcoming, which are the admonitions in the seven letters to the seven churches. The blood of the Lamb is given to all true believers. However, we have the freedom to control our testimonies.

4. The dragon attempts to persecute the woman, but she is divinely protected, and he “went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus” (12:17). The church is raptured before all the events described so far. But many will come to Christ during the Great Tribulation, and these are those described in this passage.

N. Chapter Thirteen.

1. John sees in his vision the Antichrist: “And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast” (13:1-3). Satan will give the Antichrist his power, his throne, and authority. He will be killed but will be resuscitated from the dead so the entire world will marvel.
2. The beast comes out of the sea, which is understood to be the Mediterranean, meaning that he will most likely emerge from a country in that area, part of the former Roman Empire. It has ten horns with ten crowns, which could mean ten kingdoms that he rules over. The book of Daniel gives additional information about this beast: “After this I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (Daniel 7:7-8).
3. Daniel had been given a vision of four beasts representing kingdoms that would emerge in Gentile world history. They also came up from the sea, also meaning the Mediterranean. The first was a lion, representing Babylon. The second was a bear representing the Medes and the Persians, the third was a leopard representing Greece. The fourth beast represents Rome, which merges into a description of the Antichrist. These beasts represent the various parts of the great image Daniel sees in Daniel chapter three. Please see the synopsis of the

Book of Daniel for more details. The Antichrist (the little horn) will subdue three kingdoms.

4. A second beast emerges in John's vision: "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he makes the earth and those that dwell on it to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who had the stroke of the sword and lived. And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed (13:11-15). This beast is called the false prophet, as he brings worship to the Antichrist.
5. The false prophet: "causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slave, that a mark is placed on their right hand, or on their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six" (13:16-18). Countless speculations have been made over who the number 666 might refer to. But those living on the earth who have not been deceived will know at that time who it is. The mark is more than just that. It implies those who receive it are engaging in worship of the Antichrist.
6. There is an interesting passage in Zechariah 11:17: "Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaves the flock! The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be withered, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened". Many Bible scholars attribute this prophecy to the coming Antichrist. At first, he will be welcomed, but he will be wounded in the head (his right eye) and apparently his arm. He will recover, and it will be a miraculous sign to the world.
7. Additionally, some also point to various Bible passages, such as Micah 5:5, which may indicate the Antichrist is called the Assyrian. This could mean he arises from the area of Syria or Turkey. Antiochus Epiphanes of Daniel Chapter 11:21-25 came from that region, and he is known as a type of the Antichrist. It could be fitting that the Antichrist comes from that area as well. At the time of this writing,

the nation of Syria, which was under the rule of the Assad dictatorship for 50 years is now under Islamic rule. That changed rapidly, almost overnight, as Bashar al-Assad's government and military collapsed and he fled to Russia. End times prophecy will be rapid, is the meaning behind Revelation 1:1 "the things that must shortly come to pass." This topic is beyond the scope of this synopsis to develop further. Also, consider what is called the "Damascus prophecy" of Isaiah 17:1: "Look, Damascus is no longer a city. It has become a ruined heap." Damascus is one of the continuously inhabited cities in the world. That prophecy has yet to be fulfilled.

M. Chapter Fourteen.

1. John sees another vision: "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a 144,000, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads" (14:1). These are considered the same 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Revelation chapter seven. They are first fruits and follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They will evangelize Israel and the world, turning the Jews to Christ.
2. John then sees: "another angel flying in mid heaven, having the eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he says with a great voice, 'Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters'" (14:6-7). Before the final bowl judgments which are coming in the following chapters, God gives mankind one more opportunity to repent. This is the only place in the Bible the phrase "eternal gospel" is used. The good news is that Jesus died for the sins of those who accept Him as Savior, and this acceptance is eternal.
3. "A second angel followed, saying: 'It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen, who made all nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath'" (14:8). Babylon has several meanings. Here, it refers to false religion, which brought with it sexual immorality. It also refers to the capital of the Antichrist. We will discuss that aspect in the passages that follow.
4. And a third angel followed them and spoke with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he will also drink the wine of God's wrath, which is mixed full strength in the cup of His anger" (14:9-10). To worship the beast and receive his mark will deny that person access to God, resulting in torment.

5. John hears “a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write: The dead who die in the Lord from now on are blessed.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘let them rest from their labors, for their works follow them!’” (14:13). Many will become Christians during the Great Tribulation and will be “blessed,” although probably martyred.
6. “Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and One like the Son of Man was seated on the cloud, with a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. Another angel came out of the sanctuary, crying out in a loud voice to the One who was seated on the cloud, ‘Use your sickle and reap, for the time to reap has come, since the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So, the One seated on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested” (14:14-16). These are the evil ones on the earth. They are thrown into the winepress of God’s wrath, and a vast amount of blood flows out. (14:17-20).

N. Chapter Fifteen.

1. John then sees seven angels with the last seven bowl judgments of God’s Wrath. He also sees a multitude of those who were martyred during the Tribulation standing as it were on something like a sea of glass mixed with fire. They lift up their voices in a song of Moses and of the Lamb (15:1-4).
2. “After this, I looked, and the heavenly sanctuary—the tabernacle of testimony—was opened. Out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, dressed in clean, bright linen, with gold sashes wrapped around their chests. One of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives forever and ever” (15:5-7).

O. Chapter Sixteen.

1. Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.” The first went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and severely painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image” (16:1-2).
2. “The second poured out his bowl into the sea. It turned to blood like a dead man’s, and all life in the sea died” (16:3).
3. “The third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. I heard the angel of the waters say: You are righteous, who is and who was, the Holy One, for You have decided these things. Because they poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets, You also gave them blood to drink; they deserve it! (16:4-6).

4. “The fourth poured out his bowl on the sun. He was given the power to burn people with fire, and people were burned by the intense heat. So, they blasphemed the name of God, who had the power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give Him glory” (16:8-9).
5. “The fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues because of their pain and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, yet they did not repent of their actions” (16:10-11).
6. “The sixth poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. Then I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming from the dragon’s mouth, from the beast’s mouth, and from the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons performing signs, who travel to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for the battle of the great day of God, the Almighty” (16:12-14).
7. John hears the voice of Christ saying: “Look, I am coming like a thief. The one who is alert and remains clothed so that he may not go around naked and people see his shame is blessed”. So, they assembled them at the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon (16: 15-16).
8. “Then the seventh poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the sanctuary from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’ There were flashes of lightning and rumblings of thunder. And a severe earthquake occurred like no other since man has been on the earth—so great was the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the Great was remembered in God’s presence; He gave her the cup filled with the wine of His fierce anger. Every island fled, and the mountains disappeared. Enormous hailstones, each weighing about 100 pounds, fell from the sky on people, and they blasphemed God for the plague of hail because that plague was extremely severe” (16:17-21).

P. Chapter Seventeen.

1. John is approached by one of the seven angels: “Come, I will show you the judgment of the notorious prostitute who sits on many waters. The kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and those who live on the earth became drunk on the wine of her sexual immorality” (17:1-2). He is taken away to a desert place and shown a woman dressed in gold, precious stones and pearls and covered with blasphemous names. She is drunk with the blood of the saints

and of those of the witnesses to Jesus (17:3-6). The woman is symbolic of false religion, which has killed true believers throughout all ages.

2. John is told: "Here is the mind with wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated. They are also seven kings: Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes, he must remain for a little while. The beast that was and is not, is himself an eighth king, yet he belongs to the seven and is going to destruction. The 10 horns you saw are 10 kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings. Those with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (17:9-14).
3. Although many interpret the seven mountains as being Rome, the best interpretation is that they represent kingdoms. False religion, represented by the prostitute, has aligned itself with world kingdoms. Five have fallen: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persian, and Greece. One is, which at that time was Rome. The one to come is the Antichrist's, which will last only for a short time. The ten horns are ten kings with authority only for a short time with the beast. They make war with the Lamb, but He conquers them.
4. The angel also tells John: "The waters you saw, where the prostitute was seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. The ten horns you saw, and the beast, will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, devour her flesh, and burn her up with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to carry out His plan by having one purpose and to give their kingdom to the beast until God's words are accomplished. And the woman you saw is the great city that has an empire over the kings of the earth" (17:15-18). The prostitute will compile all world religions into one blasphemous one. The Antichrist and the ten kings will utterly destroy her after they have used her for their purposes.

Q. Chapter Eighteen.

1. In chapter seventeen, we saw religious Babylon represented by the prostitute, judged. In this chapter, we see material Babylon judged. An angel with great authority comes from heaven and declares: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed

fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness” (18:1-3).

2. John is told that in one-hour, commercial Babylon is destroyed. “The men of the earth who buy and sell are sorry for her and cry. They cry because there is no one to buy their things anymore. They sold gold and silver and stones worth much money and pearls. They sold fine linen and purple and red silk cloth. They sold all kinds of perfumed wood. They sold things made from the teeth of animals and things made from wood that cost much money. They sold brass and iron and stone. They sold spices and perfumes of all kinds. They sold wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat. They sold cows and sheep and horses and wagons. They sold men who are not free and they sold the lives of men” (18:11-13).
3. John is told: “Be full of joy because of her, O heaven! Be full of joy, you who belong to God and missionaries and early preachers! For God has punished her for what she did to you” (18:20).
4. “Then a strong angel picked up a large stone like those used for grinding wheat. He threw it into the sea, saying, “The big and strong city of Babylon will be thrown down like this. It will never be found again” (18:21). “And in this city was found the blood of the early preachers and of those who belonged to God and of all those who had been killed on the earth” (18:24).
5. At the end times, the Antichrist will have a kingdom characterized by world rebellion against God. His world system will be characterized by idolatry, excessive materialism, love of wealth, religious blasphemy, and violence against Christians. This is what is known as Babylon the Great. But his kingdom will be destroyed by the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

R. Chapter Nineteen.

1. John then hears the voices of many people in heaven declaring: “Thanks to our God, the One Who saves. Honor and power belong to Him. For the way He punishes people is right and true. He has punished the powerful woman who sold the use of her body. She was making the earth sinful with her sexual sins. She killed those who worked for God. He has punished her for it.’ Again, they said, ‘Thanks to our God. The smoke from her burning goes up forever.’ The twenty-four leaders and the four living beings got down and worshiped God Who was sitting on the throne. They said, ‘Let it be so. Thanks to our God!’” (19:1b-4).
2. John is then given a vision of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Many voices like a powerful stream of water shout: “Thanks to our God. For the Lord our God is

King. He is the All-powerful One. Let us be full of joy and be glad. Let us honor Him, for the time has come for the wedding supper of the Lamb. His bride has made herself ready. She was given clean, white, fine linen clothes to wear. The fine linen is the right living of God's people" (19:6b-8).

3. John is then given a vision of Christ in triumph: "Then I saw heaven opened. A white horse was standing there. The One Who was sitting on the horse is called Faithful and True. He is the One Who punishes in the right way. He makes war. His eyes are a flame of fire. He has many crowns on His head. His name is written on Him but He is the only One Who knows what it says. The coat He wears has been put in blood. His name is The Word of God. The armies in heaven were dressed in clean, white, fine linen. They were following Him on white horses. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword to punish the nations. He will be the Leader over them using a rod of iron. He walks on the grapes where wine is made, pressing out the anger of God, the All-powerful One. On His coat and on His leg is the name written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:11-16).
4. The chapter closes with the destruction of the army of the Antichrist: "And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh" (19:19-21).

S. Chapter Twenty.

1. "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while" (20:1-3).
2. The "bottomless pit" in Greek is one word, "abyss," meaning without measure or depth. Peter refers to it in 2 Peter 2:4 as a place where the angels that sinned were bound in chains awaiting judgment (Genesis 6:2). Satan is kept there for 1,000 years and then released to cause one last rebellion by mankind. The 1,000

years refers to the millennium reign of Christ on earth with His saints, and it is mentioned six times in this chapter. Those who hold an “Amillennial” or “no millennium” viewpoint have to dismiss these six references as being only symbolic.

3. “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (20:4-6).
4. John is then told “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (20:7-10).
5. There are some who believe in the destruction of the soul or “Annihilationism”. They take as their chief argument Matthew 10:28: “And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” They cannot understand how sin for such a short time on this earth can carry with it an eternal judgment of torment. But the passage above which says “forever and ever” gives them no excuse.
6. John then sees the final judgment called the Great White Throne Judgment: “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and

Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (20:11-15).

7. God is just. There will be no one in the lake of fire, which is the ultimate destiny of those in Hades or Hell now. All will be judged according to their works. Christians are judged by Jesus at His Bema or judgment seat for rewards (2 Corinthians 5:10). They were raptured before the Tribulation. Others who accepted Christ during the Tribulation or afterwards will be judged here. The key is having their names in the Book of Life.

T. Chapter Twenty-One.

1. Then John “saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (21:1-4).
2. This is the ultimate restoration of God in a redeemed relationship with man. That which was lost in Eden through Adam’s sin, is restored. To those who overcome is given a great promise: “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (21:7-8).
3. The word “cowardly” in Greek is “deilos” which does not refer to common fears like that of deep water, public speaking, height, etc. It has a special reference to those facing a choice of taking a stand for Jesus or denying the faith. Jesus tells us “Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33). It comes down to a matter of fear versus faith.
4. “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high

mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (21:9-19).

5. John describes the New Jerusalem as a massive square including many stones, twelve gates, and a street of gold (21:11-21). John closes the chapter with: “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (21:22-26).

U. Chapter Twenty-Two.

1. John is shown “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever” (22:1-5).
2. Then John is told that the time is near: “Then he said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true.’ And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ‘Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book’” (22:6-7).
3. John gives a warning: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (22:18-19).
4. John closes with: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (22:20-21).

V. Discussion Questions, Application and Passing it on.

1. The book emphasizes these things must “shortly take place”. Are you discouraged as it seems as though they are not here already? Does it help to understand the context means once they begin to happen, they will happen quickly?
2. The book comes with a promise for those who read it. What might that be?
3. Chapters two and three are very important messages to seven churches. Do you see yourself personified in any or several of the churches to which Jesus writes?
4. Some think that any crowns they may receive as rewards, they must give back based on the 24 elders in chapter four. Why is this a false concept?
5. One way to remember the various stages of judgments given to the earth and its inhabitants is to think of a telescope with three stages: seals, trumpets and bowels. Does this help you?
6. Can you relate the visions of Daniel the prophet to those given by John?
7. What viewpoint do you have of the rapture? Did this synopsis change any of that?

This New Testament survey was provided by Joshua Nations (JoshuaNations.org)