

REVELATION 14:6-19:21

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This paper was originally published January, 1999. The first part of the paper was done using a Smith-Corona word processor that didn't permit me to use italics, different fonts, etc. The second half of the paper was done using a PC, with Word 97, which gave me many more word processing features. I'm making some modifications at the time I put the paper into Word 2002 format to upload to the internet (in August, 2007). I'm making some further modifications and improvements when I split this paper up into eight articles to put on several Christian article sites (in August, 2012).

Every verse of the book of Revelation, which is extremely important, is discussed in papers on my internet site, except for Rev. 11:1-14:5, which are discussed in a thorough verse-by-verse manner in my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*. For a condensed version, see my paper titled *Twenty-Four Articles on the Mid-Week Rapture* that is available on my internet site. Those twenty-four articles serve as a good introduction for my book and for the mid-week rapture viewpoint, that Christ will return and the rapture will take place right in the middle of the seven-year period that is sometimes called Daniel's 70th week.

I always use the New American Standard Bible, 1977 edition, in this paper unless I mention otherwise.

A Discussion Dealing with the Supreme Importance of the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation is of key importance on God's end-time plans to save and to judge, and on His plans for the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom. The more I study this book, the more I'm impressed with it; it's a very special book of the Bible. I'll take a couple of pages to illustrate this point. It was written relatively late, about AD 95.

The book of Revelation (especially chapters 11-13) shows that all true Christians will be raptured from the earth at essentially the same time that the devil (and his angels), having great wrath, is thrown down to the earth in the middle of the seven-year period (Rev. 12:4, 7-9, 12-17) and just before the super-evil reign of Antichrist begins in the middle of Daniel's 70th week (cf. Rev. 3:10; 7:9-17; 11:11, 12; 12:5; 13:1-5; and 17:14). If we didn't have the book of Revelation, I would teach that the rapture will probably take place near the end of Daniel's 70th week (the end-of-the-week rapture viewpoint), but because of this super-important prophetic book, I'm confident of the mid-week rapture. Daniel chapter 12 is the second most important passage (along with Revelation chapters 11-13) to show that the Lord Jesus will return right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. (Daniel chapter 12 is discussed in detail in my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*.)

It is significant that the book of Revelation shows that the rapture will take place right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, right after the short great tribulation. The warfare

of the short great tribulation will take place under the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13-21), and the Lord Jesus will return and the rapture will take place at the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet (Rev. 11:15-18), right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. We already knew that the Lord Jesus would return right after the short great tribulation from Matt. 24:21, 22, 29-31. The sixth trumpet will sound about a month before the seventh trumpet, about the time of the abomination of desolation (cf. Matt. 24:15; Dan. 12:11). It is significant that the trumpet of Rev. 11:15 is the same trumpet as the ones we already knew about from Matt. 24:29-31; 1 Cor. 15:50-52 [note "at the last trumpet"]; and 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

Without the book of Revelation, we wouldn't know that the gospel will still be proclaimed on the earth after Christ has returned and the rapture has taken place (Rev. 14:6, 7), and that many (including the end-time remnant of the nation Israel) will submit to the gospel *after* the rapture (e.g., Rev. 11:13, 19; 12:17; 13:5, 7 [with Dan. 7:21, 25], 10; 14:12, 13; 15:2; and 20:4).

Even though the Old Testament has much to say about God's ultimate salvation plans for the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel), I couldn't be sure that these prophecies are to be fulfilled in a literal sense if it weren't for the confirmation of the book of Revelation. Apart from the book of Revelation, the New Testament has very little to say regarding God's salvation plans for the nations. If it weren't for the book of Revelation, I might have been persuaded by the idea of many Christians that such prophecies are to be interpreted in a non-literal sense, that these prophecies speak only of Gentiles receiving Christ during this present age (before Christ returns).

Without the book of Revelation, we wouldn't know of the very important ministry of the two prophets (Rev. 11:1-13), and we wouldn't have the important confirmation of the fact that the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1, 2). We wouldn't know of the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:1-9:21; and 11:15) or of the seven bowls of wrath (Rev. 15:1-16:21); and we wouldn't know of God's judgment of Babylon the great harlot. Many of the details regarding Antichrist we wouldn't know, including knowing of his coming back from the dead; and we wouldn't know of the false prophet, or of the image of the beast, or of the mark/number of the beast (666).

We could know something of an intermediate kingdom that will take place before the eternal kingdom/state from several Old Testament verses (e.g., Isa. 65:20-22; Dan. 7:12). We wouldn't know enough, however, to understand the millennial kingdom without the book of Revelation. For one thing, this is the only book of the Bible that mentions the thousand year duration of this kingdom. We wouldn't have known that the devil will be temporarily bound in the abyss throughout the millennium (Rev. 20:2, 3), and we certainly wouldn't have anticipated a major revolt by a multitude from the nations at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7-9). And we wouldn't have known that the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" (Rev. 20:5), which is the resurrection of the dead who aren't part of true Israel, won't take place until it's time for the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:11-15).

The seven letters to the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2, 3 are very important. For one thing, several verses of key prophetic significance are included in these chapters (e.g., Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:10, and 21). But the most important feature of these letters to the seven churches which existed at that time (about AD 95)—it's a somewhat shocking feature—is the powerful call to repent or forfeit their salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to many of these Christians. And we must understand that the things that the Lord

Jesus said to those Christians (both positive and negative things) are applicable for all Christians of all generations who are in the same situation. The words were apparently chosen to address many of the needs of the universal church throughout this entire age. Five of the seven churches are called to repentance, and in three of the five there was a call for very serious repentance on the part of all, or at least many/most, of the Christians there. He warns them that they are on the brink of ceasing to be His people—they must quickly repent.

The most shocking feature is that the first church Christ spoke to, the church at Ephesus, was doing so much right. But Christ told them that they had left their first love (the love they formerly had for God and His Son[Rev. 2:4]) and if they didn't repent and do the works they did at first (Rev. 2:5), He would remove their lampstand; in other words, they would cease being His church/people. It is very clear that Christ was speaking (for the most part at least) to born-again Christians in the church at Ephesus. For one thing, He couldn't have said the positive things He said about them if they hadn't become born-again Christians, and they wouldn't have had a lampstand to begin with if this wasn't a genuine Christian church (see Rev. 1:20).

These two chapters of the book of Revelation (chapters 2, 3), taken seriously, will help bring some balance, some desperately needed balance, to many Christians of our day. Many are far from the Scriptural balance through errors like minimizing, or totally skipping, God's call to repent, both at the time of conversion, and afterward, when repentance is required (the word repent, and the concept of repenting, have seemingly disappeared from many churches; we don't want to offend anybody); errors like minimizing the call for Christians to be righteous and holy, doing the works that are required of us (by God's enabling grace in Christ/by the Holy Spirit); errors like overstating the Christian's right standing (no matter what they believe, or what they do), and errors like overstating God's unconditional love (while failing to take seriously all that the Bible says about His wrath) and denying the possibility for Christians to ever fall away from Christ and be rejected by Him (no matter what they believe or how they live). Revelation chapters 2, 3 make it clear (as does much other Scripture) that Christ has different ideas on these topics than many Christians do. He will have the last word, so where we disagree with Him, we had better change with a high priority.

Yes, it's the will of God for Christians to be secure in Christ, and to know that they are, but we shouldn't feel secure while we are in obvious violation of our covenant with God—the fear of God the Bible (including the New Testament) frequently speaks of is more appropriate. We are supposed to be afraid to sin against God. We must make it top priority to get things straightened out (to repent) if we're in sin, by God's grace. It's a very positive thing (a blessing) if Christ is dealing with us to repent. Why does Christ call His people to repent? In Rev. 3:19 (where the Lord Jesus was speaking to Christians at Laodicea, who had a very serious sin problem, but were not aware of it), He says it's because He still loves them. Of course forgiveness is provided for us in Christ, but the primary thing Christ demanded in these chapters was repentance, not asking for forgiveness. Those who are saying that God doesn't even see it when Christians sin because He looks at us through the blood of Christ, or that He doesn't take our sin seriously, had better read these two chapters (and many other chapters) again. I recommend reading my papers, *Once Saved, Always Saved?; A Paper on Faith; The Christian, the Law, and Legalism*; and my book,

Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of Lord Jesus Christ.

One spectacular feature of the book of Revelation is the prominent roles of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One thing they do is testify to the importance, authenticity, and truthfulness of this revelation; I'll demonstrate as we continue. Christ Himself appeared to John, as reported in chapter 1, directing him to write these things (Rev. 1:19). The revelation was given by God the Father to Christ to show to His bond-servants (Christians); it was sent by Christ through His angel to (the apostle) John (Rev. 1:1). In Rev. 1:3 a blessing is pronounced on "those who [read] and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it...."

Christ also came on the scene and spoke in the last chapter of this book, chapter 22 (but this time John apparently didn't see Him), which further established and confirmed the truthfulness and importance of this revelation. In Rev. 22:7 Christ said, "And behold I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book," which includes the powerful calls to repent where repentance is required. Also see Rev. 22:12-16, where Christ also spoke. In 22:16 He mentioned that He had sent His angel to testify these things for the churches (which apparently includes testifying to the authenticity and truthfulness of this revelation). Then in 22:20 Christ is referred to as "He who testifies to these things."

In Rev. 14:13b the Holy Spirit spoke, confirming a word that had just been spoken from heaven in 14:13a. In Rev. 21:5-8 God the Father spoke, including the words of 21:5b, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." "These words" apparently refer to the words just spoken in 21:1-5a, but His words have the effect of confirming the entire revelation. In Rev. 19:9 a mighty angel said, "These are true words of God." He was apparently referring to the revelation just given in Rev. 17:1-19:9a. In 22:6 a mighty angel said, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place" (NIV). He was apparently referring to the entire revelation of the book of Revelation. Also see 22:9. On God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity, I recommend reading my papers, *Who Do We Worship?*; *Who Do We Pray To?*; *The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son*; and *More on the Trinity*.

Lastly, in closing this discussion on the spectacular value of the book of Revelation, I'll mention the significance and the glory of the last two chapters, which give a glorious picture of the eternal state (with its new heaven and new earth and its new Jerusalem), which is prepared for God's people, both true Israel (the bride of Christ, the bond-servants of God, who will reign forever [Rev. 22:5]) and the elect of the nations (Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:3; 21:3, 4; 21:24-22:3).

A Few Comments Dealing with this Study of Revelation 14:6-19:21

Most of these verses deal with God's judgment and total removal of Babylon the great harlot and of Antichrist and his forces who are gathered to Armageddon. In these verses we learn of the seven bowls of God's wrath. Quite a few of these verses mention the glorified saints who are with Christ throughout the second half of Daniel's 70th week as He carries out these judgments (the glorified saints begin to reign with the Lord Jesus at the time of

His mid-week return and the rapture), and we also read of the victorious outcome for the saints who will live on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70th week (who will be converted after the rapture). A few of these verses also deal with God's ultimate salvation of the remnant of the nations (the nations being distinct from God's true Israel). True Israel will reign with God for one thing.

Many of the verses we are studying in this paper deal with God's judgment and total removal of Babylon the great harlot: Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:18, 19; and 17:1-19:3. I find this topic quite interesting, quite important, and quite relevant for our daily lives. This topic, which includes defining Babylon, isn't easy, and the interpretations given by Christians vary greatly, but I believe we can understand the meaning of these verses, even if we're not sure of every little detail. It probably wasn't intended for us to understand every little detail of verses that are so full of figurative/symbolic language. The realities spoken of behind the figurative/symbolic language are extremely important.

REVELATION 14:6-20

Revelation 14:1-5 are discussed in chapter 23 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*.

(6) And I saw another angel flying in midheaven [Compare Rev. 8:13. From this location this angel can be seen (and heard) by all. (It specifically mentions that this angel and the third angel of 14:9 speak "with a loud voice." The second angel of Rev. 14:8 probably also speaks with a loud voice.) The two following angels of Rev. 14:8 and 9 undoubtedly are in the same general location as the first angel. God obviously considers it important that all the people living on the earth hear the messages of these three angels. For one thing, all the messages contain strong warnings of imminent destruction, now that judgment day has come; the seventh and last trumpet has already sounded. But all isn't negative; even though Christ has returned (right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week) and judgment day has begun, there still is time (but a very limited time) for people to repent and respond to God and His Word.

If God is dealing with us to repent now, we had better repent now. It is very dangerous to put off repenting for a later time. For one thing, it will be very difficult to submit to God, His Son, and His gospel during the second half of Daniel's 70th week.], **having an eternal gospel** [The NIV has "the eternal gospel"; the KJV and NKJV have "the everlasting gospel"; the definite article isn't included in the Greek, but this doesn't mean that the definite article shouldn't be included in the English translation. We'll discuss the meaning of the eternal/everlasting gospel as we continue.] **to preach to those who live on the earth, and** [It would be better to translate the Greek conjunction *kai* as "even" here, instead of "and." The NIV and NKJV just have a dash here, which is quite acceptable.] **to every nation and tribe and tongue and people** [Compare Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10. See on Matt. 24:14 in my paper on Matthew chapters 24, 25 on my internet site.]; **(7) and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory** [On these words, starting with "Fear God," see under Rev. 11:13 in *The Mid-Week Rapture* (pages 288, 289).], **because the hour** [The word "hour" is sometimes used in the book of Revelation to cover the three and one-half years of the second half of Daniel's 70th week. Especially see Rev. 17:12; 3:10. The word hour is apparently also used this way here in 14:7, and in 14:15; 18:10, 17, and 19.] **of His**

judgment has come [cf. Rev. 6:17; 11:15-18; and 12:10]; **and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.**” [I don’t believe this “eternal gospel” is substantially different than the gospel being preached in our day, but because of the time setting and circumstances, the message will have a certain urgent appeal and some special emphases appropriate for that time. The time setting of these verses is right after the mid-week return of Christ. The rapture has just taken place (Rev. 11:11, 12; 12:5; 14:1-5; and 7:9-17), and judgment day has just begun (“the hour of His judgment has come”).

Those who heed the call to “fear God, and give Him glory” and to “worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters” will repent and submit to the “eternal gospel” in faith. Those who submit to the gospel after the rapture can be called the end-time elect remnant of God’s true Israel, which centers in the end-time remnant of the nation Israel (and undoubtedly other Jews) and (apparently) many Gentiles, even as the Christian church of our day includes Jews and Gentiles. Significantly, those who submit to the gospel after the rapture constitute the rest of the offspring/seed of true Israel spoken of in Rev. 12:17. (Those taken in the rapture were only “first fruits” [Rev. 14:4] of God’s end-time harvest.) I assume they will be Christians in the same sense we are Christians. The difference will be that they won’t be converted in time to be taken in the rapture, and they will be living on the earth during the very difficult three and one-half year “hour of testing” (Rev. 3:10).

Those who become Christians in that day/hour, which will cover the second half of Daniel’s 70th week, will know much travail (e.g., Rev. 12:13-13:17), and there will be many martyrs (e.g., Rev. 20:4), but they will also know something of God’s special provision and protection (Rev. 12:6, 14-16). I’m confident that those Christians who are converted after the rapture will have a special gratitude, knowing that they were saved at the last minute, in some ways even after the last minute in that the Lord Jesus will have already returned and judgment day will have begun. Those believers will fear God with a reverent, obedient fear, and they will give Him glory by submitting to Him and His Word (as is required of all true believers), and by living for Him, even in difficult times. Revelation 14:12 shows that these believers will need perseverance. All true Christians know something of the need for perseverance, and of suffering for Christ (by His sufficient grace).

It seems that those people who will eventually be left to enter the millennial kingdom (the remnant of the nations, who are called “the nations” in Rev. 20:3) will not be ready to submit to God and worship Him until after His end-time judgments, which will continue to the end of Daniel’s 70th week. (See Rev. 15:3, 4. Note that 15:4 includes the ideas of fearing God and giving Him glory, which are mentioned in Rev. 14:7.) They will, however, one way or another, refrain from worshiping Antichrist and taking his mark: If they worship him and his image and take his mark they are doomed (Rev. 14:9-11). At this point in the book of Revelation, it hasn’t been clearly revealed yet that God has special plans for the salvation of the nations (as it is rather clearly revealed in Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:3; and 21:1-22:3 and in a large number of prophecies in the Old Testament).] **(8) And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great** [Compare Rev. 18:2. These words build on Isa. 21:9; Jer. 51:8. Apparently this angel will speak these words in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, not long after the rapture. There’s widespread agreement that they are spoken in anticipation of the judgment and removal of Babylon the great during the second half of this seven-year period. An early aspect of the

judgment of Babylon will have apparently already taken place during the one-month period that precedes the return of Christ. That early judgment, which will take place during the days of the short great tribulation that will take place during that one month period that precedes the rapture, will greatly affect the nation Israel. (See under Rev. 16:17, 18, and 19 in this paper.)

Knowing that Babylon is to be destroyed as part of God's end-time judgment of the world, God's people (all believers) must flee from Babylon and all sin (cf. Rev. 18:4). All mankind will be warned that Babylon is on the brink of total destruction (Rev. 14:8), and that all who worship Antichrist and take his mark are destined for eternal torment (Rev. 14:9-11). I assume Babylon will be progressively destroyed throughout the second half of Daniel's 70th week, but there probably will be something of a climactic end to her destruction too (see under Rev. 16:17, 18, and 19; and see Rev. 17:1-19:3).

This is the first mention of Babylon the great in the book of Revelation. The judgment and removal of Babylon constitutes a major part of God's end-time judgment of the world. Revelation 17:1-19:3 deal with the identity of, and the judgment and total removal of, Babylon, the great harlot, who (for one thing) has been seducing mankind from knowing, serving, and worshiping God. Revelation 14:14-16 apparently also deal with God's judgment of Babylon. Also see Rev. 16:18, 19.

For one thing, Babylon is a symbol for the world, whose god is the devil (2 Cor. 4:4). I'll quote from Leon Morris on the meaning of Babylon the great (*Revelation*, revised edition, [Inter-Varsity Press, 1987], under Rev. 14:8). "The first time the Bible mentions Babylon (Gen. 11:9; but cf. Gen. 10:10) we read that after the Flood people tried to scale the heights of heaven by building a mighty tower. The name thus stands for the pride of mankind and for the heathen city-empire. For John, Babylon is the great city, the symbol of mankind in community opposed to the things of God. Sometimes in other writings Babylon means Rome (2 Bar. 11:1; Sib. Or. 5:143,159,434; possibly 1 Pet. 5:13). John does not go as far as this, though doubtless to first century people there was no better illustration of what Babylon means than contemporary Rome. John is looking forward to the overthrow of all the evil that Babylon stands for."

God's kingdom can't come forth in any full sense until Babylon the harlot has been removed, along with Antichrist and his followers, and, most importantly, along with Satan and his hosts.], **she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.**" [Compare Rev. 17:2, 4; 18:3. We'll discuss Babylon the great harlot as we discuss Rev. 16:17-19 and 17:1-19:3. To "drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality" apparently includes being seduced by Babylon (the devil is behind this seducing) in any of the many ways she seduces men from being faithful to God. This includes all false religion, including apostate Christianity, and all the other things (idols) men can be enticed with that take the place of God, including money, power, fame, sexual sins, occupations, arts, sports, and living in (excessive) luxury.] **(9) And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast [Antichrist; cf. Rev. 13:1-18] and his image [cf. Rev. 13:14, 15], and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand [cf. Rev. 13:16-18], (10) he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength [it isn't diluted] in the cup of His anger [Cf. Psalm 75:8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15-38; and Rev. 16:19. I'll quote part of what George E. Ladd said regarding God's wrath under Rev. 14:9, 10 (*Revelation of John* [Eerdmans, 1972]), "...God's wrath is not a human emotion; it is the settled reaction of his**

holiness to man's sinfulness and rebellion. Unless God in his wrath finally purges the world of all evil and rebellion, his Kingdom cannot come. Therefore, in the largest sense of God's redemptive purpose for men, his wrath is a necessary correlative to his love and mercy. Two of the main themes of the Revelation are the recalcitrance of men against God's salvation, manifested in their subservience to the beast; and the judgment of God which must fall upon them. In Revelation John emphasizes God's wrath as does no other book in the New Testament.... Yet it is no inconsequential matter that his [John's] Gospel, which more than any other expresses the love of God, also insists, 'He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him' (John 3:36)."; **and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone** [cf. Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8; Gen. 19:24; Psalm 11:6; and Ezek. 38:22] **in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. (11) And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever** [cf. Isa. 34:9, 10; Rev. 18:9, 18; and 19:3, 19; 20:10, 14, 15]; **and they have no rest day and night** [Contrast the unending rest for the persecuted saints mentioned in Rev. 14:13.], **those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.**" [This powerful warning of the third angel (Rev. 14:9) is given about the same time that Antichrist begins his three and one-half year super-evil reign in the middle of Daniel's 70th week (e.g., Rev. 13:1-18). It seems clear enough that those who worship Antichrist and take his mark have sealed their destiny. These verses clearly teach eternal torment for the wicked, not annihilation, and they certainly aren't compatible with universalism.

It seems that Rev. 14:17-20 build on Rev. 14:9-11 and deal with God's judgment of Antichrist and his followers at the end of Daniel's 70th week (cf. Rev. 19:19-21). It also seems that Rev. 14:14-16 build on Rev. 14:8 and deal with the judgment and destruction of Babylon, the great harlot.] **(12) Here is the perseverance** [The NIV has "patient endurance."] **of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.** [Compare Rev. 12:17; 13:10. It will require substantial perseverance on the part of the saints (Christians) living on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70th week not to submit to Antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:1-18), but God's grace always is sufficient.] **(13) And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit** [cf. Rev. 22:17], **"that they may rest from their labors** [cf. Heb. 4:9-11], **for their deeds** [works] **follow with them.**" [These words were written for the benefit and encouragement of those saints who will live on the earth during the very difficult days of the second half of Daniel's 70th week. It's also true that the message of this verse has much application for Christians of all generations. It always is a blessing, not a curse, for a Christian to die as a martyr for Christ when it's the will of God, by the grace of God. This will be especially true for those Christians who live on the earth during the three and one-half year reign of Antichrist.

Although we know that there will be many martyrs during that period (e.g., Rev. 13:15; 20:4), the words of this verse also apply to those who die (but not as martyrs) in Christ. The more difficult the times, the more of a blessing it is to escape to the rest of heaven. Their righteous deeds/works, which come through faith and the grace/Spirit of God, will follow them, and they will be ready to stand before God to be judged according to their works.] **(14) And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand.** [Christ will come in glory with the clouds of heaven at His mid-week return (cf. Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9-11; and Rev. 1:7. The saints will

be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet Him in the air at the time of His return (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17). I assume that the time-setting for the scene pictured here in Rev. 14:14 is the middle of Daniel's 70th week, not long after the rapture.

The "one like a son of man," which builds on Dan. 7:13, refers first and foremost to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 16:27; 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; John 5:27; and Rev. 1:13), but we can probably also say that the raptured saints are included with Him under this terminology. (For a detailed discussion on the one like a son of man, see my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture* under Dan. 7:13, 14 on pages 75-83.) Even if the glorified saints aren't included in what is meant by the words "one like a son of man" here in Rev. 14:14, it's clear that they will be with Him in the clouds of heaven (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17), and that they will be reigning with Him from the time of the rapture (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14, 18, 22, and 27; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21; 12:5; 14:1-5; 17:14; and 19:14).

The "golden crown" goes with the reigning (cf. Rev. 6:2). The "sharp sickle" is used for the reaping mentioned in the next two verses.] **(15) And another angel came out of the temple** [This angel apparently gives directions that come from God the Father. On the temple in heaven, cf. Rev. 11:19; 14:17; 15:5-8; and 16:17.], **crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe."** [Many understand this to be a positive reaping of the earth, the reaping of the saints at the time of the rapture; others see both a positive and negative reaping here; I agree with the widespread viewpoint that this is a negative reaping, a reaping of judgment. The "sharp sickle" of Rev. 14:14-16 is used for judgment, even as the "sharp sickle" of Rev. 14:17-20 is used for judgment.

I believe Rev. 14:14-16 build on Rev. 14:8 and speak of the judgment and removal of Babylon the great, which will apparently be progressively destroyed throughout the second half of Daniel's 70th week. (We'll discuss this point as we discuss the judgment of Babylon under Rev. 16:17-19; 17:1-19:3.) See Jer. 51:33; Joel 3:13. Joel 3:13 says, "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great." Revelation 14:14-16 probably build on the first sentence of Joel 3:13, and Rev. 14:17-20 probably build on Joel 3:13. With the words "the hour to reap has come" (Rev. 14:15), compare the words of Rev. 14:7, "the hour of His judgment has come." (On the use of the word *hour*, see under Rev. 14:7.)] **(16) And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.** [First Christ judges and removes Babylon the great harlot through Antichrist and his supporters (Rev. 17:12-18), then He judges and removes Antichrist and his forces after gathering them to Armageddon at the end of Daniel's 70th week (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:19-21). I believe these next verses (14:17-20) deal with this judgment of Antichrist and his forces. The *gathering* of the grapes of the vine of the earth corresponds with the *gathering* of Antichrist and his forces to Armageddon. The treading of the grapes in the winepress of the wrath of God corresponds with Christ's judgment and destruction of Antichrist and his forces pictured in Rev. 19:17-21.] **(17) And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.** [This sharp sickle is used in the judging of God's enemies, as is the sharp sickle of 14:14-16.] **(18) And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar** [Revelation 8:5 shows that the altar in heaven has fire on it (apparently speaking of the sacrificial altar, not the golden altar before the throne [cf. Rev. 8:3-5; 6:9, 10; and 16:7]). The fire goes with the judgment of God (cf., e.g., Dan. 7:9-11; Rev. 8:5; 2 Thess. 1:7; Heb. 10:27; and 12:29).]; **and he called with a loud voice to him**

who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth [This “vine of the earth” can be contrasted with the vine of God/heaven, which embraces God’s people (cf. John 15:1). On the gathering of Rev. 14:18, 19, see under 14:16, 20.], because her grapes are ripe.” (19) And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. [On God’s end-time judgment being pictured as treading grapes in a wine press, see above under Rev. 14:15, 16; see on Rev. 19:15 in this paper (with the cross-reference to *The Mid-Week Rapture* noted at Rev. 19:11); and see Jer. 25:30.] **(20) And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.** [“The city” is Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is probably used here in a symbolic, fuller sense than just the literal city (even as Babylon is used in a symbolic, fuller sense in the book of Revelation). The cities of Jerusalem and Babylon, and the kingdoms that go with these capital cities, are contrasted in the book of Revelation. Every person must make a choice for one city/kingdom, or the other. Outside of Jerusalem God’s judgment will fall. On being “outside” the city of Jerusalem, compare Rev. 22:15.

“Two hundred miles” could be understood in a literal sense, but (in the Greek) it probably is a symbolic number; this is a common view in the commentaries. On symbolic numbers in the book of Revelation, see the section at the beginning of the discussion of Revelation Chapter 21 in my paper on Revelation chapters 20-22, and see under Rev. 21:16, 17 in that paper. As in Rev. 21:16, 17, the translation of the NASB here in 14:20 obscures the symbolic number by its translation. In the margin the NASB has, “lit[erally] sixteen hundred stadia; a stadion was approx[imately] 600 feet.” The NIV has, “for a distance of 1,600 stadia”; the NKJV has, “for one thousand six hundred furlongs.” The number four can function as a symbol for the world/worldwide (cf., e.g., the four corners of the earth [Rev. 7:1; 20:8] and the four winds [Dan. 7:2; 8:8; 11:4; Jer. 49:36; Matt. 24:31; and Mark 13:27]). Four times four multiplied by a hundred is probably used here in a symbolic sense that speaks of the worldwide judgment of God outside of Jerusalem. For one thing, we could think of the judgment and removal of every person living on the earth who has worshiped Antichrist and taken his mark.

I’ll quote from Philip E. Hughes (*Book of Revelation* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1990], page 167), “[The sixteen hundred stadia] should certainly be regarded as a number of symbolical significance, four times four times a hundred, signifying judgment that is worldwide and thorough and complete.” I’ll also quote from H. B. Swete (*Commentary On Revelation* [Kregel, 1977, reprint of the 1911 edition], page 192), “...it is more in accordance with Apocalyptic arithmetic to regard 1600 (equals 4 times 4 times 100) as symbolical of completeness; except within the walls of the City, the deluge of blood was everywhere; or as Victorinus [bishop of Petau; martyred in AD 304] explains, followed by Primasius and the later Latin commentators, it spread ‘through all the four parts of the world; ... [Swete has this quotation from Victorinus in Latin].’ The point to be illustrated is the finality of the blow dealt to the enemies of the Israel of God...”

The *gathering* of Rev. 14:18, 19 apparently corresponds with the significant *gathering* that takes place under the sixth bowl of wrath, which is described in Rev. 16:12-16. These verses speak of the gathering (in the plan of God) of the enemies of God to Armageddon “for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty” (Rev. 16:14). They are gathered by Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, and three unclean spirits like frogs working with them.

They (including Antichrist and the false prophet) are gathered by God for their destruction, which is pictured in Rev. 19:19-21. Christ Himself (accompanied by His armies, which includes the raptured saints) destroys those who are gathered to Armageddon.]

REVELATION CHAPTER 15

And I saw another sign in heaven [cf. Rev. 12:1, 3], great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. [This verse serves as an introduction for chapters 15 and 16. In 15:5-8 we learn more about these seven angels with the seven last plagues; the seven last plagues equate with the “seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God” (15:7). In chapter 16 the seven bowls of wrath are poured out. Revelation 17:1 and 21:9 both mention “one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls”; these two verses aren’t necessarily referring to the same angel.

God’s end-time wrath “is finished” in these seven last plagues/bowls of wrath, but it doesn’t begin with them. The first bowl of wrath probably won’t be poured out until Antichrist’s three and one-half year, super-evil reign is well established (cf. Rev. 16:2, 5, 6); it could be poured out as late as a few months (or even a month) before the end of this reign. God’s end-time plagues/wrath will be manifested to some extent even before Christ returns, especially during the plagues associated with the sixth trumpet. (Christ will return at the time of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week.) Revelation 9:18, 20 (verses dealing with the sixth trumpet) use the same word plague used of the seven last plagues.

Revelation 6:16, 17 speak of the wrath of God the Father and the Lamb that is associated with the end-time day of judgment. This “great day of their wrath” (Rev. 6:17) will begin in a very significant sense when Christ returns, but as I mentioned, something of God’s wrath/plagues is manifested under the sixth trumpet, which will sound about the time of the abomination of desolation, about a month before Christ returns and the rapture takes place. God’s wrath is also mentioned in Rev. 11:18, a verse that includes all the wrath of judgment day and is not to be limited to the wrath of the seven last bowls of wrath.

Revelation 16:19 speaks of God’s end-time wrath being directed against Babylon the great. Revelation 18:4 and 8 speak of the plagues that are to come against Babylon the great. As we’ll discuss, it doesn’t seem that the seven last plagues/bowls of wrath have much, if anything, to do with God’s end-time judgment and removal of Babylon the great. It’s possible that a climactic end could come to Babylon the great under the seventh plague/bowl of wrath, after the gathering of forces under the sixth plague. For more on Babylon the great and her destruction, see under Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:17-19; and 17:1-19:3 in this paper.

The seven last bowls of wrath will be directed, for the most part at least, at Antichrist and his followers (cf. Rev. 16:2, 4-7, 10-16). Babylon will be judged and destroyed by God through Antichrist and his associates (Rev. 17:16, 17). Antichrist and his associates will apparently be against Babylon the great from the time Antichrist begins his super-evil reign in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (cf. Rev. 13:1-18; 17:12, 13). Antichrist apparently won’t tolerate competition/opposition from that time on (whether from religious or governmental authorities, leaders of commerce, etc.; all must submit to him [cf. Dan. 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4]), and Babylon will apparently be progressively destroyed during his reign. Also, even though Antichrist won’t have his full authority at the relatively early time of the abomination of desolation (about a month before the middle of Daniel’s 70th week), he will begin some of his anti-God, anti-religion, anti-all-competition/opposition activities

at that time.

On Antichrist's destructive activities that will be used by God as part of His end-time judgment, see Dan. 8:19, 23-25; 11:36-44; and Zech. 11:1-17. The sequence of Rev. 14:8 (a verse that deals with the judgment of Babylon the great) followed by Rev. 14:9-11 verses that warn of the doom that will come to al; who worship Antichrist) and Rev. 14:14-16 (verses that apparently also deal with the judgment of Babylon), followed by Rev. 14:17-20 (verses that deal with God's judgment of Antichrist and his followers) confirms that Babylon will be judged first. Revelation 14:14-20 suggest that Babylon will be destroyed before Antichrist's forces are gathered to Armageddon (which will come to pass under the sixth bowl of wrath). This gathering is apparently pictured in Rev. 14:17-19 as the gathering of the clusters of grapes. It is totally clear that Babylon the great will be destroyed before Antichrist and his followers are destroyed in that God is going to judge Babylon through Antichrist and his ten associates (Rev. 17:16, 17).

How Far Does the Seventh Plague/Bowl of Wrath Extend? There are some solid reasons for saying that the seventh bowl of wrath extends to include God's casting the rest of His unrepentant enemies (including Satan and his angelic, demonic host) into the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15). Quite a few commentators understand the seventh bowl in this full sense, and I favored this viewpoint in *The Mid-Week Rapture*. It's clear that God's wrath won't be finished in the full and final sense until after the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium. Also, the fact that it is "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues" (Rev. 21:9) that showed John the holy city, new Jerusalem, after the millennium and the great-white-throne judgment fits the idea that the seventh bowl of wrath extends to the end of the millennium.

Now, however, after further consideration, I believe it was intended by the Author that we see the seventh plague/bowl of wrath just extending to the judgment and removal of Antichrist, the false prophet, and those who were gathered to Armageddon under the sixth plague/bowl of wrath. (This seventh plague may well be against all who have taken the mark of the beast, whether they are gathered to Armageddon, or not.) In other words, the seventh plague/bowl of wrath deals with the intense judgment pictured in Rev. 14:20 and 19:19-21; and we apparently also see this same judgment pictured in the plague of huge hailstones of Rev. 16:21. The language of 16:21 probably has a strong symbolic component, if it isn't entirely symbolic, but God's enemies will be totally removed by His judgments..

The word plague fits better with this more limited view of the extent of the seventh plague/bowl of wrath. For another thing, this view fits much better with Rev. 15:8. (The idea that God the Father will be preoccupied with judgment throughout the millennium and will be unapproachable in the temple until after the millennium seems untenable.) This more limited view also fits better with Rev. 15:2-4, verses that deal with things that will come to pass at the end of Daniel's 70th week, apparently after God's end-time wrath has been finished in the seven bowls of wrath.

Revelation 15:2-4 have a strong tie to the seven bowls of wrath because of their setting between Rev. 15:1 and 15:5-8, verses that deal with the seven bowls of wrath. The scene of the saints who came off victorious over Antichrist pictured in heaven in 15:2, and the statement of 15:4 that (the remnant of) the nations will now come to worship God, both fit the idea that God's wrath manifested in judging (and in saving His people), which is finished with the seven last bowls of wrath, will not extend beyond the end of Daniel's

70th week.] **(2) And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.** [I agree with the widespread viewpoint that this is the same “sea of glass” that was seen before the throne of God in Rev. 4:6. The “fire” here probably represents the refining fire these now-glorified saints just came through, as they lived for God during the very difficult days of the super-evil reign of Antichrist, during the second half of Daniel’s 70th week. On this refining fire for the end-time elect remnant of Israel, see Zech. 13:9; Dan. 12:7, 10-12; Rev. 13:5, 7. They had “come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name” by staying faithful to God and rejecting the worship demanded by Antichrist (e.g., Rev. 13:1-18). These victorious, now-glorified saints are pictured in heaven.

The time setting of the scene pictured in Rev. 15:2-4 is about the end of Daniel’s 70th week, after the “wrath of God is finished” (Rev. 15:1), but we are shown this scene, with its very positive outcome for these saints, before the seven bowls of wrath are poured out. (This is comparable with the scene of the just-raptured saints in heaven in Rev. 7:9-11 [who will be raptured at the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15) in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week] being presented just before the seven trumpets are introduced and then sounded, starting with Rev. 8:2.

Although the seven trumpets aren’t introduced until Rev. 8:2, Rev. 6:12-17 give us an early look at the arrival of the day of God’s wrath before the all-important scroll that the Lord Jesus takes from the hand of God the Father is opened with the removal of the seventh and last seal at Rev. 8:1.) These verses (Rev. 15:2-4) show the glorious outcome for those members of true Israel who will be converted after the rapture and stay faithful to God; they will undoubtedly encourage those saints who will live on the earth during those very difficult three and one-half years. Revelation 15:3, 4 go on to speak of the ultimate conversion of the remnant of the nations about the time of the end of the seven-year period.

Many teach that these glorified saints in Rev. 15:2 are all martyrs. There is nothing said in this verse, however, that indicates that these saints are martyrs, though it’s clear that some of them are (cf., e.g., Rev. 20:4). I believe this multitude in heaven includes those members of God’s true Israel who stay faithful to Him and are still alive at the end of Daniel’s 70th week. (Revelation 12:6, 14-16 show how it will be possible for some saints to stay alive during this period. Compare 13:10 in the NIV. Also see Psalm 110; Mic. 5:3-6; Zech. 12:1-14; and 14:3-15; these passages are discussed in chapters 19, 17, and 15 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*.) Assuming this viewpoint is correct, it’s clear (from Rev. 15:2-4) that these non-martyred saints (along with the martyred saints) will be glorified and enter heaven/the heavenly dimension about the time of the end of Daniel’s 70th week. (Many teach that those saints still alive at the end of Daniel’s 70th week will enter the millennial kingdom in their natural [non-glorified] bodies.)

Isaiah 66:8 is an important cross-reference; it helps confirm that all the members of true Israel, including those still alive at the end of Daniel’s 70th week, will be glorified at that time. Isaiah 66:8 is discussed on pages 243, 244 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*. We can apparently say that all the members of God’s true Israel, who are represented by the woman of Revelation chapter 12 and by the bride of Christ spoken of in Rev. 19:7-9, including the Christians still alive on the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70th week, will be glorified in time to function as priests and to reign throughout the millennial kingdom.

The fact that these saints are “holding harps of God” and sing before God (Rev. 15:3, 4) has some important correspondence with Rev. 14:2, 3. In Rev. 14:2, 3 the members of true Israel who were raptured in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week sang a new song before the throne of God. Revelation 14:2, 3 didn’t mention that they were holding harps of God, but it did say that John heard a voice “like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.” (Revelation 14:2, 3 are discussed in chapter 23 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*.) Now, in Rev. 15:2-4, we see the rest of the members of true Israel (those converted after the rapture) join their raptured, glorified brethren in the presence of God, in glory, to begin their eternal reign with Him.] **(3) And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb** [It seems there’s only one song here, not two. The last words confirm that these glorified saints are Christians. The words “the song of Moses” help confirm that these saints constitute the end-time elect remnant of (true) Israel. (This remnant centers in the remnant of the nation Israel [cf. Rom. 11:25-27].) I believe these words (the song of Moses) build on Deut. 31:14-32:52; these verses in Deuteronomy speak of the song God gave Moses just before he died to teach to the sons of Israel. This song included, for one thing, the message that God would save the repentant end-time elect remnant of Israel. I’ll refer to this song from Deuteronomy further as we continue. I also refer the reader to the discussion on the “the song of Moses” on page 246 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*.

Some commentators agree with this reference to Deuteronomy chapters 31, 32, but the majority refer to the song of Exodus chapter 15, where Moses and Israel sang beside the sea after God had destroyed their enemies in the waters. The translation of the NIV in Rev. 15:2 (“standing beside the sea”) fits this understanding of the song of Moses, and this view is certainly reasonable, but it seems to me that the reference to Deuteronomy chapters 31, 32 is weightier. Also, the translation “[standing] on the sea of glass” of the NASB, KJV, and the NKJV seems more probable.], **saying, “Great and marvelous are Thy works** [Compare Deut. 32:3, 4. God’s works of saving His people and of judging His enemies are spoken of here in Rev. 15:3. In this song of Rev. 15:3, 4, with its setting between verses dealing with God’s seven plagues/bowls of wrath, the emphasis is on God’s works of judging, but this judging goes with the saving of His people. Note that the words “great and marvelous” were also used in Rev. 15:1 with reference to the seven angels with the seven last plagues.], **O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are thy ways** [cf. Deut. 32:4; Rev. 16:4-7; and 19:2], **Thou King of the nations.** [God is the Creator and Judge of all the peoples of all the nations. This will become evident when He judges the nations, and when He saves the elect end-time remnant of the nations. Jeremiah 10:7 says, “Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Thy due....”] **(4) Who will not fear, O Lord** [This speaks of a proper, reverential fear of God, which the remnant of the nations will manifest after God’s end-time judgments, about the time of the end of Daniel’s 70th week. Significantly, Deut. 32:43, which is part of the song God gave Moses, shows that the nations (that is, the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations) will have cause to rejoice with (true) Israel after God’s end-time judgment of the nations.], **and glorify Thy name?** [The remnant of the nations will glorify God’s name by humbling themselves before Him and worshiping Him. Sections 1 and 2 of my paper titled, *More Regarding God’s Salvation Plans for the Nations* list many passages that confirm this teaching regarding the conversion of (the remnant of) the nations after God’s end-time judgment.] **For Thou alone art holy** [The God of the Bible is the only real God, and the only One holy and worthy of worship.]; **FOR ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND**

WORSHIP BEFORE THEE [Revelation 20:3 is an important cross-reference (see under that verse in my paper on Revelation chapters 20-22. Psalm 86:9 says, “All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; And they shall glorify Thy name.” Cf., e.g., Psalms 22:27-31; 47; Isa. 2:2-4; 66:23 and Jer. 16:19-21. These passages are all discussed in my verse-by-verse studies of selected eschatological passages for the books of Psalms, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. These three papers all deal to some extent with God’s salvation plans for the remnant of the nations.], **For Thy righteous acts have been revealed.**” [As I mentioned, His righteous acts of saving and judging will have been revealed. I’ll quote part of what A. R. Fausset (1821-1910) says under this verse (*A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown [Eerdmans, 1984 reprint], page 706). “The confederacy of apostates against Christ becomes, when overthrown with fearful judgments, the very means, in God’s providence, of preparing the nations not joined in the antichristian league to submit themselves to Him.”

I’ll also quote part of what George R. Beasley-Murray says here (*New Bible Commentary*; 21st Century Edition [Inter-Varsity Press, 1994], page 1445). “The vision is remarkable in its context, and is a reminder that the success of the antichrist is less than the hyperbolic [an adjective meaning exaggerated] pictures of the Messianic judgments may suggest.” That is, you could easily get the idea from some, or many, prophetic passages (very much including some passages in the book of Revelation) that there won’t be any people left alive on the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70th week to come and submit to God and worship Him. Keep in mind that this must be people who had not worshipped Antichrist and taken his mark. As I have mentioned I believe the number could be in the billions. This strongly suggests, for one thing, that Antichrist’s dominion will not extend (at least not effectively extend) worldwide, as we may have thought based on some prophecies. For more on the extent of Antichrist’s dominion see under Rev. 9:15 in my paper on Revelation chapters 1-10.] **(5) After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened** [See Rev. 11:19. Exodus 38:21 and Num. 1:50 speak of “the tabernacle of the testimony” (cf., e.g., Num. 17:7; 18:2); it was called the tabernacle of the testimony because “the testimony” was placed in the tabernacle. Many verses speak of the ark of the covenant as “the ark of the testimony”; it was called “the ark of the testimony” because into the ark was placed “the testimony” (cf., e.g., Ex. 25:16, 21). “The testimony” refers to the two tablets on which were written the ten commandments (cf., e.g., Ex. 31:18; 32:15; and 34:28, 29).

The ten commandments were the heart and foundation of the covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. All the promises God made in the old covenant, including those contained in the song God gave to Moses, will ultimately be fulfilled. The words of this verse about the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven being opened (also for Rev. 11:19) include the idea that God will now bring to pass His covenant promises that deal with His end-time works of saving and judging. Along this line, also see Rev. 10:7. I should also mention that the tabernacle built under the leadership of Moses, which also served as the pattern for the later earthly temple(s), was built after the pattern of the heavenly temple (Ex. 25:9, 40; Acts 7:44; and Heb. 8:5).], **(6) and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their breasts with golden girdles** [cf. Rev. 1:13]. **(7) And one of the four living creatures** [cf. Rev. 4:6-9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7] **gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. (8) And the temple was filled**

with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished. [On not being able to enter the temple because of the glory of God, cf. Ex. 40:34, 35; 1 Kings 8:10, 11; and 2 Chron. 5:13, 14. As I mentioned, this last verse rather strongly supports the idea that the seventh plague/bowl of wrath will be finished by the end of Daniel's 70th week. It doesn't seem tenable that this scene pictured in Rev. 15:8, with its great intensity, could extend throughout the millennium.]

REVELATION CHAPTER 16

And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.” [Compare Psalm 79:6, 7; Jer. 10:25; Zeph. 3:8-10; and Rev. 15:1, 5-8.] **(2) And the first angel went and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.** [Compare Ex. 9:8-11; Rev. 16:11. On the mark of the beast and the worship of his image, see Rev. 13:14-18; 14:9-11. Note that the contents of the first bowl of wrath just fall upon those who worship Antichrist. Also, it is specifically mentioned that “the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast [Antichrist],” and the sixth bowl is concerned with those who are gathered to Har-Magedon by Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, and the “three unclean spirits like frogs,” who came out of their mouths (16:12-16). And, as we’ll discuss, the apparent purpose of the seventh bowl of wrath is to destroy all those gathered to Har-Magedon under the sixth bowl (very much including Antichrist and the false prophet). (See under Rev. 16:12, 13, 16, 17, 21; and 19:19-21.)

We can probably say that all seven bowls of wrath are directed against Antichrist and his followers. Antichrist’s super-evil reign (which involves the “ten horns/kings” [Rev. 17:12-14, 16, 17] and the false prophet [Rev. 13:11-18; 16:13; 19:20]) will constitute the dominant center of evil on the earth from the middle of Daniel’s 70th week. For example, Antichrist will kill the two prophets/witnesses (11:7) in the (approximate) middle of this seven-year period (apparently three and one-half days before the rapture takes place in the actual middle); the devil will give Antichrist “his power and his throne and great authority” (13:2) in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week; Antichrist will blaspheme God (13:6); he will make war with the saints and (in some ways) overcome them (13:7); he will have authority over, and be worshiped by, all but the elect (13:3-8, 12-18); he, with the ten horns, will hate the great harlot and make her desolate (17:16, 17); and we can probably say that he is the one behind the pouring out of at least most of “the blood of saints and prophets” mentioned in 16:6 (see under 16:6), which would confirm that the third bowl of wrath (16:4-7) is also directed against Antichrist and his followers.] **(3) And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.** [Compare Ex. 7:17-21; Rev. 8:8, 9 (the second trumpet); and 11:6. There’s some correspondence with the second trumpet of Revelation, but there (Rev. 8:8, 9), only a third of the sea became blood, and only a third of the living things in the sea died. What is meant by “the sea” is a major question. I can’t be dogmatic, but I assume the Mediterranean Sea is referred to with the second bowl, and with the second trumpet.] **(4) And the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood.** [Cf. Ex. 7:17-25; Psalm 78:44; Rev. 8:10, 11; and 11:6.] **(5) And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast** [Cf. Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8; and 11:17. It should be noted that the last part of God’s name from Rev. 1:4, 8; and 4:8 (the words “and who is to come”) have been dropped in Rev. 11:17, and here in 16:5, because He comes at the sounding of the seventh trumpet of the book of Revelation (in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week). Apparently He comes at first only in the sending of His Son.], **O Holy One** [cf. Rev. 15:4], **because Thou didst judge these things** [cf. Rev. 6:10]; **(6) for they poured out the blood of saints and**

prophets [Compare Rev. 11:7, 8; 13:7, 10, 15; 14:12, 13; 17:6; 18:20, 24; and 20:4. The references from chapters 17 and 18 refer to Babylon's shedding the blood of God's people, not Antichrist and his followers. Most of the blood of the saints shed on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70th week will be shed by Antichrist and his followers (also see Rev. 13:2-5; 17:12-14, 16, and 17), not by Babylon the great. Most of the blood of the saints shed by Babylon is shed before Antichrist takes over in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, throughout the history of man on the earth.

See under Rev. 14:8, 16-18 on the identity of Babylon and on her destruction, and we will further discuss these topics as we continue (see Rev. 16:18-20 and 17:1-19:3).

Throughout the history of the Bible, until the time of the split between Antichrist (who is the last of the leaders of the world kingdoms of the Bible) and Babylon the great harlot, the two (the leaders of the world kingdoms with their kingdoms and Babylon) are typically united (cf. Rev. 17:3, 7, 9), with both being motivated by the god of this world (cf., e.g., Rev. 12:3; 13:2, 4, 11; 17:5, 6; 18:3, 23, 24). The split comes, as Rev. 17:16, 17 demonstrate, because God has planned to use Antichrist and his followers to judge and destroy Babylon. In the book of Revelation, God uses the devil, evil angels, demons, Antichrist, and the false prophet along with His righteous forces in His end-time judgment of the world.], **and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it.” (7) And I heard the altar** [undoubtedly referring to the sacrificial altar (cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 14:18)] **saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments** [cf. Rev. 15:3, 4; 19:2].” **(8) And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun** [cf. Rev. 8:12 (the fourth trumpet)]; **and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. (9) And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God** [cf. 13:5, 6; 16:11, 21] **who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent** [cf. Rev. 9:20, 21; 16:11], **so as to give Him glory** [cf. Rev. 11:13; 14:7]. **(10) And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened** [cf. Ex. 10:21-23 (the ninth of the ten plagues at the time of the exodus from Egypt); Rev. 8:12]; **and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, (11) and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores** [cf. Rev. 16:2]; **and they did not repent of their deeds**[cf. Rev. 16:9]. **(12) And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates** [cf. Rev. 9:14]; **and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.** [These “kings from the east” will cross the Euphrates River on their way to Har-Magedon, as the following verses show. It may prove to be relevant that Turkey has built a dam that would enable drying up the Euphrates.] **(13) And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon** [Satan (cf. Rev. 12:9)] **and out of the mouth of the beast** [Antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:1-8)] **and out of the mouth of the false prophet** [cf. Rev. 13:11-17; 19:20], **three unclean spirits like frogs;** **(14) for they are spirits of demons, performing signs** [cf. Rev. 13:13-15; 19:20; and 2 Thess. 2:8-12], **which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.** [Compare 1 Kings 22:19-23; Rev. 19:19; and see the references in the third paragraph under Rev. 16:16.] **(15) (“Behold, I am coming like a thief** [cf. Rev. 3:3]. **Blessed** [cf. Luke 12:37] **is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame** [cf. Rev. 3:18].”) [On the need for Christians to always be awake, alert, ready, and watchful, and living in the truth and righteousness of God, so that Christ will have no need to come against them in judgment as a thief, see under Matt. 24:42-51 in my paper on Matthew

chapters 24, 25. These words are apparently directed at those saints who will be living on the earth during the second half of Daniel's 70th week, but they are applicable to all Christians of all generations.] **(16) And they gathered them together** [cf. Rev. 19:19] **to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.** [In the margin the NASB says, "Some ancient authorities read Armageddon." The KJV, NKJV, NIV, and the Amplified Bible all have Armageddon. In Hebrew "Har" means mountain, or hill, or hill country. Apparently there is some reference to the ancient city of Megiddo, which was on the edge of a large plain [cf. 2 Chron. 35:22], the plain of Esdraelon. The site of the ancient city is located on a hill/mound some seventy feet high. Many excavations have been done at this site. The site is about fifty-five miles north of Jerusalem.

There is widespread agreement that the territory around Megiddo is probably referred to in Rev. 16:16. One primary reason is that the plain of Esdraelon, which is some twenty miles long and some fourteen miles wide at its widest point, would be a good place to gather forces. In ancient times, and in modern times, there have been many battles fought in the area around Megiddo. The battle where Deborah and Barak, by the intervention of God, defeated a large Caananite army with chariots (Judges 4:1-5:31; note 5:19) is probably the most important battle at that location mentioned in the Old Testament.

There are quite a few verses in the Old Testament that speak of God's end-time gathering of the armies of the nations to Israel in order to destroy them in judgment (cf., e.g., Isa. 66:18; Joel 3:2, 9-17; Mic. 4:11-13; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:2-9; and 14:2-4, 12-15). The references in Zechariah, for example, make it clear that Jerusalem will be attacked in the last days. The forces that gather at Har-Magedon won't necessarily be destroyed there (at that particular location).

What motivates Antichrist and his followers to gather at Har-Magedon? Ultimately it traces back to the plan of God to judge His enemies and then to the work of the three demons who come out of the mouths of the dragon (the devil), the beast (Antichrist), and the false prophet in Rev. 16:13. The devil is motivated by a hatred of God/Christ, and it is clear that Antichrist and those who worship him are motivated by a hatred of God/Christ and His people throughout his three and one-half year super-evil reign (cf. Rev. 13:5-7; 15:2; 16:6, 9, 11; 17:14; and 19:19). Revelation 17:14 speaks of Antichrist and the ten horns/kings "[waging] war against the Lamb," and it goes on to mention that the raptured saints are with Christ at that time. This verse speaks of their waging war throughout their three and one-half year reign (cf. Rev. 17:12, 13).

Revelation 19:19 is the most important verse to show what the primary motivation is behind the gathering to Har-Magedon. It says, "And I saw the beast [Antichrist] and the kings of the earth assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse [the Lord Jesus Christ] and His army [which at least includes the raptured saints]." It would be far better to translate "gathered," or "gathered together" instead of "assembled" in Rev. 19:19 to show the tie to the gathering of Rev. 16:16. (In the Greek the same verb is used in Rev. 16:16 [also 16:14] and 19:19. The NIV, KJV, and NKJV have "gathered together" in Rev. 19:19 and in 16:16.)

Apparently it will be clear that Christ is associated with the city of Jerusalem and with the people of Jerusalem from the time of His mid-week return. For some details on this topic, see the section titled "The Lord Jesus Christ Will Claim Jerusalem as His City" on page 70 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture* and the Biblical references cited there (which are all discussed in that book). I'm speaking of Christ claiming Jerusalem as His city from

the time of His mid-week return.

In conclusion, it seems clear that Antichrist and his followers are gathering to attack the followers of Christ in Jerusalem/Israel, and Christ Himself (and His army), and ultimately God the Father. To gather gigantic armies to fight opponents like this will undoubtedly require some extra motivation, like that provided by the three demon spirits of Rev. 16:13, 14. Apparently the primary motivation traces back to Satan's hatred of God, which he also imparts to his followers, including Antichrist. God, however, will have the last word. For one thing, Rev. 11:18 (which builds on Psalm 2) shows that the end-time rage of the nations (being led by Antichrist) will be countered and silenced by the wrath of God.] **(17) And the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."** [When the events associated with the seventh plague/bowl of wrath are completed, "the wrath of God [will be] finished" (Rev. 15:1). All the judgments associated with the day of judgment, which begins when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, at the time of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation, is included in the seventh trumpet, including the judgments associated with the seven bowls of wrath. See Rev. 10:6, 7 (discussed in *The Mid-Week Rapture* on pages 169, 170, including endnote 7) and in my article on Revelation chapter 10 in the paper on Revelation chapters 1-10.

But what is included in the seventh bowl? For a start, see the lengthy discussion under Rev. 15:1. Commentators typically include the judgment and removal of Babylon the great in this bowl; Rev. 16:18, 19 (which speak of the destruction of Babylon), coming right after 16:17, fit this viewpoint well. The more I study the details, however, the more I'm convinced that the seventh bowl doesn't include God's destruction of Babylon. (It's possible that there could be a climactic end to the destruction of Babylon under the seventh bowl.)

We'll get into more details under 16:18-21, and in the following chapters that deal with the judgment of Babylon, but I'll mention here two key reasons for my viewpoint. I believe (in agreement with quite a few commentators) that "the great city" spoken of in Rev. 16:19 is Jerusalem, the capital city of the nation of Israel. It seems that most of God's end-time judgment/shaking of the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel (which will leave a substantial remnant, the often-mentioned end-time remnant of the nation Israel) will take place during the one-month period between the abomination of desolation and the mid-week return of Christ, which is too early to be a judgment/shaking associated with the seventh bowl of wrath. And, second, as I mentioned under Rev. 15:1, Antichrist's attacks against Babylon the great (which apparently embraces all false religion, along with the other things the devil uses to seduce people from God) will start early, not near the end of Daniel's 70th week. The viewpoint of the book of Revelation seems to be that Babylon has already been destroyed before the seventh bowl is poured out. It probably is destroyed (at least to a significant extent) before any of the seven last bowls are poured out.

First God uses Antichrist and the ten horns to destroy Babylon (Rev. 17:16, 17), then He destroys Antichrist and his followers. Three other passages which show that God will use Antichrist in His end-time judgment of the world (much of this judgment will fall on Babylon) are Dan. 8:19, 23-25; 11:36-45; and Zechariah chapter 11, especially verses 15-17. (See chapters 7, 9, and 14 of *The Mid-Week Rapture* on these passages.)

It seems to me, as I mentioned, that the seventh bowl is probably limited to the

destruction of Antichrist and his forces that have been gathered to Har-Magedon (Armageddon). This fits perfectly with the first six of the seven last bowls of wrath, which are aimed (at least for the most part) at Antichrist and his followers. (See under Rev. 16:2, 6.) After the gathering to Har-Magedon in the sixth bowl, we expect the judgment of the gathered forces, and that's (apparently) just what the seventh bowl contains.

I assume that we see the results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath *upon the air* (where hailstones come from) of Rev. 16:17 in the plague of huge hailstones pictured in Rev. 16:21. Note that the outpoured bowls typically affect the objects on which they are poured out: The second bowl "into the sea" (16:3); the third bowl "into the rivers and the springs of waters" (16:4); the fourth bowl "upon the sun" (16:8); the fifth bowl "upon the throne of the beast" (16:10); and the sixth bowl "upon the great river, the Euphrates" (16:11).

The gathered forces are judged and (apparently) totally destroyed by "the plague of the hail" (Rev. 16:21), which is the seventh plague of the seven last plagues spoken of in Rev. 15:1-8. Although literal huge hailstones may well be falling during the seventh last plague, this language (like the language of the great earthquake/shaking that destroyed Babylon the great of Rev. 16:19) probably symbolizes God's judgment going forth against Antichrist and his gathered followers.

The same judgment and removal of these enemies of God is pictured with very different, but equally graphic and powerful, symbolic language in Rev. 14:20 and in Rev. 19:20, 21. (Revelation 14:20 speaks of the judgment of the enemies of God, undoubtedly referring to Antichrist and his followers, as gathered grapes being trodden in the wine press of the wrath of God. Revelation 19:20 speaks of Antichrist and the false prophet being seized and thrown into the lake of fire, and 19:21 says "the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." Also, whereas Rev. 16:18, 19 speak of Babylon the great being destroyed by a great earthquake/shaking [cf. Rev. 14:8], Rev. 17:16, 17 speak of her being burned up with fire [compare "the smoke of her burning" (Rev. 18:9, 18); and "her smoke rises up forever" (19:3)]. And Rev. 14:14-16 apparently speak of the judgment of Babylon as a reaping with a sharp sickle.) See under 16:21 for more details.

After mentioning here in 16:17 that God's end-time wrath is finished with the seventh bowl of wrath ("It is done"), the book of Revelation apparently goes on in 16:18-21 to give a brief summarizing account of God's end-time day of judgment (not just of the judgment associated with the seventh bowl of wrath). The two primary judgments of the day of wrath are the destruction and total removal of Babylon the great harlot (Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:18, 19; and 17:1-19:3) and the destruction and total removal of Antichrist and his followers under the judgment of the seven bowls of wrath, especially under the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:21; 19:19-21; and 14:17-20; cf. 14:9-11). When these judgments are finished (about the end of Daniel's 70th week), we are able to see the end result of God's end-time judgments—His enemies have been judged and totally removed: "It is done."

Revelation 11:19 is a very important cross-reference for Rev. 16:17-21; it says, "And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple [These words have much correspondence with Rev. 15:5-8]; and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder [These same manifestations of God's power going forth are mentioned in Rev. 16:18] and an earthquake [or, shaking. This

earthquake/shaking corresponds, at least to some significant extent, with the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18, 19] and a great hailstorm [which undoubtedly equates with the great hailstorm of Rev. 16:21].”

Revelation 11:19, which is tied to the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:15), apparently pictures, in symbolic language, all the judgments of the day of judgment (which starts at the sounding of the seventh trumpet) going forth. (The seventh trumpet includes all the judgments of the day of judgment, including the judgments of the seven last bowls of wrath.) Two other passages that have some correspondence with Rev. 11:19 and 16:17-21 are Rev. 6:12-17 and 8:5.] **(18) And there were flashes of lightning and sounds** [The BAGD Greek Lexicon shows that we could think, for example, of the sounds/noise of “the roar of the storm.”] **and peals of thunder** [cf. Rev. 4:5; 8:5; and 11:19]; **and there was a great earthquake** [or, shaking], **such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake** [or, shaking] **was it, and so mighty.** [Revelation 6:12 and 11:13 also mention a great earthquake/shaking, and Rev. 8:5 and 11:19 mention an earthquake/shaking. All these earthquakes/shakings (not that they are all separate and distinct from one another) can probably be considered part of the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18. It seems clear that the purpose of the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18 is to totally bring down Babylon the great.

We must understand that there is more being spoken of here than literal earthquakes, though it’s clear there will be literal earthquakes in the last days (e.g., Zech 14:4, 5, which apparently correlates with the great earthquake at Jerusalem mentioned in Rev. 11:13). God’s end-time judgment can be symbolized by His shakings (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:19, 21; 13:13; 24:1, 19, 20; Hag. 2:6, 7, 21; and Heb. 12:26-29). Revelation 17:16, 17, verses that also use language that has a strong symbolic component, speak of Babylon being burned up with fire (cf. Rev. 18:9, 18; 19:3).

I believe the “great earthquake [shaking]” of Rev. 6:12, which is spoken of just before mentioning that “the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood,” at least includes the shaking of the short great tribulation, that time of very intense warfare (the warfare of the sixth trumpet) that will take place in the one-month period just preceding the mid-week return of Christ. The shaking of the short great tribulation is important here in the context of Rev. 16:17-21 because, for one thing, it is (apparently) during this shaking that “the great city [will be] split into three parts” (Rev. 16:19). We’ll discuss this point as we continue.

If the shaking of the short great tribulation is included in the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18, as I assume it is, this serves as a strong confirmation that the great earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18 can’t be limited to events associated with the seventh bowl of wrath, which will be poured out near the end of Daniel’s 70th week. As I mentioned, I don’t believe this great earthquake/shaking of 16:18 (God’s judgment/shaking of Babylon the great) is even included in the seventh bowl of wrath. (On the great tribulation of Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; and Mark 13:19, see number 8 on page 14 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*; see under Dan. 12:1 in that book (pages 149-155); see under Matt. 24:21, 22 in my paper on Matthew chapters 24, 25; and see under Rev. 9:13-21 in my paper on Revelation chapters 1-10.) **(19) And the great city was split into three parts** [Most commentators say these words refer to Babylon the great, which is called the “great city” in Rev. 17:18; 18:16, 18, 19, and 21. I agree with those (and there are quite a few) who say the “great city” here is Jerusalem. Jerusalem is called “the great city” in Rev.

11:8. The city of Jerusalem (and the nation of Israel) will experience intense judgment/shaking in the last days, but, unlike the cities of the nations, it won't be totally destroyed.

Zechariah 13:8 apparently enables us to understand what is meant by Jerusalem's being split into three parts: This verse shows that "two parts in it [apparently referring to the land of Israel, of which Jerusalem is the capital] will be cut off and perish; But the third [the end-time remnant of Israel] will be left in it." Apparently two thirds of the people of Israel will be cut off (by death or by exile [cf. Zech. 14:2]) through God's judgment in the last days. This two thirds cut off can probably be considered part of, or at least closely aligned with, Babylon the great. The one third are part of God's elect, part of God's true Israel; they will be left as a remnant to receive Christ, starting at the time of His mid-week return (cf., e.g., Zech. 13:8, 9; 12:10-13:1; 14:1-8; Rev. 11:13; and 12:6-13:18).

The time during which the two thirds will be cut off (at least for the most part) will be during the one-month period between the abomination of desolation and the mid-week return of Christ. In other words, it will take place during the days of the short great tribulation, which we just discussed under Rev. 16:18. This serves as a strong confirmation that the earthquake/shaking of Rev. 16:18 includes the shaking of the short great tribulation., **and the cities of the nations fell.** [Unlike Jerusalem, the cities of the nations, which are pictured as being part of, or at least closely aligned with, Babylon the great, totally fall in God's end-time judgment. God's end-time judgment starts in earnest by the time of the shaking/judgment of the sixth trumpet (under which the short great tribulation takes place). I think of the day of judgment officially beginning when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, at the time of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation.

I'll quote a few sentences from G. K. Beale under Rev. 16:19 (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999]): "That 'the cities of the nations fell' describes the universal extent of the last judgment. It is not just Rome or some later great capital of evil that is decimated but all the world's cultural, political, economic, and sociological centers. They fall because they are part of the Babylonian world system." **And Babylon the great was remembered before God** [cf. Rev. 18:5], **to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.** [The judgment of Babylon has already been mentioned in Rev. 14:8 and (apparently) in 14:14-16. Revelation 17:1-19:3 tell us a lot about who and what Babylon the great is, and about her judgment. Babylon is a symbol for the world, whose god is the devil (2 Cor. 4:4). When Babylon is understood in the fullest sense, it includes all the cities of the nations, including that part of Jerusalem (and that part of the Christian church) which is unfaithful to God and aligned with the devil.

On "the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath," cf. Rev. 14:10; 19:15 (on Rev. 19:15 see pages 28, 29 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*). Revelation 18:4 and 8 mention "plagues" associated with God's wrath falling on Babylon the great, but they (apparently) are separate from and come (at least for the most part) before the seventh and last plague. Furthermore, the "plagues" of Rev. 18:4, 8 aren't included (at least not for the most part) in the first six plagues/bowls of wrath of Rev. 16:2-16.] **(20) And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.** [Compare Rev. 6:14; 20:11; Ezek. 38:20; and Nah. 1:5. As Rev. 20:11 shows, the present earth must ultimately vanish to make way for the new earth, but that is after the millennial kingdom.] **(21) And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God**

because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe. [The word “men,” used twice here in Rev. 16:21, apparently refers to the same people called “men” in 16:2, 8, and 9, men who have taken the mark of Antichrist and worshiped his image (cf. Rev. 16:2) and who continued to blaspheme God without repentance. In all five of these uses of the word men, the definite article is included with the word in the Greek. (For the record, the 1995 edition of the NASB translated “people” in 16:2.)

Compare Ex. 9:13-35. The seventh of the ten plagues against Egypt consisted, for the most part, of “a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now” (Ex. 9:18). I’m sure that this hail was nothing like the hail of Rev. 16:21. Exodus 9:19, however, says (speaking to Pharaoh), “Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them will die.” I should also point out that the plague of hail in Egypt began when Moses, according to God’s instructions, stretched out his hand/staff toward the sky.

As I mentioned, I believe this verse describes the results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath; the “huge hailstones” apparently result from the pouring out of the seventh bowl “upon the air” (Rev. 16:17). The word “plague,” used twice in 16:21 serves to confirm this interpretation: Note the word plagues in 15:1, 6, 8 and 16:9, referring to the seven last plagues/bowls of wrath. This plague of the seventh bowl will apparently totally destroy Antichrist and his followers, who are gathered to Armageddon under the sixth bowl. (We’ll further discuss this idea of total destruction as we continue.) Based on Rev. 16:2, 5-7, 10, and especially 12-16, which deal with the gathering under the sixth bowl, we expect the seventh bowl to come against Antichrist and his gathered followers.

This is the same judgment of Antichrist and his followers pictured in Rev. 14:17-20 and in Rev. 19:17-21, but it is described in different figurative/symbolic language, but (apparently) with the same end result—the total destruction and complete removal of these enemies of God and of His people. These hailstones are extremely large. I assume we are to think of a total destruction of the gathered enemies of God in this plague, as in Rev. 14:17-20 and 19:17-21. Assuming it’s true that the hail of 16:21 describes the results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath, we would expect this plague of hail to complete the destruction of Antichrist and his followers. The plague of hail can be pictured totally destroying Antichrist and his followers just as easily as an earthquake/shaking can be pictured totally destroying Babylon the great.

It’s clear in Rev. 14:20 and in 19:20, 21, even if it’s not clear here in 16:21, that all those gathered will be killed and removed by judgment. Revelation 16:21 doesn’t specifically mention that all will be killed, but it doesn’t necessarily deny this either. If we think of this gathered multitude being in an open space, where there’s little protection from the huge hailstones, it’s easy to think of them all being killed by the hail (cf. Ex. 9:19; quoted above). The blaspheming (cf. Rev. 16:9, 11), which is an important feature of this verse (Rev. 16:21) that demonstrates hatred for God and an unrepentant heart to the end, can be pictured as going on during the plague of the hail but ending with the death of all those being bombarded with the hail.

We need not necessarily think, and we probably should not think, of some of these people being left alive to blaspheme after the plague of hail is over. For one thing, the Greek verb translated “came down” could just as well be translated “were coming down,” which would fit better with the picture of men blaspheming during the time the hail was

coming down, before they had all been destroyed by it. (The Greek verb is in the present tense, which would normally be translated “comes down” or “is coming down.” The *Twentieth Century New Testament* has, “Great hailstones are falling upon men from the heavens.” The asterisk in the NASB beside this verb [came down] demonstrates that the Greek present tense has been translated with an English past tense to better conform to modern English usage.)

I’ll quote part of what G. K. Beale (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999], page 845) said here under 16:21, “The people suffering the judgment ‘blasphemed’ God up to the bitter end because it came from his hand.... This does not necessarily mean that some were left after the judgment of hail but that they were blaspheming during the onslaught of the woe.... .. Verses 17-21 could be viewed as the beginning of the last judgment in history, with chapters 17-19 giving subsequent chronological developments of that judgment. But it is best to view the following chapters as synchronously supplemental perspectives on the last judgment, which is described already in 16:17-21.”

There may well be literal hailstones used by God in the judgment of the seventh bowl of wrath (on God’s judgments by hail, cf. Ex. 9:18 -26; Josh. 10:11; Job 38:22, 23; Isa. 28:2, 17; Ezek. 13:11-13; 38:22; and Rev. 8:7 [at least most of these references refer to literal hail falling from the sky]), but I assume this judgment by hail also has a large symbolic component (even as the earthquake/shaking of 16:18, 19 has a large symbolic component): The huge hailstones probably symbolize God’s very intense judgment going forth; Antichrist and his followers will be totally destroyed and removed by God’s judgment. It’s possible that Rev. 16:21 doesn’t picture the entire results of the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath upon the air (Rev. 16:17), but I assume that’s what was intended. Taken in the fullest sense the judgment of the seventh bowl of wrath could include God’s destruction of all the people worldwide who worshiped Antichrist and his image and took his mark, and not be limited to those who were gathered to Armageddon (cf. Rev. 14:20). We know that all such people will be removed by judgment (Rev. 14:9-11); they will not have a place in the millennial kingdom.]

REVELATION CHAPTER 17

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot [In Rev. 21:9-22:5 one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls showed John a very different woman/city—the glorified bride of Christ, new Jerusalem.

On the “judgment” of Babylon, the great harlot, see Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:18, 19; and 17:1-19:3. Babylon is also called a “harlot” in 17:15, 16; “the great harlot” in 19:2; and she is called “the mother of harlots” in 17:5. Also, in 14:8 we read that Babylon the great “has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality”; in 17:2 we read that “the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality [with her], and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality”; in 18:3 we read, “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth [literally, power] of her sensuality [or, luxury (wicked, excessive) luxury]”; in 18:9 we read of “the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously [or, luxuriously] with her”; and in 19:2 we read of “the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality.”

It’s rather obvious that the Bible is speaking of Babylon as a harlot (immoral, etc.) in a figurative/symbolic sense. The Bible uses harlotry/adultery in a figurative sense in two different ways; both of them are applicable to Babylon, the great harlot, here in the book of Revelation. First, she is a harlot in her unfaithfulness to God, and second, she is a harlot in that she seduces all that she possibly can to be unfaithful to God. We’ll discuss these two ways in the following paragraphs.

The Old Testament frequently speaks of the harlotry of God’s people, Israel, in their unfaithfulness to Him. (See, e.g., Ex. 34:12-17; Lev. 17:7; 20:5, 6; Num. 25:1-3; Deut. 31:16; Jud. 2:17; 1 Chron. 5:25; 2 Chron. 21:11; Psalm 106:34-39; Isa. 1:21; Ezek. 6:9; and 16:15-43.) And there are many similar verses in the Bible which speak of the adultery of God’s people (cf. Jer. 3:8, 9; Ezek. 6:9; 16:32; 23:36-49; James 4:4; 2 Cor. 11:2-4; and Gal. 1:6-9).

The dominant idea in most of these verses, which speak of the harlotry/adultery of God’s people, is that they were unfaithful to Him by worshiping other gods/demons; another problem mentioned was looking to the nations/the world instead of looking to God; and several of these verses make it clear that all flagrant, intentional sin against God by His people is spiritual harlotry/adultery. Turning to sin (including accepting heretical doctrines of demons) is turning to the god of this world, and it’s joining the devil in his rebellion against God. All such harlotry/adultery against God aligns a person with the devil and his woman/city, Babylon the great harlot. Taking Babylon in the fullest sense, she is the mother (origin/source) of all harlotry (Rev. 17:5). We must be faithful to God and His city, Jerusalem (heavenly Jerusalem, ultimately new Jerusalem).

Also, since God is the Creator and Judge of all men, and all men are obligated to be faithful to Him, it can be considered harlotry for those who aren’t His people (by the old or new covenants) to be unfaithful to Him. For one thing, the Bible speaks of a covenant God has with all mankind. See under Zech 11:10 on pages 211-213 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*. Also see the discussion titled “The World as God’s Flock” on pages 208, 209 of

my book, including the note. In Jer. 49:4 the sons of Ammon are called a “backsliding daughter.” Ezekiel 16:44-46 inform us that ancient Sodom, who is called a sister of Judah, loathed her husband (referring to God). (Ezekiel chapter 16 is discussed in some detail on pages 14-16 of the paper on my internet site titled, *More Regarding God’s Salvation Plans for the Nations*.) In Psalm 82:1 all mankind are called the “congregation” of God, and this psalm shows us that all rulers/judges worldwide must answer to God (cf. Rev. 13:1-7). And Jeremiah 25:15-38 show that God is the judge of all the nations; the earth is His “fold/pasture”; and mankind worldwide is His “flock.” Also see Rom. 1:18-25; Acts 14:15-17; and 17:22-31.

Isaiah 23:15-18 (which deal with ancient Tyre, a major center of commerce and trade in the ancient world) and Nah. 3:4 (which deals with ancient Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian “world kingdom”) are two passages of special interest for this study in that they speak of the harlotry of these pagan cities/kingdoms. Both passages apparently include the idea that these cities/kingdoms were unfaithful to God (which they certainly were), but the idea that these cities/kingdoms seduced/influenced others to be unfaithful to God is probably more pronounced in these verses. Isbon T. Beckwith (*Apocalypse of John* [Baker, 1979, copyright 1919], page 691) comments that “Tyre and Nineveh, Isa. 23:17, Nah. 3:4, receive the name [harlot], because they have corrupted the kingdoms of the world.”

These cities/kingdoms seduced/influenced/controlled people with such things as false religion, occult powers, and the seductiveness of things like riches, fame, the things money can buy, and other things the devil uses to seduce men from God (these things take the place of God). (Of course it’s true that the military might of kingdoms like the Assyrian kingdom, with its capital city Nineveh, and the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman kingdoms was a major factor in their control of people.) Many of the things people live for in fellowship with the city/kingdom of this world (whose god is the devil) aren’t evil in themselves, but they become evil when God is left out, when they become a substitute for God, and when they result in glory for man, instead of glory for God.

These verses in Isaiah, actually this entire chapter of Isaiah, and to a lesser extent Nah. 3:4, are important to this study of Babylon in Rev. 17:1-19:3. As we’ll see, this passage in Rev. 17:1-19:3 builds on Isaiah chapter 23 (Isaiah chapter 23 deals with God’s judgment of Tyre), on Nah. 3:4 (the book of Nahum deals with God’s judgment of Nineveh), and on other passages. Babylon the great of Rev. 17:1-19:3 incorporates all the evil of ancient Tyre, even as it incorporates all the evil of ancient Nineveh, ancient Babylon, and ancient Rome (the last three cities listed were all capital cities of “world kingdoms”). The seductiveness, influence, and control of such cities was enormous. On the “sorceries” of ancient Babylon, cf., e.g., Isa. 47:9, 12, and 13.] **who sits on many waters** [See Rev. 17:15; the “waters” represent the peoples that are part of, or at least are strongly influenced by, Babylon the great harlot. Compare Jer. 51:13. The ancient city of Babylon literally sat on many waters, with the Euphrates River running through the city, and its system of canals, but, more importantly, its influence over peoples was extensive, being a “world kingdom” (e.g., Dan. 2:37, 38; 4:10-12, 20-22). God’s judgment of ancient Babylon, prophesied about, for example, in Jeremiah chapters 50, 51 and Isaiah chapters 13, 14, foreshadows and includes God’s end-time judgment of Babylon the great. (I’ll refer to several other prophetic passages from the Old Testament that Revelation chapters 17, 18 build on as we continue. Isaiah 13:6-13 and chapter 14 and Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 are discussed verse-by-verse in papers on my internet site dealing with selected

eschatological prophecies from the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah.) These prophecies clearly extend beyond the literal judgment of literal Babylon and include some reference to God's end-time judgment of the world (cf., e.g., Isa. 13:6-13; Jer. 50:20).], **(2) with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of** [The NIV has, "With her the kings of the earth committed adultery."] **immorality** [cf. Rev. 18:3, 9], **and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.**" [Compare Rev. 14:8. In other words, the peoples of the earth were seduced by Babylon the harlot. They were seduced from God to the city of the "god of this world/age" (2 Cor. 4:4). We're not just talking of the last days here; this seduction has been taking place for thousands of years.

Some Quotations from Commentators Regarding the Meaning of Babylon the Great Harlot:

I'll quote part of what Alan F. Johnson said regarding the meaning of Babylon the harlot here (*Revelation* [Zondervan, 1983], pages 152, 153). "To a majority of modern exegetes, Babylon represents the city of Rome. ... It is simply not sufficient to identify Babylon with Rome. For that matter, Babylon cannot be confined to any one historical manifestation, past or future: it has multiple equivalents (cf. 11:8). [Revelation 11:8 refers to Jerusalem, where Jesus was crucified.] The details of John's description do not neatly fit any past city, whether literal Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, Rome, or even Jerusalem. Babylon is found wherever there is satanic deception. It is defined more by dominant idolatries than geographic or temporal boundaries. Babylon is better understood here as the archetypal head of all entrenched worldly resistance to God. Babylon is a transhistorical reality that includes idolatrous kingdoms as diverse as Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Nineveh, and Rome. ... It may be said that Babylon represents the total culture of the world apart from God, while the divine system is depicted by the New Jerusalem."

I'll also quote part of what Philip E. Hughes said under Rev. 17:1-5 on the meaning of Babylon the harlot (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1990], pages 181-183). "It is plain from verse 5 [Rev. 17:5] that the great harlot is 'Babylon the great', who...denotes the ungodly civilization of the world in its fallenness...and we are informed in verse 15 that the many waters on which the great harlot is seated are 'peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues—terminology which both in its plain sense and also in its fourfold structure confirms the international extension of the influence of the great harlot who is great Babylon.

... The fornication or harlotry intended here is simply unfaithfulness to God, which comes to expression in the unholy pride and ambition of human self-centredness, in hatred and violence, in vice and immorality, and in every form of idolatry, which, whether it be the worship of images or of money or of worldly power, is the worship of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25. ...).

... [The name that is seen on her forehead (Rev. 17:5)] is, moreover a mystery, that is, a name of cryptic significance, like the name 'Sodom and Egypt' previously mentioned (11:8 [Revelation 11:8, referring to Jerusalem, says "which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt" because of its backslidden state; cf., e.g., Isa. 1:10, 21-23; 3:9]). In other words, the appellation Babylon is not to be taken literally, but symbolically.... Here Babylon the great is called the mother of harlots and of earth's abominations because she is the symbol of all

that corrupts and degrades human society, all its lust and lechery, its graft and deceit, its violence and tyranny, its hatred and squalor and injustice.”

Commenting on “the portrait...of great opulence” of the harlot in Rev. 17:4, Hughes mentions “the display of wealth that worldlings admire and worship.”

I’ll quote part of what G. K. Beale (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999], page 850) said on the meaning of Babylon the great under Rev. 17:2. “Therefore, Babylon is the prevailing economic-religious system in alliance with the state and its related authorities and existing throughout the ages.”

Then under Rev. 17:3 on page 853, Beale says (in part), “The woman must represent that part of the ungodly world that works together with the state, such as the social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects of the world.”

I’ll also quote part of what William Hendriksen said on the meaning of Babylon the great under Rev. 17:1-6 (*More than Conquerors* [Baker, 1982 edition], pages 167-169): “...Babylon is called the great harlot. In other words, the symbol indicates that which allures, tempts, seduces and draws people away from God.

Secondly, we must remember that this harlot is a worldly city, namely, Babylon. It reminds us of pleasure-mad, arrogant, presumptuous Babylon of old. (In a footnote here, he says, “The Scripture passages which should be studied, as forming the foundation for this New Testament symbolism, are: Gen. 10:10; 11:11; Isa. 13; 14; 21; 46; 47; 48; Jer. 25; 50; 51; Dan. 2; 4:30; 7; Hab. 3; also Ezek. 27, the fall of Tyre.) The description of this symbolical Babylon of Revelation 17-19 also recalls to our mind that heathen centre of wickedness and seduction, Tyre. Observe the striking similarity between Revelation 17-19 and Ezekiel 27, 28. ... Babylon, therefore, must indicate the world as a centre of industry, commerce, art, culture, etc., which by means of all these things seeks to entice and seduce the believer [The devil, through Babylon, want to seduce all mankind], that is, to turn him away from God. It symbolizes the concentration of the luxury, vice, and glamour of this world. It is the world viewed as the embodiment of the ‘lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life’ (1 John 2:16). ...

According to the figure employed, the harlot holds in her hand a golden cup. A golden cup entices one to drink; for one expects the most precious drink from such a precious vessel. Yet the cup contains nothing but abominations, the unclean things pertaining to the woman’s whoredom. Whatever is used by the world in order to turn believers away from their God is in this cup: pornographic literature, sports in which one becomes completely absorbed, luxuries, worldly fame and power, the lusts of the flesh, and so on. ... It includes things that are bad in themselves as well as things which become bad because one does not view them as a means but as an end in themselves: art for arts sake, etc.”

Lastly, I’ll quote part of what J. A. Seiss said on the meaning of Babylon (*Apocalypse* [Zondervan, 1980 printing, originally published in 1900 by Cook], pages 386, 387). “The first thing which strikes me in the study of this subject, is one which I have nowhere seen duly noticed, namely: the evident correlation and contrast between the Woman here pictured and another Woman described in the twelfth chapter. There, ‘a great sign was seen in the heaven, a Woman,’ here, it is remarked, ‘he bore me away in spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a Woman.’ Both these Women are mothers; the first ‘brought forth a son...who

is to rule all the nations;’ the second ‘is the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.’ ...

[Speaking further about the pure woman, Seiss says] She is not the church of any one period or dispensation, but the entire Universal Church of all time, as Victorinus, the earliest commentator on this Book, held and affirmed, saying: ‘The Woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, is the Church of the Patriarchs, and of the Prophets, and of the holy Apostles—that is, the Church from the days of Adam and Eve on to the last victory over the worship, name, and mark, of the final Antichrist. [I agree, and I believe this is very important. The woman clothed with the sun etc. is found in Revelation chapter 12, which is a super-important prophetic chapter. Revelation chapter 12 is discussed verse-by-verse in some detail in chapter 21 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*.]

...

[Speaking of Babylon, Seiss further says] One of the most characteristic features of this Woman is her harlotry. ... Harlotry is the standing symbol in the word of God for a debauched worship, idolatry, and false devotion. When people worship for God what is not God, or give their hearts to idols, or institute systems, doctrines, rites, or administrations, to take the place of what God has revealed and appointed, the Scriptures call it whoredom, adultery, fornication. ... the very essence of the divine law is that we love God our Lord with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength. This is Jehovah’s [Yahweh’s] due and requirement of all that live. Hence the bestowal of worshipful affection on any other object, or the putting of anything whatever in the place of the true God, is, in the very nature of the case, a great spiritual harlotry; for it is the turning of the soul from the only legitimate object of its adoration, to take into its embrace what has no right to such room and place. And as this woman is a harlot, ‘the great Harlot,’ and ‘the mother of the harlots and the abominations of the earth,’ she must needs be the great embodiment, source, and representative of all idolatry, false worship, and perversion of the word and institutes of God. ... And as the pure Woman is made up of the whole congregation of the faithful from the beginning, so must this great Harlot be made up of all the faithless from the beginning.”] **(3) and he carried me away in the Spirit [cf. Rev. 1:10; 4:2; and 21:10] into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.** [The “beast” is the “world kingdom,” with the seven heads referring to the seven “world kingdoms” (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman, and revived Roman). On the seven heads, see Rev. 12:3; 13:1; and 17:7, 9-11. Daniel chapters 2 and 7 (which are discussed in detail in my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*) set the stage to understand the seven “world kingdoms.” Revelation 12:3 is a very important cross-reference; for one thing, it shows that the devil is behind the kingdom of the world throughout its history. The “red” of Rev. 12:3 apparently equals the “scarlet (red)” of 17:3. This color apparently relates to the blood shed by this beast throughout its history, especially the innocent blood of God’s faithful servants.

The “woman” is Babylon, the great harlot. The fact that the woman is sitting on the beast (and is carried by it [Rev. 17:7; cf. 17:2, 18; and 18:3, 9]) shows that she, at least in some ways, and to some extent, influences and controls the beast (through such things as false religions, occult powers, and the influence and power of her riches, commerce, etc.). She sits on the beast, however, only until the time when, in the plan of God, the last ruler of the “world kingdom,” Antichrist (with the ten horns), totally destroys the woman. (See Rev. 17:16, 17.)

The ten horns refer to the rulers of the ten nations of the revived Roman Empire (see Dan. 7:7, 8, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; and 17:7, 12-17). On the “blasphemous names,” cf. Rev. 13:1. This blasphemy has continued throughout the history of the beast—Rev. 12:3 is sufficient to explain this fact (the devil is fully behind this beast)—but the blasphemy during the reign of Antichrist (starting to some extent with the abomination of desolation, but receiving a gigantic boost when he begins his super-evil reign in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week [cf., e.g., Rev. 13:2, 5-8]), will rise to unprecedented levels.] **(4) And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet** [Compare Jer. 4:30. On “scarlet,” cf. Rev. 17:3. The purple and scarlet dyes used in the ancient world were quite expensive and reserved for those with money and influence.], **and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup** [This deceptive woman and cup look good on the outside, but....] **full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality** [Compare Rev. 18:16. Satan makes the woman as appealing as possible to draw mankind to her (and through her, and the beast that carries her, to himself). One thing this harlot clearly uses to seduce mankind is riches and the things of this world that money can buy. (If mankind wasn’t fallen, deceived, and seduced, it would be obvious that such things can never serve as an adequate substitute for God.) We can see this in the clothes and jewelry of the harlot and in the teaching of Revelation chapter 18. Compare, for example, 1 Tim. 6:5-11 (I’ll quote 6:9-11, “But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. (10) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. (11) But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”); 1 John 2:15-17 (“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [Such a person doesn’t love God the Father, but the meaning of these words here probably is that he is not motivated by the love of God, by the love that comes from God (cf. 1 John 4:12). Christians are enabled to walk in the love of God by the indwelling Spirit, by the fruit of the Spirit of love (Gal. 5:22). The next verse (1 John 2:16) goes on to speak of the motivation that is of (comes from) the world.] (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.”). The “abominations and...unclean things of her immorality” include all sin, not just sexual sins, as demonstrated by this entire discussion regarding Babylon, the great harlot.] **(5) and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery** [As it typically happens in the New Testament, the “mystery” of Rev. 7:5 and 7 doesn’t remain a mystery in that it is explained/interpreted for the saints (cf., e.g., Rev. 1:16, 20).], **“BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”** [Taking Babylon the great in the fullest sense, she is the “mother” (origin/source) of all the spiritual harlotry and abominations that have ever taken place on the earth, as men looked to, and followed, her instead of God. It isn’t hard to understand Babylon when we understand that Satan is behind this woman/city.] **(6) And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.** [Compare Rev. 18:24; 19:2. One of the most grievous sins traceable to Babylon is the slaughtering of God’s people. The judgment and removal of Babylon will be part of the answer to the cry of the martyrs for God to make

things right (Rev. 6:9-11). The “saints” here in 17:6 probably refer to the faithful people of God who lived in the days before the new covenant was initiated. The new covenant saints are referred to here as “the witnesses of Jesus.” The Greek noun translated “witnesses” by the NASB here is *martus, marturos*, which can also be translated martyr. The KJV and NKJV translate “martyrs of Jesus” here. The English word martyr traces back to this Greek word. Martyrdom was viewed by the early Christians as the ultimate “witness” to Christ (cf., e.g., Rev. 2:13). The NASB and NIV translate “witness” in 2:13; the KJV and NKJV translate “martyr.”] **And when I saw her, I wondered greatly.** [The NIV has, “I was greatly astonished.” The NKJV has, “I marveled with great amazement.”] **(7) And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. (8) The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to [is going to] come up out of the abyss** [On the beast coming up out of the abyss, see Rev. 11:7. The beast is Antichrist. The statement that the beast “was and is not” refers to the fact that Antichrist will be killed, after which he “is not,” not until he comes up out of the abyss (comes back from the dead). On Antichrist’s being killed and coming back from the dead, including the probable timing of these events, see on Rev. 13:3 in my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture* (pages 328-331). I assume Antichrist will come back from the dead some few days before he kills the two witnesses/prophets (Rev. 11:7) and then begins his super-evil reign in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week after the devil gives him “his power and throne and great authority” (Rev. 13:2). The devil will not give him this power etc. until after he and his angels are cast down to the earth in the middle of the seven years (Rev. 12:4, 7-9).] **and to go to destruction.** [The Bible frequently mentions the judgment and destruction of Antichrist, which will take place at the end of Daniel’s 70th week (see Dan. 7:11, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 2 Thess. 2:3 [This verse, speaking of Antichrist, has “the man doomed to destruction” (NIV).], 8; and Rev. 17:11; 19:20; and 20:10).] **And those who dwell on the earth will wonder** [I would translate “will be amazed” (or the equivalent). The same Greek verb was translated that way by the NASB in Rev. 13:3. Here in 17:8 the NIV has “will be astonished”; the NKJV has “will marvel.” As the following words show, God’s people, the elect, are not included here.], **whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world** [Although I have seen people try, I don’t believe there’s any reasonable way to avoid the fact that this verse speaks of these names having been in the book of life since the foundation of the world (really it was before the foundation of the world [cf., e.g., Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20]). For one thing, it must be noted that this verse is specifically speaking only of those people who live on the earth at the time of the end, during the three and one-half year super-evil reign of Antichrist. The elect (those whose names have been written in the Lamb’s book of life from the foundation of the world) who live on the earth during the second half of Daniel’s 70th week must include the elect of true Israel (the woman of Revelation chapter 12) and the elect of the nations (cf. Rev. 15:2-4; 20:3; and 21:27). (If the names of the elect of the nations weren’t included here, they would worship Antichrist [e.g., Rev. 13:8], which would demonstrate that they weren’t among the elect [cf. Rev. 14:9-11].)

For me the Bible’s teaching on God’s electing (choosing) before the foundation of the world (based on His foreknowledge), which rightly puts the emphasis on God’s role in our salvation, is an important, comforting truth. Some other verses that teach this same truth are Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 1:24; Eph. 1:4, 5, 11; 2 Thess. 2:13; and Rev. 13:8.

At the same time, we must maintain the Biblical balance and understand that it's not all God; we have a crucial role to play—God set it up this way. The most important word used in the New Testament to describe our role is the word faith (not a faith that earns salvation, but a faith that receives salvation and cooperates with God's grace in Christ). And God doesn't just give us saving faith to begin with or override our will and make us continue in faith to the end. In my papers *Once Saved, Always Saved?* and *A Paper on Faith*, I tried to demonstrate something of the Biblical balance. It seems to me that many Christians are out of balance, either overstating God's role and understating (or even denying our role), or overstating our role and understating God's role. We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. One verse in the book of Revelation that brings some balance to Rev. 17:8 (and 13:8) is Rev. 3:5. (On Rev. 3:5 see my paper on Revelation chapters 2 and 3; and see on Rom. 8:28-30 in my paper on Rom. 8:16-39.), **when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.** [Antichrist "will come," in the sense these words are used here, when he comes up out of the abyss (when he comes back from the dead; Rev. 11:7).] **(9) Here is the mind which has wisdom.** [On wisdom, cf. Rev. 13:18.] **The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits** [We discussed the "seven heads" under 17:3. The "seven mountains" refer to the seven "world kingdoms." Mountains can symbolize kingdoms (cf. Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35). For the woman to sit on seven mountains speaks of the same reality as her sitting on the scarlet beast with seven heads in 17:3, and of her being carried by the beast with seven heads in 17:7. We can also say that the woman sat on (influenced and to some extent controlled) essentially every kingdom/nation that has ever existed on the earth, not just the seven "world kingdoms" (cf. 17:1, 2, 5, 15, 18; 18:3, 9, 23). When God's people are faithful to Him, they are not influenced by (and they certainly are not controlled by) the woman or the devil behind her (cf., e.g., Rev. 12:3).], **(10) and they are seven kings** [Kings and kingdoms are often interchangeable in such prophecies (cf., e.g., Dan. 2:37-39; 7:4-7, 17, 23).]; **five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come** [The five that had already fallen in John's day were the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Greek "world kingdoms." The "world kingdom" that then was (in John's day) was the Roman Empire. The seventh "world kingdom" was, and in our day still is, yet to come. The revived Roman Empire (the seventh kingdom) seems to be taking shape in our day, but I wouldn't say it's here yet (in August 2012).]; **and when he comes** [This refers to the revived Roman Empire, with its king(s). This kingdom will exist under the leadership of the ten horns until they "give their power and authority to the beast [Antichrist]" (Rev. 17:13) in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. I'll qualify this over-simplified sentence as we continue. On this point also see Rev. 17:17. Daniel 7:8, 20, and 24 confirm that Antichrist (the little horn who becomes a very large horn) will arise after the ten horns. (These verses from Daniel are discussed in chapter 6 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*, which is a verse-by-verse study of Daniel chapter 7 of 27 pages.)

I'm certainly not saying that Antichrist won't have any authority before the middle of Daniel's 70th week; clearly he will. For one thing, one way or another, Antichrist will have enough authority to make, or to confirm, the seven-year covenant/treaty of Dan. 9:27, which will initiate Daniel's 70th week. Also, although this detail isn't mentioned in the book of Revelation, he will overthrow three of the ten horns (Dan. 7:8, 20, 24). (The three horns will apparently be replaced by three others who are loyal to Antichrist.) This overthrow will apparently take place during the one-month period between the

abomination of desolation and the time Antichrist begins his three and one-half year reign in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. (See on Zech. 11:8 in *The Mid-Week Rapture* in the chapter on Zechariah chapter 11, on pages 210, 211. Zechariah chapter 11 prophesies about Antichrist quite a bit.)

So, it's clear that Antichrist will reign to some extent before we arrive at the time spoken of in Rev. 17:12-17 (the middle of Daniel's 70th week). The rise of Antichrist is discussed under Dan. 7:8 on pages 64-67 of *The Mid-Week Rapture*.], **he must** [in God's plan] **remain a little while**. [It is clear, I believe, that he will reign for three and one-half years after the devil gives him his power and throne and great authority right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. He will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus at the end of the seven-years (e.g., Rev. 19:20).] **(11) And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth** [Two extraordinary things will happen to Antichrist that will cause the resulting "world kingdom," over which he reigns, to be so different that it can be considered an *eighth* from that time on: He will be killed and come back from the dead (see under 17:8), and he will (in God's plan) be given great authority and power by the devil (13:2). From the time he becomes "an eighth," Antichrist will have three and one-half years for his super-evil reign (e.g., Rev. 13:5; Dan. 7:25).], **and is one of the seven** [Note that the NASB has the word *one* in italics, since it's not there in the Greek. I would translate, "is of, is out of, or, is from the seven." The KJV and NKJV have "is of the seven." Antichrist and his eighth kingdom will emerge from the seventh "world kingdom"; the eighth kingdom is part of, and a continuation of, the seven-headed "world kingdom." But he is called an eighth because his kingdom will be extremely evil and powerful, far more than any previous kingdom.], **and he goes to destruction**. [On the destruction of Antichrist, see under 17:8. His kingdom will be destroyed along with him at the end of Daniel's 70th week This is a significant feature in God's end-time judgment of the world.] **(12) And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings** [see under 17:3, 10], **who have not yet received a kingdom** [That is, in the days of the apostle John, they had not yet received a kingdom.], **but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour**. [The ten horns will be reigning as rulers of nations before they begin the spectacular, super-evil reign with Antichrist spoken of here, as 17:13, 17 (and other verses) confirm. The spectacular kingdom/reign spoken of here will begin right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week (cf. Rev. 13:2, 5). The "one hour" spoken of here refers to the three and one-half year period that constitutes the super-evil reign of Antichrist. Revelation 3:10 speaks of the blessing of being kept out of/from the "hour of testing" (which also refers to the second half of Daniel's 70th week) for those who are faithful to Christ in the days preceding His return. Revelation 14:7 speaks of "the hour of His judgment" having come, and 14:15 speaks of "the hour to reap" having come, with both verses apparently speaking of the hour beginning when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. On this "hour," also see Rev. 18:10, 17, and 19.] **(13) These** [the ten horns] **have one purpose** [The two Greek words translated "one purpose" here are also used in 17:17, where they are translated "common purpose" by the NASB.] **and they give their power and authority to the beast** [to Antichrist]. **(14) These will wage war against the Lamb** [Antichrist and the ten horns will wage war against the Lamb (the Lord Jesus Christ) throughout the "one hour" of their reign (which covers the second half of Daniel's 70th week), which includes waging war against His people, including the raptured saints (not that he can harm the Lord Jesus Christ and the raptured, glorified saints; quite the contrary; but in the plan of God, he will look invincible to many [cf. Rev. 13:1-18; 2

Thess. 2:9-12]) and those saints living on the earth during his reign (cf., e.g., Rev. 13:5-17; 15:2; 16:4-16; 19:19-21; and 20:4). Note that the raptured saints are mentioned later in this verse (Rev. 17:14); they are also mentioned in Rev. 13:6; 19:19 (cf. 19:8, 14).], **and the Lamb will overcome them** [The Lamb could, of course, destroy them any time, but it fits the plan of God to use Antichrist, the false prophet, and the ten horns before destroying them at the end of Daniel's 70th week. He will use them, for one thing, to destroy Babylon the great harlot (cf. 17:16, 17). God's judgment, destruction, and total removal of Babylon is a major feature in God's end-time judgment of the world.], **because He is Lord of lords and King of kings** [Cf. 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16. 1 Tim. 6:15, 16 refer to God the Father, who has the preeminent role in the Trinity. See my papers *Who Do We Worship?*; *Who Do We Pray To? The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son*; and *More on the Trinity*.], **and those who are with Him are the called** [On "called," cf., e.g., Acts 2:39; Rom. 1:6; 8:28-30 (on Rom. 8:29-30, see my paper on Rom. 8:16-39); 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:9, 24; 2 Thess. 2:14; and Heb. 1:15), and see under Rev. 19:9 in this paper.] **and chosen** [On "chosen," see on the book of life under Rev. 17:8 in this paper.] **and faithful**. [Significantly, those who are with Christ are the glorified saints, who were raptured to meet Him in the air in the middle of Daniel's 70th week (as pictured in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; cf. Rev. 12:5). The raptured saints are also pictured being with Him in Rev. 7:9-17; 14:1-5; 19:14, 19, and apparently 14:14-16; cf. 12:12; 13:6.] **(15) And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.** [See under Rev. 17:1-5.] **(16) And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate** [It's important to see that the same Greek verb (actually it's a participle formed from the Greek verb) translated "desolate" here is also used in Rev. 18:17, 19; these verses in chapter 18 refer to the same desolating total judgment of the great harlot/great city that 17:16, 17 speak of. It isn't obvious in the NASB translation that the same Greek verb was used; it has "has been laid waste" in 18:17 and "she has been laid waste" in 18:19. The NIV has, "they will bring her to ruin" here and "[she] has been brought to ruin" in 18:17, 19.] **and naked** [cf. Ezek. 16:30-43, especially verse 39; 23:22-30, especially verses 26, 29, and 30] **and will eat her flesh** [cf. Psalm 27:2; Mic. 3:3] **and will burn her up with fire** [cf. Rev. 18:8, 9, 18; 19:3]. [I assume Antichrist (the beast) and the ten horns will hate the harlot from the time their super-evil three and one-half year reign begins. For one thing, Antichrist won't want anyone competing with him, much less controlling him in any way. This will apparently include his being against all religion (cf. Dan. 11:36-38; 2 Thess. 2:4). He will want to be worshiped from the time of his abomination of desolation, which will be manifested about a month before the middle of Daniel's 70th week. It's a common Biblical theme for God to use a kingdom (like the Assyrian or Babylonian kingdoms) to judge other kingdoms/nations, then to judge that kingdom (cf., e.g., Isa. 10:5-34; Jer. 25:1-38).] **(17) For God has put it in their hearts [the ten horns] to execute His purpose by having a common purpose** [cf. Rev. 17:13], **and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.** [This is an important verse to help us understand God's end-time judgment. He clearly uses Antichrist and the ten horns to destroy Babylon the harlot, which is a major feature in His end-time judgment of the world. He devotes some three chapters of the book of Revelation to that judgment. Compare, for example, Dan. 8:23-25; Zech. 11:15-17. He also uses Antichrist during the "hour of testing" of Rev. 3:10. Revelation chapter 18 continues with the theme of the judgment of Babylon the great.] **(18)**

And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth. [As we discussed under 17:1-5, Babylon the harlot is a woman and a city, even as (new) Jerusalem is a woman (the bride of Christ) and a city. Babylon is also called “the great city” in Rev. 18:10, 16, 18, 19, and 21.

I’ll quote what Alan Johnson (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 12 [Zondervan, 1978], pages 562, 563)) said under 17:18. “The ‘woman’ and ‘the great city’ are one. Yet this city is not just a historical one; it is the *great* city, the *mother* city, the archetype of every evil system opposed to God in history.... Her kingdom holds sway over the powers of the earth. John’s concept of the city in Revelation entails much more than a historical city even in its political and sociological aspects. The two cities in Revelation are communities; they are the city of God, the New Jerusalem (3:12; 21:2, 10; 22:2ff.) and the city of Satan, Babylon the Great (11:8; 14:8; 16:19; 18:4, 20, etc.). [I believe “the great city” of Rev. 11:8 and 16:19 is Jerusalem.] The meaning cannot be confined to Sodom or Egypt or Jerusalem or Rome or any future city. Instead, John describes the real transhistorical system of satanic evil that infuses them all.”]

REVELATION CHAPTER 18

I'll quote part of what F. F. Bruce said at the beginning of his discussion of this chapter (*New Layman's Bible Commentary In One Volume*, edited by G. C. D. Howley, F. F. Bruce, and H. L. Ellison [Zondervan, 1979], page 1705). "The theme of Babylon's great downfall is continued, but it is now presented in terms of the destruction of a great mercantile city. In John's day Rome was the centre of world commerce...and what is here portrayed is not merely the doom of an ancient city, but the sure collapse of all human organization, commercial and otherwise, that leaves God out of its reckoning.... . It might seem unnecessary to mention that Babylon of ch. 18 is identical with Babylon of ch. 17, were it not that some commentators have tried to make a distinction between them."

I'll quote part of what Leon Morris said as an introduction to Revelation chapter 18 (*Revelation* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1987], page 208). "...he is thinking not of the fall of one city or empire but of the collapse of civilization. Final judgment means the overthrow of all that opposes itself to God."

I'll also quote part of what Alan F. Johnson (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 12 [Zondervan, 1981], pages 565, 566) said as an introduction to chapter 18. "Chapter 18 contains the description of the previously announced 'judgment' ...of the prostitute (17:1). It is important not to separate this chapter from the portrayal of the prostitute in chapter 17, for there is no warrant for making the prostitute in chapter 17 different from the city in chapter 18 (cf. 17:18). Under the imagery of the destruction of the great commercial city, John describes the final overthrow of the great prostitute, Babylon. ...he describes God's judgment on the great satanic system of evil that has corrupted the earth's history. Drawing especially from the OT accounts of the destruction of the ancient harlot cities of Babylon (Isa. 13:21; 47:7-9; Jer. 50-51) and Tyre (Ezek. 26-27), John composes a great threnody [song of lamentation, funeral song].... . John combines the song of triumph and the wailing strains of lamentation into a noble funeral dirge (cf. 2 Sam. 1:17-27; Isa. 14:4-21; Lam., in its entirety)."

Now Rev. 18:1.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. (2) And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! [These words build on Isa. 21:9; Jer. 51:8; and Rev. 14:8.] And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. [These words build on Isa. 13:19-22; 34:11-17; Jer. 50:39, 40; 51:37; and Zeph. 2:14, 15. In the margin, for both uses of the word "prison" in this verse, the NASB has "or, haunt." The NIV has "haunt." The BAGD Greek Lexicon (under *phulakē*), dealing with the two uses of this noun in Rev. 18:2, says, "The fallen city of Babylon becomes a *phulakē* haunt for all kinds of unclean spirits and birds." I'll quote part of what George E. Ladd (*Commentary on the Revelation of John* [Eerdmans, 1972]) said under 18:2, "When this desolation has befallen the city, she will be no longer the mistress of civilization; no longer will she be inhabited

by princes and merchants; she will be so desolated that no human being will set foot in her.”] **(3) For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality** [see Rev. 14:8; 17:2, 15], **and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her** [see Rev. 17:2; 18:9], **and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth** [In the margin the NASB has “literally, power.”] **of her sensuality.”** [On this last word, also see Rev. 18:7, 9. The Greek noun used here in 18:3 and the Greek verb used in 18:7, 9 are closely related, being derived from the same Greek word. The BAGD Greek Lexicon gives “sensuality, luxury” as the meaning of this Greek noun, which isn’t used anywhere else in the New Testament. In the margin the NASB has, “or, luxury.” The NIV has, “grew rich from her excessive luxuries.” The NKJV has, “have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” On the “merchants,” see Rev. 18:11-19, 23; Ezek. 27:1-36.

Revelation chapter 18 shows that the devil uses Babylon the great harlot to seduce people to live for the things of the world (instead of living for God), such things as riches, luxury, the things money can buy, and the fame that comes with worldly success. See, for example, Matt. 6:19-34; Luke 16:13; Rom. 12:2; 13:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:5-10, 17-19; James 1:27; 3:13-4:4; and 1 John 2:15-17. God’s judging and removing of Babylon the harlot during His end-time judgment of the earth, will, for one thing, be part of His setting the stage to wake up and save the remnant of the nations, which is a very big deal, especially if the number is in the billions, which I believe is quite possible.] **(4) And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues** [Compare Isa. 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 9, 45; and 2 Cor. 6:17. Throughout this present age, Christians are called to separate from everything sinful and defiling in the world, as the last reference demonstrates, along with many other verses of the New Testament. Revelation 18:4 (cf. 18:5-8), however, is aimed at the people of God living on the earth in the very last days, when the time for the judgment and total removal of Babylon has arrived. Leon Morris (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) said here, “Compromise with worldliness is fatal. God’s people must, while playing their full role in the community, hold themselves aloof from what is involved in being worldly-minded.”]; **(5) for her sins have piled up as high as heaven** [cf. Ezra 9:6], **and God has remembered her iniquities** [cf. Rev. 16:19]. [It must be understood that unreconciled sin always ultimately brings judgment. Instructive along this line is the fact that several of the primary Hebrew words for *sin* also mean *penalty for sin*. (See the first four chapters of my book *Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ*.)] **(6) Pay her back even as she has paid** [cf. Psalm 137:8 (NIV); Jer. 50:15, 29], **and give back to her double according to her deeds** [Many commentators point out that we tend to get the wrong idea from this word “double” in a context like this, and that of Isa. 40:2. I’ll quote from G. K. Beale under this verse (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999], page 901). “...[Meredith] Kline has demonstrated convincingly that the almost unanimous translation ‘double’ in the English versions is inaccurate. ... Kline especially establishes the meaning ‘duplicate/equivalent’ in texts to which Rev. 18:6 may allude (Isa. 40:2; Jer. 6:18) and in the two uses of the adjective elsewhere in the NT (Matt. 23:15; 1 Tim. 5:17). Consequently, the clauses in Rev. 18:6 should be translated ‘give the *very equivalent*...according to her work....’]; **in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. (7) To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously** [or, luxuriously; cf. Ezek. 27:1-28:19; Luke 16:19-31; and Rev. 18:3 (see under this verse), 9.

I'll quote what Robert L. Thomas (*Revelation 8-22* [Moody, 1995]) said under 18:7 on the meaning of this last word, "It denotes a luxurious lifestyle with the accompanying trappings of discourtesy, arrogance, self-indulgence, ruthless exercise of strength, and unruliness."], **to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning** [cf. Isa. 47:7-15].' **(8) For this reason in one day** [cf. Isa. 47:9; Jer. 50:29-32; and Rev. 18:10, 17, 19] **her plagues** [cf. 18:4] **will come, pestilence** [The margin of the NASB has "or, death"; the NIV, KJV, and NKJV have "death."] **and mourning** [cf. 18:7] **and famine, and she will be burned up with fire** [cf. Rev. 17:16; 18:9, 18; and 19:3]; **for the Lord God who judges her is strong** [cf. Jer. 50:34]. **(9) And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously** [or, luxuriously] **with her** [cf. Rev. 17:2; 18:3, 7], **will weep and lament over her** [cf. Ezek. 26:15-18; 27:35] **when they see the smoke of her burning** [Compare Rev. 17:16; 18:18; 19:3; and Ezek. 28:18. The "kings of the earth" here certainly exclude Antichrist and the ten kings/rulers of Rev. 17:12, 16, 17, who (according to the plan of God) destroy Babylon the great.

Understanding Babylon the great in the fullest sense, we could say that the kings of the earth were part of Babylon (symbolic language can be quite flexible; compare, for example, the varying descriptions of Babylon the great in Revelation chapters 17, 18, including *where* she is sitting/seated), but the primary viewpoint of Revelation chapters 17, 18 is that these kings were closely related with Babylon in an immoral relationship, not fully part of Babylon. So too for the merchants, those transporting the merchandise, etc.

After Babylon lies in smoking ruins, as pictured in Rev. 18:9-19:3, all that remains to be accomplished before Daniel's 70th week ends is the destruction of Antichrist and those who follow him, which apparently will be accomplished in very little time (cf. Rev. 19:19-21). It seems that at least some of these kings (and the merchants, those involved in the transportation systems, etc.) will be left as a remnant of the nations at the end of Daniel's 70th week to enter the millennial kingdom (not being destroyed as part of Babylon or as part of those who worship and follow Antichrist). See Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:3. It is clear that all the people who will be left by God as a remnant of the nations will have refrained, one way or another, from worshiping Antichrist or taking his mark (Rev. 14:9-11). It seems that (at least most of) the kings, etc. who will have a place in the millennial kingdom will not gather to Har-Magedon (Rev. 16:12-16); any who did gather would have repented later.

On (some of) the kings of the nations having a place in God's kingdom (the millennial kingdom and the subsequent eternal kingdom), cf., e.g., Psalm 72:10, 11; Isa. 49:23; 60:3, 16; and Rev. 21:24. (Psalm 72 and Isaiah chapter 49 are discussed verse-by-verse in my eschatological papers on selected passages from the books of Psalms and Isaiah that are on my internet site. Both of those papers and the paper on the book of Jeremiah deal extensively with God's salvation plans for the remnant of the nations after His end-time judgment of the world. Revelation 21:24 is discussed in my paper on Revelation chapters 20-22.)

We have already discussed the fact that Rev. 15:3, 4 show that the remnant of the nations will repent and submit to God after His righteous acts have been revealed. His righteous acts of saving true Israel and judging and removing the rebels who never will repent (which apparently pretty much equals judging and removing Babylon the great and Antichrist and his followers) will be completed, in a significant sense, at the end of Daniel's 70th week., **(10) standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment**

[Compare 18:15, 17. The idea probably is included here that “the kings of the earth” (18:9) fear for themselves, and rightly so. God will apparently use this fear to help motivate at least some of these kings to repent and turn to Him.], **saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city [cf. 18:16, 19], Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’** [Revelation 18:17 and 19 both also mention that the judgment of Babylon takes place “in one hour.” Revelation 18:8 says, “in one day her plagues will come.” Significantly, Rev. 17:12 shows that the super-evil reign of Antichrist will last “for one hour,” speaking of the second half of Daniel’s 70th week. Also, Rev. 3:10 speaks of “the hour of testing”; Rev. 14:7 speaks of “the hour of His judgment”; and 14:15 speaks of “the hour to reap”; all these verses also refer to the second half of Daniel’s 70th week. This information from these verses probably gives us the meaning of the “one hour” of Rev. 18:10, 17, and 19.

I assume Babylon the great will be progressively destroyed by Antichrist and the ten horns throughout this three and one-half year period—throughout the one hour—but there probably will be something of a climactic end to her destruction too. As we discussed under Rev. 16:19, part of Babylon’s destruction will apparently also take place during the month just preceding the mid-week return of Christ.] **(11) And the merchants** [Apparently none of these merchants have been living for God; they have not become Christians, but apparently at least some of them will have refrained (one way or another) from worshiping Antichrist or taking his mark. Any of these merchants who have worshipped Antichrist and taken his mark will be doomed (Rev. 14:9-11).] **of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more** [cf. Ezek. 27:1-36; Rev. 18:3, 12-19, 23]; **(12) cargoes** [cf. Ezek. 27:12-24] **of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, (13) and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.** [In the margin the NASB has “lit., bodies” for “slaves” and “lit., souls of men” for “human lives.” The BAGD Greek Lexicon gives “slaves” as the meaning for the plural of the Greek noun *sōma* here in this verse; this Greek noun is normally translated “body.” I agree with the common view that the word “slaves” and the following words “human lives” (however these words are translated) both refer to slaves. Instead of the word “and” after the word “slaves,” we could translate “even.” The NIV and NKJV both have “bodies and souls of men” here in 18:13.

Ezekiel 27:13, which also speaks of trading slaves, may have influenced the wording here; in the Hebrew it has *nephesh* [soul/life/person] *adam* [of man]. I’ll give some English translations of Ezek. 27:13: NASB “the lives of men”; NIV “slaves”; KJV “the persons of men”; and NKJV “human lives.” In 1 Chron. 5:21 *nephesh adam* is used of people who were taken captive; the NIV translates, “They also took one hundred thousand people captive; the NASB has, “men [lit., souls of men].”

I’ll quote from Robert H. Mounce (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1977], pages 330, 331). “The word translated ‘slaves’ is literally ‘bodies.’ This is a vivid commentary on the social conditions of the day. Slave traders regarded their human cargo as so much merchandise to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. It is estimated that there were as many as 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire. . . . Most commentators take the expression [‘souls of men’] in apposition to slaves and translate ‘even.’ ”] **(14) And the fruit you long for** [literally, the fruit of your soul’s desire] **has gone from you, and all**

things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. [The fact that “you,” which is used three times in this verse, is singular in the Greek demonstrates that Babylon is being spoken to (also note “your judgment,” literally “the judgment of you [singular in Greek]” in 18:10), but it’s clear that these words also apply to all the people who had been seduced by Babylon the great harlot (whether they are considered part of Babylon the great, or not). These things were part of the things used by Babylon the great harlot (by the devil behind Babylon) to seduce people from God; they desired these things instead of for God, His kingdom, His righteousness, and His glory.

Those who are left from the nations (not including any true Christians) when Babylon the great lies in total destruction, about the time of the end of Daniel’s 70th week and the beginning of the millennial kingdom, at least many of them, will wake up, repent, and turn to God (cf. Rev. 20:3). (As I mentioned, Rev. 14:9-11 make it clear that any people who have worshipped Antichrist and taken his mark are doomed for destruction.) For one thing, it will be obvious that they won’t be able to continue to live for all the wrong things that have just been taken away from them (through God’s mercy). God’s righteous acts of saving of His people (true Israel) and His judgment of Babylon the great and of Antichrist and his forces gathered to Armageddon (along with the fact that He has left them alive when the day of judgment is over) will also serve to wake up the (remnant of) the nations. See Rev. 15:3, 4.

I’ll quote part of what John F. Walvoord said under Rev. 18:11-19 (*Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Moody, 1966], page 265). “Christ warned against coveting the wealth of this world when He said, ‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21). In contrast to the transitory wealth and glory of this world, which are here consumed by a great judgment from God, are the true riches of faith, devotion, and service for God laid up in heaven beyond the destructive hands of man and protected by the righteous power of God.’” **(15) The merchants of these things, who became rich from her** [These riches (cf. 18:3), and the fame of the merchants of Babylon (cf. 18:23), demonstrate part of Babylon’s power of seduction over (many of) the merchants of the earth.], **will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment** [see under 18:10], **weeping and mourning** [cf. 18:11], **(16) saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city** [cf. 18:10, 19], **she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls** [Compare 17:4. Every one of these items associated with riches listed here in 18:16 was listed in 18:12, 13.]; **(17) for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste** [Compare 18:10, 19. On the verb “has been laid waste,” see on “make her desolate” under Rev. 17:16. Note that the verb is used again in 18:19.!]’ **And every shipmaster** [The NIV has, “sea captain.”] **and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea** [cf. Ezek. 27:26-32], **stood at a distance** [On standing at a distance, see under 18:10. What I said there applies to all people, including “every shipmaster and every passenger [on ships, etc.] and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea,” apparently excluding only those who had totally submitted themselves to God and His city/kingdom. I don’t know about the situation during the second half of Daniel’s 70th week (it will be quite different), but during this present age it’s clear that Christians can, in the will of God, be merchants, shipmasters,

airline pilots, train engineers, bus and truck drivers, passengers, sailors, etc.; we must, however, make it a top priority to make sure we aren't being drawn away (seduced) from being faithful to God—it can, and does happen. It's not always easy; it can cost us in the world to be set apart for God.], **(18) and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning** [cf. 17:16; 18:9; and 19:3], **saying, 'What city is like the great city?'** [Cf. Ezek. 27:32.] **(19) And they threw dust on their heads** [cf. Ezek. 27:30; Josh. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; 32; 2 Sam. 1:2; 15:32; Job 2:12; and Lam. 2:10] **and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth** [cf. Rev. 18:3, 15], **for in one hour she has been laid waste!'** [Cf. Rev. 18:10, 17.] **(20) Rejoice over her** [Contrast the mourning of the world in Rev. 18:9-19.], **O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.**" [Cf., e.g., Jer. 51:48; Rev. 6:9-11; 17:6; 18:24; and 19:1-6.] **(21) And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone** [Alan Johnson (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) commented on the size of a "great/giant millstone": "four to five feet in diameter, one foot thick, and weighing thousands of pounds."] **and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.** [Cf. Jer. 51:63, 64; Ezek. 26:21; and Rev. 18:14.] **(22) And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer** [Compare Isa. 24:8 (Isaiah chapters 24-27, sometimes called *Isaiah's Little Apocalypse*, prophesy of God's end-time judgment of the world. God's judgment of the "city of chaos" of Isa. 24:10 [cf. Isa. 25:2; 26:5, 6] is somewhat comparable with His judgment of Babylon in the book of Revelation. And Isaiah 24:13-16a; 25:3-8; 26:9, 10; and 27:5, 6 confirm that God will save the remnant of the nations after His end-time judgment. Isaiah chapters 24-27 are discussed verse-by-verse in my eschatological paper on selected passages of Isaiah on my internet site.); Ezek. 26:13]; **and no craftsman or any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; (23) and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer** [Compare Jer. 7:34; 16:9; and 25:10. Since Babylon will be totally destroyed, no one will live there any longer, and these activities, which are not sinful in themselves, will no longer take place there. I'll quote part of what Philip E. Hughes said under Rev. 18:21-24 (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1990]). "This is the passing away of the world with all its ungodly lust (1 John 2:17): what was formerly a hive of self-seeking activity has become a place of death and desolation. The prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled: 'The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word' (Isa. 24:3); and also the prophecy spoken through Jeremiah: 'I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste' (Jer. 25:10...)."]

The people who are left alive on the earth after God's end time judgment, the remnant of the nations (cf., e.g., Rev. 20:3), will have no reasonable choice but to repent and turn to God and His kingdom. I assume that at least most of them will repent and begin to worship God. For one thing, God determines who will be left alive. This is quite significant in that this remnant could number in the billions.]; **for your merchants were the great men of the earth** [cf. Isa. 23:8, 9 with Isa. 2:10-22; and Rev. 18:3], **because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.** [As discussed under Rev. 17:1-6, Babylon the harlot includes

all false religion, including the occult, which includes “sorcery” (cf. Isa. 47:8-15; Nah. 3:4; Rev. 9:21; 21:8; and 22:15). Here in Revelation chapter 18, however, the emphasis is on Babylon as the center of commerce, and the primary idea here seems to be the “sorcery” of so deceiving/seducing men that they devote their lives to, and live for, riches and the things money can buy, instead of living for God. I’ll quote from Isbon T. Beckwith on the meaning of “sorcery” here (*Apocalypse of John* [Baker, 1979, original copyright 1919], page 720), “used figuratively, with the same meaning as the wine of fornication, cf. Rev. 18:3; 14:8.”] **(24) And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain** [The NIV has “all who have been killed.”] **on the earth.** [Compare Rev. 6:10; 17:6; 18:20; and 19:2. Apparently we can say that all the “innocent” blood ever shed on the earth, starting with righteous Abel (not limited to the blood of the old-covenant saints and the new-covenant saints, but their blood is in the spotlight), is attributable to the great harlot, Babylon. This verse confirms that Babylon is much more than any one city/kingdom. As I have mentioned, in its fullest sense Babylon is a symbol for the world, whose god is the devil. I suppose we can say that the blood shed by Antichrist after he separates from Babylon will not be found in Babylon.]

REVELATION CHAPTER 19

After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven [cf. Jer. 51:48; Rev. 18:20], **saying, “Hallelujah!** [This last word is also found in Rev. 19:3, 4, and 6. This glorious word of praise, which is a transliteration of two closely connected Hebrew words that mean *Praise Yah!*, is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. (*Yah* is typically considered to be a shortened form of *Yahweh*.) Also, although these two Hebrew words are used together quite a few times in the book of Psalms (e.g., Psalms 104:35; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1, 9; 115:18; and 135:1, 3, 21), the word “Hallelujah” doesn’t show up in the translations of the Old Testament. The NASB has “Praise the LORD!” in these verses from Psalms. So do the NIV and NKJV; the KJV has “Praise the LORD” or “Praise ye the LORD.” Some Bible translations (including the NASB, NIV, KJV, and NKJV) use four capital letters for the word LORD to show that the Hebrew has *Yahweh*. On the name *Yahweh*, see my paper, *The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son.*] **Salvation** [cf. Psalm 3:8; Rev. 7:10; and 12:10] **and glory and power belong to our God** [It’s not clear whose loud voice sounds forth here (and it’s not necessary for us to know), but it probably is the voice of angels, as in Rev. 5:11, 12 (cf. Rev. 7:11, 12; 11:15). (The KJV has, “...I heard a great voice of much people in heaven....” I’m not denying the possibility that this could be the voice of the saints/people in heaven. Some understand the voice this way. But “great multitude” is the better translation, which still could refer to people. The NIV and NKJV have “great multitude.”) Revelation 5:14 then says, “And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen.’ And the [twenty-four] elders fell down and worshiped.” Note the contribution of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures in Rev. 19:4 (cf. Rev. 11:16-18). In Rev. 19:4 we read of the worship and of the “Amen, Hallelujah!” of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures. Next, in response to the call from the throne for God’s bond-servants (probably referring to the saints/all the members of God’s true Israel who are in heaven/the heavenly dimension by that time, near the end of Daniel’s 70th week) to praise Him (Rev. 19:5), they praise Him (Rev. 19:6-8).]; **(2) BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS** [cf. Psalm 19:9; Rev. 15:3, 4; and 16:7]; **for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality** [cf. Rev. 17:1-18:24], **and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER.**” [See Deut. 32:43; Rev. 6:10, 11; 17:6; and 18:20, 24; cf. Rev. 16:5-7. As the margin of the NASB points out, the Greek behind “ON HER” literally reads “from her hand.” The idea is that God avenges the blood that has been shed by her hand/by her. The NKJV, for example, has, “the blood of His servants *shed* by her.”] **(3) And a second time they said, “Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND FOREVER.**” [See Isa. 34:10 (Edom is a symbol for the world in Isaiah chapter 34); Rev. 14:10, 11; 17:16; 18:8, 9, 18; 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; and 21:8; cf. Isa. 66:24. The time setting here is very near the end of Daniel’s 70th week. The Lord Jesus has already judged and destroyed Babylon the great harlot, and the smoke of her burning rises up forever and ever. It is now time for Him to judge and destroy Antichrist and those who have been gathered (by Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet and the demons coming out of their mouths [Rev. 16:12-16]) to Har-Magedon to fight against Him and His army, and that won’t take long.] **(4) And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne** [cf., e.g., Rev. 4:4-11], **saying,**

“Amen. Hallelujah!” (5) And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” (6) And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude [The Greek noun *doulos*, the plural of which is translated “bond-servants” here, is always used of members of true Israel (the woman of Revelation chapter 12) in the book of Revelation, with the exception of three uses where it refers to literal slaves. With the added words “you who fear Him, the small and the great” (cf. Rev. 11:18; Psalm 115:13), it seems rather clear that the “bond-servants” here are those members of true Israel who will already be in heaven/the heavenly dimension at that time, near the end of Daniel’s 70th week. (This “voice of a great multitude,” like the voices of Rev. 19:1-5, apparently also comes from heaven/the heavenly dimension.) I should mention that angels also are bond-servants of God: The Greek noun *sundoulos*, which is used three times in the book of Revelation, is used twice of angels being “fellow [bond] servants” with the saints (Rev. 19:10; 22:9).] **and as the sound of many waters** [cf. Rev. 1:15; 14:2] **and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder** [cf. Rev. 14:2; 6:1], **saying, “Hallelujah!** [This word, which, as we discussed, means *Praise Yah [the LORD]!*, answers (in part) the call to give praise to God of Rev. 19:5.] **For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.** [The reign spoken of here began in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (cf. Rev. 11:15-18; 12:10; and Matt. 6:10). The Greek verb used here, which is the equivalent of the Greek verb used in 11:17, could be translated “has begun to reign.”

I’ll quote the introductory remarks of G. K. Beale (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1999], page 926 to his discussion of Rev. 19:1-6. “The dual theme of reward to the saints and destruction of their enemies announced by the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) is picked up again in ch. 19, as is evident from the verbal similarities, especially in 19:5-6, specifically the threefold description of believers (11:18), the declaration of the commencement of God’s reign (11:15-16)... [Revelation] 19:1-6 (perhaps extending to verse 8) actually continues the last segment of ch. 18 (18:20-24) and may be seen as the conclusion of that segment in its emphasis on Babylon’s fall.”] **(7) Let us rejoice and be glad** [cf. Psalm 118:24; Matt. 5:12; and 1 Pet. 4:13] **and give the glory to Him** [to God the Father; “the Lord our God, the Almighty” of Rev. 19:6], **for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready** [cf. Rev. 21:2 (“made ready as a bride adorned for her husband”), 9; 22:17].” [See Matt. 22:12; 25:10; Mark 2:19, 20; Luke 12:36; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2, 3; and Eph. 5:23-32. *Who is the bride of Christ?* The bride of Christ is God’s true Israel, the woman of Revelation chapter 12. The bride clearly includes all true Christians of this entire age, who are glorified and raptured when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week. I believe it also includes all true believers from Old Testament days; they too will be glorified and raptured when Christ returns. Both groups are part of true Israel, but so too are those who will become Christians after the mid-week rapture, centering in the end-time remnant of the nation Israel. We can see those converted after the rapture in Rev. 12:6-17, for example. Rev. 12:17 shows that they are Christians with the words, “[those] who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” I believe all the members of true Israel will be glorified and begin to reign by the time the millennial kingdom begins.

The marriage of the Lamb with His bride is a figurative way to speak of the glorious, intimate, relationship/communion that will take place between Christ and His people throughout eternity. (I believe that the relationship between God the Father and the

members of true Israel will be equally glorious.) Born-again Christians have already become united with the Lord Jesus Christ, but most of the glory of that relationship is reserved for the future, after we have been glorified.

This marriage won't take place in its full and final sense until all the members of the bride, true Israel, are fully ready, after they have all finished the race and been glorified, which will not come to pass until the end of Daniel's 70th week. Revelation 20:4 indicates that the martyrs of the second half of Daniel's 70th week won't be resurrected and glorified until after Antichrist and his forces have been destroyed (at the end of Daniel's 70th week). It seems equally clear that those members of true Israel who are left alive at the end of Daniel's 70th week won't be glorified until after Antichrist is destroyed.

The bride "[makes] herself ready" by submitting to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and being sanctified (by becoming saints), and staying sanctified, through the grace of God in Christ (cf., e.g., 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:13-19; 2 Pet. 3:14; and 1 John 3:3). The next verse (and all the verses listed at the beginning of this discussion of Rev. 19:7, starting with Matt. 22:12, with the exception of John 3:29, when read in their contexts) confirms that the emphasis is on Christians believing right and living right/doing righteous acts (by grace/the Spirit), always being fully ready for Christ's return, not on forgiveness and right standing (but thanks be to God for forgiveness).] **(8) And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.** [The NASB and NKJV have closing quotation marks at the end of Rev. 19:7. The NIV, however, has the closing quotation marks in the middle of Rev. 19:8. The *UBS Greek New Testament* (Fourth Revised Edition) continues the quotation to the end of 19:8, as do the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, the *New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips, and the *Jerusalem Bible*. I prefer this last option. The location of the closing quotation marks doesn't affect the overall meaning of these verses.

Significantly, the last words of this verse ("for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints") make it clear that the emphasis is on the fact that Christians are called and enabled to live in the righteousness and holiness of God through the saving grace of God in Christ, not on forgiveness and having a right standing before God. This is very good news! God hates sin, and He paid a very high price to give us the victory over sin! See my book, *Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

See Rev. 19:14; 3:4, 5 ("But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy [by the saving, sanctifying grace of God in Christ]. He who overcomes [and we must be overcomers according to the book of Revelation] shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."); 6:11; 7:9, 14 ("...and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"; we are sanctified by the blood of the Lamb); and 15:6. All these references speak of heavenly garments. Revelation 19:8 and 15:6 both have the adjectives "bright" and "clean." Revelation 19:14 has the adjectives "white" and "clean." Revelation 3:4, 5; 6:11; and 7:9, 14 have the adjective "white." I'll also read Rev. 22:14, "Blessed are those who wash their robes [through new-covenant salvation in the blood of the Lamb, as in Rev. 7:14], so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city [new Jerusalem]." **(9) And he said to me, "Write [cf. Rev. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 10:4; 14:13; and 21:5], 'Blessed are those who are invited**

to the marriage supper of the Lamb [cf. Luke 14:15].’ ” [The setting here is quite different than the setting in Matt. 22:1-14. In Matt. 22:1-14 all are *invited* to come to the “wedding feast for [the] son” (Matt. 22:2), but it’s clear that those who accept the invitation are required to make themselves ready: They must be “dressed in wedding clothes” when the time arrives for the wedding feast (Matt. 22:11, 12); in other words, they must submit (in faith) to the terms of the new covenant and then stay faithful. Those who don’t make themselves ready will be rejected (Matt. 22:11-14).

By the time the marriage supper of the Lamb (of Rev. 19:9) takes place, about the time of the end of Daniel’s 70th week, all the members of true Israel (including those who become believers after the rapture) will have finished their race and been glorified. None of them will be rejected, unlike the situation in Matt. 22:14, which says, “For many are called (this call is the same as the invitation/call of Matt. 22:3-10), but few *are* chosen” (chosen, that is, to have a place in God’s eternal kingdom).

The words “those who are invited” (Rev. 19:9) are a translation of a Greek perfect participle of the verb *kaleō*, which means *call, invite*. The KJV has, “they which are called; the NKJV has, “those who are called.” I would translate “those who have been invited [or, called],” as does the *Weymouth* translation. Revelation 17:14 is an important cross-reference; it speaks of the glorified saints, who are with Christ after the rapture, as the “called and chosen and faithful.” The Greek adjective translated “called” in 17:14 (*klētos*) was derived from the verb *kaleō*. Those “chosen [elected]” by God to be part of true Israel have been called/invited to “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Their names are found in the Lamb’s book of life (cf. Rev. 13:8; 17:8), and at the end they are found to be “faithful.” Their Christian lives were characterized by “righteous acts” (Rev. 19:8). On Christians being called by God, see, for example, Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 1:9, 24; and 2 Thess. 2:13-15.

In this interpretation of 19:7-10, I am agreeing with the common, but not universally accepted, viewpoint that “those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” are the same people who constitute the bride of 19:7, 8. The flexible nature of the figurative language of the Bible permits such variation. In Rev. 5:5 Christ is referred to as a Lion; in 5:6 He is a Lamb. In 7:17 He is both a Lamb and a Shepherd. In the parable of the wedding feast for the son (Son) in Matt. 22:1-14, those who are invited to the wedding feast take the place of the bride, and in Matt. 25:1-13 the ten virgins take the place of the bride. For one thing, when you speak of a bride you think of one person; by speaking of those invited to the wedding feast, or of ten virgins, it permits speaking of many people. In Matt. 22:1-14 and in Matt. 25:1-13 it was necessary to speak of multiple persons to include the idea that some would be faithful and ready, and some wouldn’t.

In Rev. 19:7-9 it wasn’t absolutely necessary to expand the bride to multiple persons because all the people who are part of the bride in the setting of Rev. 19:7-9 will be ready for the marriage/marriage feast, but it was helpful to expand the picture of the bride to demonstrate the blessing prepared for all the members of true Israel. Revelation chapter 12 provides another good example of flexible language: True Israel is pictured as a woman and as the seed/offspring of the woman. Lastly, I’ll quote two sentences from Robert H. Mounce (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1977], page 341). “Note that in verses 7-9 the church is pictured both as the bride and as the guests who are invited to the wedding. Far from constituting a contradiction, this sort of freedom is a normal characteristic of apocalyptic writing.”

Although it is true that “the nations” mentioned in Rev. 20:3 will be converted and interact with true Israel in the millennial kingdom (cf., e.g., Rev. 15:4; 20:6; Isa. 2:2-4; and Zech. 14:16-21), I don’t believe it was intended here that we should think of them being “invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (The people of the nations will not be glorified as they live on the earth in the millennial kingdom.) **And he said to me, “These are true words of God [cf. Rev. 21:5; 22:6].”** [Apparently the person speaking here is the angel mentioned in Rev. 17:1. The revelation regarding the judgment of Babylon the great harlot, which continued to this verse in chapter 19, came through this angel. The last few verses (Rev. 19:6-9) go beyond the destruction of Babylon the harlot and speak of the glorious woman totally opposite the harlot, the bride of Christ. This angel apparently was referring to all the words of Rev. 17:1-19:9 when he said, “These are true words of God.” The book of Revelation goes out of its way to repeatedly mention that the contents of this book are true and trustworthy. This book is extremely significant, not to minimize the importance of the other prophetic passages contained in the Bible.] **(10) And I fell at his feet to worship him.** [John fell at the feet of the angel (one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls) mentioned in Rev. 17:1. Compare Col. 2:18 (not to suggest that John was guilty of worshiping angels in the sense spoken of by Paul in that verse).] **And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant [or, bond-servant] of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus [They testified to Jesus, that He was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, their resurrected Savior, etc. (cf. Rev. 1:9; 12:17; and 20:4).]; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.** [Christians are to worship God, and only God, which here (as the last sentence in this verse demonstrates, along with much other scripture) includes God the Son. (Other verses demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is included with the Father and the Son in the Trinity.) Although the word God is typically reserved for God the Father in the New Testament (even as the name Yahweh is typically reserved for God the Father in the Old Testament), the word is sometimes used for God the Son in the New Testament (cf. John 1:1; 20:28; and Heb. 1:8). The name Yahweh is used for God the Son several times in the Old Testament too. See my papers titled, *The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son; Who Do We Worship?; Who Do We Pray To?; and More on the Trinity.*

The word “prophecy” in the Greek here has the definite article (which is similar to our “the” in English). It would probably be better to translate “the prophecy” here, which would limit the prophecy to the prophecy of the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:3; 22:7, 10, and 18 all have “the prophecy,” referring to the prophecy of the book of Revelation. The definite article is included in the Greek in each of these verses. Revelation 22:7, 10, and 18 have, “the words of the prophecy of this book.” Revelation 22:19 has, “the words of the book of this prophecy.”)

I understand the last sentence of this verse in this sense: The “testimony of [regarding] Jesus [which greatly exalts Him] is [a big part of the message inspired/given by] the [Holy] Spirit in the prophecy [of the book of Revelation].” It is also true, of course, that the Spirit exalts the Lord Jesus Christ in much other prophecy of the Bible, and in general. Compare John 15:26. The *Greek-English Lexicon* by Liddell and Scott lists *divine inspiration* as one meaning of the Greek noun (*pneuma*), which is translated “spirit” by the NASB here in Rev. 19:10.

John 6:63 is a cross-reference that will help us understand the use of the word “spirit [Spirit]” here in Rev. 19:10; it has, “It is the Spirit [*pneuma*] who gives life; the flesh

profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit [*pneuma*] and are life.” However we translate the second use of *pneuma* in John 6:63, the meaning is that the “words” of Jesus are inspired/given by the Spirit of life (and it is understood that they are backed up by the Spirit); that’s why they give life.

See under Rev. 22:8, 9 in my paper on Revelation chapters 20-22; also compare Acts 10:25, 26.] (11) [I refer the reader to the rather complete discussion of Rev. 19:11-16 on pages 25-29 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*. That important discussion/information, for the most part, is not repeated here. However, after I finish verse 11 and the comments I had in the original version of this paper, I’ll quote what I said regarding this verse in my article, “The Mid-Week Rapture #22.” This verse is quite important.] **And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse** [Compare Rev. 6:2; 19:19, 21. The color *white* goes with the purity/holiness of heaven, but it undoubtedly symbolizes victory here too.], **and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True** [cf. Rev. 3:14]; **and in righteousness He judges and wages war** [cf. Gen. 18:25; Psalms 9:8; 72:2; 96:13; 98:9; Isa. 11:4, 5; Acts 17:31; Rev. 15:3, 4; 16:5-7; and 19:2].

Excerpt from My Article, “The Mid-Week Rapture #22” on Rev. 19:11.

Let’s go on to Rev. 19:11, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.” Everything that the triune God does He does “in righteousness.” It is clear that the Rider on a white horse is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is judging and waging war in His end-time judgment of the world. He has been judging and waging war since He returned to the earth and began to reign at the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (see Rev. 11:15-18). He has already judged and removed Babylon the great harlot, and the first six bowls of wrath have already been poured out by the time we get to Rev. 19:11. Revelation 14:14-16 picture the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on a white cloud and swinging His sickle over the earth to reap the earth. I believe that reaping refers to His judgment and removal of Babylon the great harlot. (See under those verses in this paper.)

The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured with His robe dipped in blood in Rev. 19:13 serves to strongly confirm the very important fact that He has been actively engaged in judging before He judges and destroys Antichrist and his followers at the end of Revelation chapter 19. The glorified, raptured saints (who are pictured riding on white horses in verse 14) have been reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ since the time of their glorification and rapture in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (cf. Rev. 17:14). I should mention that although the Lord Jesus Christ will be visibly present at the time of His mid-week return with the clouds of heaven, apparently He will not be visibly present throughout at least most of the second half of Daniel’s 70th week, when He will be judging the world.

For one thing, if the Lord were visibly present on the earth throughout much of the second half of Daniel’s 70th week, it would detract from God’s plans to test mankind regarding who they will worship (see Rev. 3:10). (Also see 2 Thess. 2:3-12.) The Lord Jesus Christ (and the glorified, raptured saints with Him) will be living, at least for the most part, in the heavenly (spiritual) dimension after the time of His return and the rapture, but He will be very directly involved with His end-time work of saving and judging in the spiritual and physical dimensions.

At the beginning of verse 11, John “saw heaven opened.” Heaven was opened so John could see—see in a series of visions—the next things that God wanted to reveal to him, and through him to us. As I mentioned, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of God’s wrath came to John in Rev. 17:1 and told him that he would show him the judgment of Babylon the great harlot. Revelation chapters 17, 18, and the first verses of chapter 19 dealt with that judgment. But then the angel went on (in Rev. 19:7-9) to speak of the marriage of the other woman of the book of Revelation, the woman of God’s true Israel, the bride of Christ.

That angel passed from the scene with Rev. 19:9, 10, and John began to receive a series of visions that continue through Rev. 21:8. Then at Revelation 21:9 one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of wrath came to show John the bride, the wife of the Lamb. THE FACT THAT HEAVEN WAS OPENED SO THAT JOHN COULD RECEIVE VISIONS FROM GOD IS LIKE EZEKIEL 1:1, WHERE HEAVEN WAS OPENED SO EZEKIEL COULD RECEIVE VISIONS FROM GOD. I’ll read Ezek. 1:1, “Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day, of the fourth month, while I [Ezekiel] was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.”

A large number of Christians (including those who hold the pre-week rapture and the end-of-the-week rapture viewpoints) believe that heaven was opened here in Rev. 19:11 so that the Lord Jesus Christ (and those with Him) could leave heaven and come to the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70th week. As we have discussed, however, Rev. 11:15-18 demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ will come and begin to reign at the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, right in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week. And we see the resurrection, glorification, and rapture of the saints taking place in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week in Rev. 12:5. We also see the resurrection, glorification, and rapture of the two witnesses/prophets taking place in the middle of the seven-year period in Rev. 11:11, 12. A *cloud* is even mentioned in Rev. 11:12. And we see the glorified saints with (including reigning with) the Lord Jesus after the rapture in Rev. 17:14 (Significantly, this verse speaks of Antichrist and the ten horns waging war against the Lord Jesus AND the glorified saints throughout the three and one-half year super-evil reign of Antichrist.); 19:14, 19; cf. Rev. 7:9; 13:6; and 14:14-16.

And as we have discussed, Christ’s mid-week coming that is pictured in Revelation chapters 11, 12 is the same coming that is pictured in Matt. 24:30, 31 (which mention His coming, the trumpet, the rapture, and the clouds); 1 Cor. 15:51, 52 (which mention the last trumpet and the resurrection and glorification of the saints); and 1 Thess. 4:16, 17 (which mention His coming, the trumpet, the clouds, and the resurrection, glorification, and rapture of the saints). It is significant that there is no mention in Rev. 19:11 and the following verses of Christ’s coming to begin to reign, or of the resurrection, glorification, or rapture of the saints, or of the trumpet, or of the clouds. (Those holding the pre-week rapture viewpoint believe that Christ will come in the sky and the saints will be resurrected, glorified, and raptured before Daniel’s 70th week begins, but they don’t call that His second coming. They typically speak of His second coming taking place at Rev. 19:11, very near the end of the seven-years.) Also, as we have discussed, it is significant that the Lord Jesus Christ (and the glorified, raptured saints with Him) has already judged and removed Babylon the great harlot, and the first six bowls of wrath have been poured out, before we get to Rev. 19:11. His robe has already been dipped in the blood of His enemies.

Now that we have finished the excerpt, we'll go on to Rev. 19:12.

(12) And His eyes are a flame of fire [cf. Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:14; and 2:18], **and upon His head are many diadems** [cf. Rev. 6:2; 19:16]; **and He has a name written upon Him which no knows except Himself. (13) And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood** [I'll quote from Robert H. Mounce (*Book of Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1977], page 345). "The Palestinian *Targum* on Genesis 49:11 reads in part, 'How beautiful is the King Messiah! Binding his loins and going forth to war against them that hate him, he will slay kings with princes, and make the rivers red with the blood of their slain.... His garments will be dipped in blood and he himself like the juice of the winepress' cf. Rev. 14:14-20.']; **and His name is called The Word of God.** [See John 1:1, 14. I'll quote again from Mounce (pages 345, 346), "... In Hebrew thought a word is not a lifeless sound but an active agent that achieves the intention of the one who speaks (Gen 1:3, 7, 9, etc.). ... This idea finds expression in Hebrews 4:12, 'the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.' The same concept is found in the Wisdom of Solomon in connection with the death of the firstborn in Egypt: 'thy all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed, a stern warrior carrying the sharp sword of thy authentic command' (19:15-16). The Messiah as avenging warrior is appropriately named the Word (the powerful and active utterance) of God."

I'll also quote part of what Philip E. Hughes said here (*Book of the Revelation* [Eerdmans, 1990], page 204). "As the Word of God the Son is both the revealer of the divine mind and also the agent of the divine will. Since the word of God never fails to effect what it decrees (cf. Isa. 55:11), it is through him who is the eternal word that the will of God is brought to pass not only in creation but also in re-creation (2 Cor. 4:6) and in judgment (Acts 17:31).]" **(14) And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean** [cf. Rev. 19:8], **were following Him on white horses. (15) And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron** [This ruling with a rod of iron includes destroying those who persist in rebellion. Psalm 2:9, from which the words about ruling with a rod of iron were derived, includes this idea: "Thou shalt break [another reading is rule] them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware." The raptured saints who are "following [Christ] on white horses" will also rule with a rod of iron (cf. Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5).]; **and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. (16) And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS** [cf. Rev. 17:14; Deut. 10:17; and Dan. 2:47]."

Excerpt from My Article "The Mid-Week Rapture #23" on Rev. 19:12-16.

I didn't comment very much on these verses (Rev. 19:12-16) in the original version of this paper, but I referred the reader to the discussion of Rev. 19:11-16 on pages 25-29 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*. Here I'll include a four page excerpt from my article titled, "The Mid-Week Rapture #23" that deals with Rev. 19:12-16. These verses are quite important.

I'll read Rev. 19:12, "His eyes are a flame of fire [see Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:14; and 2:18.], and on His head are many diadems [or, crowns]; and He has a name written on Him which no

one knows except Himself.” We probably will be able to know and understand the meaning of this name after we are glorified, or at least by the time His eternal kingdom has been fully established, with its new heaven and new earth and its new Jerusalem. I’ll read Rev. 3:12 (Jesus is speaking here), “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; 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 out of heaven from My God, AND MY NEW NAME [my emphasis].” Also see Rev. 2:17. That verse speaks of our being given a new name, a name which no one knows and understands but the one who receives it. Our new name will undoubtedly reflect our new glorified status and existence (in union with the Lord Jesus), so too for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has many crowns on His head could demonstrate that He has the authority to judge and fully take over the world (verse 16 mentions, for example, that he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; also see Rev. 17:14), but these could be crowns of enemies He has conquered already. In 1 Cor. 15:25, the apostle Paul (speaking of Christ’s end-time reign) said, “He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.” In verse 24 he mentioned that Christ will abolish “all rule and all authority and power.”

We’ll go on to Rev. 19:13, “*He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*” Many Christians have trouble with this verse because they think that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to the earth at this time (very near the end of Daniel’s 70th week) to judge the world, but His robe has already been dipped in the blood of His enemies. However, as we have discussed, the book of Revelation shows that He returned to the earth in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, and He has already judged and removed Babylon the great harlot and the first six bowls of wrath have already been poured out. As I mentioned, these words about His robe being dipped in blood serve to strongly confirm that the Lord doesn’t come to judge the world at Rev. 19:11 (near the end of Daniel’s 70th week); He comes at Rev. 11:15-18 (right in the middle of the seven-year period). (I should mention that some say that the blood in view here is the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. I don’t believe that view is tenable in this context.)

These words about the Lord Jesus Christ’s robe being dipped in blood build on Isa. 63:1-6. I’ll read these verses, “Who is this who comes from Edom [Edom is used here, as it is in Isaiah chapter 34, as a symbol for the world. God’s judgment of Edom here includes His end-time judgment of Babylon the great harlot and His judgment of Antichrist and his followers.], With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah [Bozrah was a city of Edom.], This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? ‘It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’ [God cannot fully save His people, or fully establish His kingdom, until He has judged and removed His unrepentant enemies.] (2) Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? (3) ‘I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. [There are some things that God must do Himself, but the book of Revelation informs us that the glorified saints will be reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ (and even ruling with a rod of iron, but He clearly has the DOMINANT role) from the time of the rapture.] I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance was in My heart [This includes God’s avenging all the shed blood of His people (cf., e.g., Rev. 6:10;

Deut. 32:43).], And My year of redemption has come. (5) I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me. (6) I trod down the peoples in My anger and Made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.’ ”

The verses in Isaiah speak of God’s treading His enemies in the winepress in His end-time judgment of the world. Revelation 19:15 goes on to mention that the Lord Jesus Christ “treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.” I’ll comment further on treading the wine press when we discuss verse 15.

On God the Son’s name being called the Word of God, see John 1:1, 14; cf. 1 John 1:1.

Let’s go on to Rev. 19:14, “And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.” The fact that verse 8 mentions that it was given to the glorified saints to wear “fine linen, bright and clean” demonstrates that the armies here in verse 14 at least include the glorified saints; they have been reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ from the time of their glorification and rapture in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week. The angels of God will certainly be present too, but apparently they are not mentioned here.

The glorified, raptured saints will be with the Lord, reigning with Him, and following Him forever from the time of their glorification and rapture. I’ll give some important cross-references on this point: I’ll read 1 Thess. 4:16-18, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, AND SO WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD [my emphasis]. (18) Therefore comfort one another with these words.” Yes! I guess so! I won’t read Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21; or 12:5, but those verses demonstrate that the glorified, raptured saints will be reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ. Two of these verses even mention that we will be ruling with a rod of iron. Revelation 14:1-5 picture the glorified saints with the Lord Jesus right after the rapture. Verse 4 mentions, “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” The “fine linen, white and clean” of Rev. 19:14 is matched by the righteousness of the saints mentioned in Rev. 14:4, 5. Revelation 14:1-5 are discussed in chapter 23 of my book, *The Mid-Week Rapture*. In Rev. 14:14-16 the glorified saints are undoubtedly included with the Lord Jesus Christ on the white cloud as He swings His sickle over the earth to judge Babylon the great harlot. See the discussion of Rev. 14:14-16 in this paper. I’ll read Rev. 17:14 and briefly comment on this verse, “These [referring to Antichrist and his ten associates] will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, AND THOSE WHO ARE WITH HIM ARE THE CALLED AND CHOSEN AND FAITHFUL [my emphasis].” “The called and chosen and faithful” who are with the Lord Jesus Christ are the glorified, raptured saints. Antichrist and his ten associates will be waging war against the Lord throughout the second half of Daniel’s 70th week. Of course the Lord could destroy His enemies at any time, but (as we have discussed) God is going to use Antichrist in His end-time judgment of the world before He destroys him and his followers. Revelation 19:19 demonstrates that Antichrist and the gigantic multitude who gather to Har-Mageddon will be waging war against the Lord Jesus Christ AND AGAINST HIS ARMY, which at least includes the glorified, raptured saints. I’ll read Rev. 19:19, “And I saw the beast [Antichrist] and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse AND

AGAINST HIS ARMY [my emphasis].” Also see Rev. 13:6 (We are God’s “tabernacle” now, and in a fuller sense after the glorification and rapture.)

Let’s go on to Rev. 19:15, “From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty [God the Father].” On the sharp sword that comes out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ, see Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; and 19:21. Revelation 19:21 shows that the Lord kills His enemies with the sword that comes out of His mouth. Verses like Isa. 11:4; 49:2; and 2 Thess. 2:8 confirm that this figurative language of a sharp sword coming out of His mouth means that the words He speaks will cause the death of His enemies. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks with total authority; His words, backed up by all the power of heaven, will strike down all the unrepentant enemies of God.

These words about His ruling with a rod of iron build on Psalm 2:9. This rule of the Lord Jesus Christ with a rod of iron, which will begin at the time of His mid-week return, very much includes the judgment and removal of His unrepentant enemies, including Babylon the great harlot and Antichrist and his followers. Revelation 2:26, 27; 12:5 prophesy that the glorified saints will also rule with a rod of iron, as they reign with the Lord Jesus Christ. It isn’t clear how involved the glorified saints will be in the judging and warfare of the second half of Daniel’s 70th week, but it is clear that the Lord Jesus Christ will be the primary One ruling with a rod of iron. He is the One who has a sharp sword coming out of His mouth for striking down the nations, and this verse goes on to say that “He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.” Furthermore, verse 13 only mentions the blood of His enemies being on His robe (not on the garments of those with Him), and verse 21 speaks of Antichrist’s forces being killed by the sword which comes from Christ’s mouth. As I mentioned, there are some things that God must do Himself, but the book of Revelation informs us that the glorified saints will be reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ, and even ruling with a rod of iron. And, as I mentioned, Rev. 19:19 speaks of Antichrist and the kings of the earth and their armies waging war against the Lord Jesus Christ and against His army. I assume we will be quite active in this warfare.

Now we’ll discuss these words at the end of verse 15, “and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.” Isaiah 63:1-6, which I quoted above, mentioned a wine press in verse 2, and it mentioned treading in the wine press in verses 2, 3, and treading down His enemies in verse 6. Verse 2 spoke of His garments being red, and verse 3 spoke of their lifeblood being sprinkled on His garments. Revelation 19:13, which speaks of the Lord’s garments being dipped in blood before He judges Antichrist and his forces at the end of Daniel’s 70th week, helps confirm that these words about treading the wine press include Christ’s judgment of Babylon the great harlot. And, as I mentioned, Edom, which is a symbol for the world in Isa. 63:1-6, includes Babylon the great harlot—Babylon is a symbol for the world too.

Will the Lord Jesus Christ literally have the blood of His enemies on His robe? It is possible, but we must face the fact that the book of Revelation is packed with figurative language, figurative language that deals with reality and communicates very important truth in powerful ways. I have found that many Christians go way too far with insisting that every detail in the book of Revelation must be understood in a literal sense if it is at all possible to take it in a literal sense. Our goal must be to interpret God’s Word in the sense He intended. It is also true, of course, that some Christians totally misinterpret the book of

Revelation (and other parts of the Bible) by taking just about everything in a symbolic/figurative sense. We need the wisdom of God to rightly interpret His Word. It is clear (I believe) that the Lord will not have a literal sword coming out of His mouth, and it is clear (I believe) that He will not literally smash His unrepentant enemies with a rod of iron, and that He will not literally tread on His enemies with His feet. Since He won't literally tread on His enemies, He probably won't have His robe dipped in their blood. But His enemies will be killed by His judgment, and the wrath of God will be manifested in powerful ways.

Let's go on to Rev. 19:16, "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.'" See Rev. 1:5; 17:14. The expression "King of kings and Lord of lords" is used of God the Father in 1 Tim. 6:15. God the Father has put all things (obviously not including Himself) under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Cor. 15:27, for example).

That completes the excerpt on Rev. 19:12-16. Now we come to Rev. 19:17.

(17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven [The angel is in a central location and cries out with a loud voice so all the birds which fly in midheaven can hear him; cf. Rev. 8:13; 14:6, 7.], **"Come, assemble for the great supper of God; (18) in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great** [cf. Rev. 13:16]."**"** [See Ezek. 39:17-20; Rev. 19:21.] **(19) And I saw the beast** [Antichrist; cf. Rev. 16:13] **and the kings of the earth** [cf. Rev. 16:14; Psalm 2] **and their armies, assembled** [I would translate "gathered," or "gathered together" (with the NIV). It's important to see that this is the same *gathering* spoken of in Rev. 16:12-16, the *gathering* that takes place under the sixth bowl of wrath. The Greek participle used here in 19:19 that I would translate "gathered," or "gathered together," was formed from the Greek verb *sunagō*, the verb used in 16:14 ("to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty"), and in 16:16 ("they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Mageddon"). As we discussed under Rev. 16:17-21, the destruction of Antichrist and his forces gathered to Har-Mageddon seems to be the primary objective, if not the total objective, for the seventh bowl of wrath. It would be possible to think of the judgment and removal of every person still living on the earth at that time (at the end of the seven-year period) who has worshiped Antichrist and taken his mark (see under Rev. 14:17-20). We know that all such people will be removed before the millennial kingdom begins (cf. Rev. 14:9-11).] **to make war against Him who sat upon the horse** [Rev. 19:11; 17:14], **and against His army** [Rev. 19:14; 17:14]. **(20) And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image** [cf. Rev. 13:11-18; 16:13]; **these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.** [See Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8; Isa. 66:24; and Dan. 7:11. These two men apparently are the first men (even the first persons/beings) ever to be thrown into the eternal "lake of fire," which can also be called hell, or Gehenna. On the yet-future eternal fire, also see Matt. 3:12; 13:40-42, 49, 50; 18:8, 9; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 3:17; and Jude 1:7. The

word Gehenna (Greek *geenna*) came from the Hebrew. The Greek noun *geenna* was used twelve times in the New Testament (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; and James 3:6.) It was always translated “hell” by the NASB and NIV; the KJV translated it “hell” nine times and “hell fire” three times.

There is confusion in the Body of Christ because the KJV also always translated the Greek noun *hades* as “hell” in the New Testament. The NASB translates it as “Hades” in all of its ten uses in the New Testament (Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; and 20:13, 14). The NIV has “Hades” five times (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14), “depths” two times (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15), “grave” two times (Acts 2:27, 31), and “hell” one time (Luke 16:23; I wouldn’t translate *hades* as hell in this verse either).

Hades (Hebrew *sheol*) was where the dead went in the days before the new covenant, including the believers (but for them it wasn’t a place of torment). Now that the new covenant is in effect, believers go to heaven at death (heaven in a preliminary form in that the resurrection and glorification haven’t taken place yet); unbelievers still go to *Hades/Sheol* at death. Revelation 20:14 shows that *Hades* will be cast into the lake of fire (into hell/Gehenna) at the end of the millennium, before the eternal state begins.] **(21) And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse** [cf. Rev. 19:15, 19], **and all the birds were filled with their flesh.** [Cf. Rev. 19:17, 18]. [The rest of those who were gathered to Har-Mageddon will be killed. We can also safely assume that any of the people who have worshiped Antichrist and taken his mark who still remain alive at this time, right at the end of Daniel’s 70th week, will also be killed (cf. Rev. 14:9-11), whether they were gathered to Har-Mageddon, or not (cf. Ezek. 39:6). Surely none of them will enter the millennial kingdom. Revelation 20:3 shows, however, that many people from the nations (the remnant of the nations), who aren’t part of true Israel, will be spared to enter the millennium, but none of them will have worshiped Antichrist and his image and taken his mark.]

May God’s will be fully accomplished through this paper and His people be edified!

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