

The Rapture and Beyond

AS SEEN IN REVELATION 1-5

**A Study Concerning The Rapture and
That Which Christians Will Both See
and Experience Beyond the Rapture
Leading into the Messianic Era**

Arlen L. Chitwood

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**The
Lamp Broadcast, Inc.
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According to Rom. 8:18-22, *the entire creation is groaning and travailing in pain, AWAITING “the manifestation of the sons of God.”*

The government of the earth is in view, Christ’s coming reign over the earth is in view, and the subject matter in this section of Romans has to do with a new order of sons about to be brought forth to replace the present order.

Angelic rulers, sons of God, constitute the present order; and Man, forming the coming “manifestation of the sons of God,” will constitute the new order.

Satan and his angels are ABOUT TO BE REPLACED by Christ and His co-heirs, Who will rule from the same place over the same domain as the present rulers — ruling from the heavens over the earth (Eph. 1:20-23; 3:8-11; 6:11-18).

“For unto the angels hath he *NOT* put in subjection the world to come...” (Heb. 2:5; *cf.* Heb. 3:1).

“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him [*accepted* relative to Christ’s reign; *rejected* by Him is the alternate].

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord [at the judgment seat], we persuade men...” (II Cor. 5:9-11a).

Cover Picture: Sunrise, SW Utah, 2016

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By the Same Author —

HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES
COMING IN HIS KINGDOM
WE ARE ALMOST THERE
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
PROPHECY ON MOUNT OLIVET
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM
MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE
MIDDLE EAST PEACE — HOW? WHEN?
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
“NEVER AGAIN!” OR “YES, AGAIN!”
“O SLEEPER! ARISE, CALL!”
ISRAEL — FROM DEATH TO LIFE
BROUGHT FORTH FROM ABOVE
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
SO GREAT SALVATION
THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE
THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS
THE TIME OF THE END
DISTANT HOOFBEATS
IN THE LORD'S DAY
END OF THE DAYS
MOSES AND JOHN
LET US GO ON
RUN TO WIN
BY FAITH
JUDE
RUTH
ESTHER

FOREWORD

When following that taught about the rapture by the Bible teachers in today's Christianity, a person quite often finds himself at odds with that which Scripture has to say and how Scripture handles the matter.

Though many of these individuals correctly hold to what is usually called "a pretribulation rapture of the Church," they invariably begin in the wrong place and reference the wrong Scriptures.

They begin in the New Testament rather than the Old and often go to Scriptures which have nothing to do with the rapture (*e.g.*, I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; II Thess. 2:1, 3; Rev. 3:10), attempting to relate these Scriptures to the rapture, attempting to show or prove a pretribulation removal of Christians through such means.

And, at the same time, they invariably ignore Scriptures in the Old Testament which have to do with the rapture, clearly showing that *Christians have NO PART in the Tribulation* (*e.g.*, Gen. 5-8, 18, 19, 24).

Then, many times they want to argue about or debate the subject, using all the wrong Scriptures, the wrong interpretation, etc.

Suffice it to say, if the matter is approached correctly (and this would not only be true when dealing with the rapture but when dealing with any Biblical subject) *there can be NO ARGUMENT*. And debates relative to the Scriptures...? *Scripture is to be PROCLAIMED, NOT DEBATED!*

The only correct way to approach a study of the rapture in Scripture — or to approach a study of any other subject in Scripture — is to approach the matter *after the same fashion that God originally set it forth in His Word*.

And that would be through beginning at Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. A person MUST begin in the Old Testament where the foundational teachings have been laid, NEVER in the New Testament.

Almost no one though does this, which will speak volumes concerning why Biblical doctrine is so skewed today, why arguments exist, why Christians want to debate subjects...

The central crux of existing arguments and debates concerning the rapture invariably has to do with *the timing of the rapture in relation to the Tribulation*.

Note just one example from the Book of Ruth on the timing of the rapture in this respect — which, if it were properly understood

and taught, *would quell ALL arguments and debates on the subject* — showing the way God originally established matters in His Word. And this one example is dealt with at length in Chapters V-VIII in this book. Thus, little attention will be given to explaining matters here.

In the Book of Ruth, in chapter three (vv. 6-14), *Ruth appears on Boaz's threshing floor BEFORE the redemption of the inheritance*, seen in chapter four (vv. 1-10).

What is so significant about this sequence of events? Actually, this *CAN ONLY BE SEEN as both primary and necessary interpretation for anyone dealing with the timing of the rapture*.

In short, to turn this around, for anyone to successfully argue that the rapture is not a pretribulational event, or win a debate, taking the position that the rapture will occur other than pretribulational, *he will have to, first and foremost, prove that Ruth DID NOT appear on Boaz's threshing floor before the redemption of the inheritance*.

Or, to remain with the Biblical sequence, if an individual wants to show that the rapture is pretribulational, the matter can be done in *A VERY SIMPLE MANNER. All he has to do is let the Word speak for itself on the subject by going to JUST THIS ONE Old Testament type, calling attention to the sequence of events in Ruth chapters three and four*.

But, this is just one of numerous types which show *EXACTLY the same thing, with all of the types on the subject filling in details on a developing word picture, with the antitype in EXACT ACCORD with the types*.

However, this is not what man does today. He usually ignores the types in the Old Testament, ignores a major way God has structured His Word (I Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 1:1, 2), and, consequently, goes to many of the wrong Scriptures in the New Testament.

In conjunction with the preceding, it is often stated that there is no sequence of events in Scripture which, in so many words, presents the rapture occurring preceding the Tribulation.

Genesis presents one sequence at the outset of Scripture (chs. 5-8); Ruth presents another (chs. 3, 4); Revelation presents another at the close of Scripture (chs. 1-5); and there are others.

With the existing confusion on the rapture, maybe it's time for people to *TRY SOMETHING ELSE for a change, something that few seem to try these days*. Maybe it's time for them to *TRY THE SCRIPTURES! They just might find that the Scriptures shed AFLOOD OF LIGHT on the subject*.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction, set up in four parts, covers, in a succinct manner, different ways that the rapture and that which occurs relative to Christians beyond the rapture is dealt with in Scripture. Then, beginning in Chapter I and continuing through the remaining nine chapters, one of these ways, dealt with succinctly in this introduction (Part IV, p. xxiv), is dealt with in a far more extensive manner.

Thus, of necessity, there will be some overlap between that seen in the introductory material and the main body of the book.

PART I

THE MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE

Scripture declares “the rapture” — the removal of Christians from the earth at the end of this dispensation — to be *a mystery*, something often overlooked or glossed over when dealing with this subject.

“Behold, I shew you a mystery...” (I Cor. 15:51ff).

Seeing the rapture introduced in this manner though *relates something quite indispensable about the subject*. The word “mystery” moves matters, at the outset, *to a realm of study not often taken into account when dealing with the rapture — drawing from the Old Testament Scriptures*.

The very fact that the rapture is “a mystery” *inseparably connects the origin of any and all teaching concerning the rapture with Old Testament revelation, particularly with typology in this revelation*.

And to ignore the manner in which the rapture is introduced is *to ignore the God-provided connection with the Old Testament and the typology found in the Old Testament*. It is *to ignore one of the numerous ways God has structured His revelation to man* (I Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 1:1, 2).

And doing this is to ignore a facet of Biblical revelation, which, in this case, is *to ignore information which God has deemed necessary for man to properly understand the rapture*.

Use of the Word “Mystery” in the N.T.

The word “mystery” is used twenty-seven times in the New Testament.

It is used one time in each of the three synoptic gospels, for the same event — *the mysteries of the kingdom* (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).

It is used twenty times in the Pauline epistles.

Paul used the word numerous times to reference *the gospel which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world* (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27).

He used the word to reference *Israel’s blindness*, awaiting the fullness of the Gentiles, to be followed by Israel’s salvation (Rom. 11:25, 26).

And, as previously seen, among several other usages, Paul used the word to reference *the coming resurrection of Christians and the corresponding removal of the living at the end of the present dispensation* (I Cor. 15:51ff).

The word is not used in Hebrews or the general epistles, but it is used four times in the Book of Revelation. It is used of *the seven stars* (1:20), of *God* (10:7), and of *the Woman and the Beast* (17:5, 7).

Meaning of the Word “Mystery” in the N.T.

The word “mystery” is an Anglicized form of the Greek word *musterion*. The word has to do with *something hidden, a secret*. It has to do with *something beyond human comprehension, something which cannot be explained by human endeavors, human ingenuity*.

In the light of the exact meaning of this word, note R.C.H. Lenski’s comments in his New Testament Greek word studies on the use of *musterion* in Matt. 13:11:

“These are ‘mysteries’ [the mysteries of the kingdom] because men by nature and by their own abilities are unable to discover and to know them. It must ‘be given’ to a man ‘to know’ them. This divine giving is done by means of revelation...”

In this respect, seeing that the word “mystery” is used of the rap-

ture, one must then understand the meaning of this word and how it is used in the New Testament. Then, one can proceed from that point and know that matters concerning things dealt with through the use of this word *cannot be explained through human comprehension. Divine intervention must be involved.*

God must make things pertaining to a mystery known to an individual; and God makes things known today through *one means alone — through His Word.*

Thus, understanding what is involved in the use of the word “mystery” and that this word is used to reference the rapture, one can know that the only possible way to learn things about the rapture is *through Divine revelation, i.e., through the Word of God, through comparing Scripture with Scripture.*

And this MUST be done, not just through using the New Testament, but particularly by going back to the Old Testament as well. As will be shown, the word “mystery,” in reality, reflects back far more on Old Testament Scripture than on New Testament Scripture.

“A mystery” in the New Testament does not have to do with something completely new, something not dealt with at all or unknown in the Old Testament (a common misconception which is often taught concerning the meaning of the word).

This, of course, couldn't be true, for, there is nothing in the New that cannot be found after some form or fashion in the Old (*ref.* next section in this first part of the introduction).

Rather, “a mystery” in the New Testament has to do with *an opening up and an unveiling of something previously introduced and dealt with in the Old Testament.* “A mystery” has to do with *additional revelation, commentary, on that already seen in the Old Testament, allowing the Old Testament revelation to be fully opened up and revealed (e.g., note that a full revelation of the Son in the Book of Revelation [Rev. 1:1, the announced subject matter of the book, stated at the outset] allows the “mystery of God” [Rev. 10:7] to be correspondingly fully opened up as well, for Christ is God manifested in the flesh).*

And the preceding is exactly what is in view through referring to “the rapture” by the use of the word *mystery.* There is an opening up, an unveiling of that previously revealed concerning the rapture, which, of course, would necessitate prior revelation on the subject.

This alone would tell a person that *foundational material for both CAN, and MUST, be found in the Old Testament, for, again, there is NOTHING in the New that does not have its roots someplace in the Old.*

The entirety of the Old Testament is about *the person and work of Jesus Christ* (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-47). And the New Testament, continuing from the Old — with “the Word” (the Old Testament Scriptures) *becoming* “flesh” (John 1:1, 2, 14) — must be viewed *in exactly the same light.*

Nothing in the New Not Previously Seen in the Old

According to John 1:1, 2, 14, the incarnation was simply the Word (the Old Testament Scriptures) becoming flesh. There is *the written Word* (which is living [Heb. 4:12]), and there is *the living Word* (which is the written Word, inseparably connected with the Word made flesh).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God...

And the Word was made flesh [*lit.*, ‘the Word became flesh’]...”
(John 1:1, 2, 14a).

For example, as previously seen, the Book of Revelation — which begins, “The revelation [‘opening up,’ ‘unveiling’] of Jesus Christ...” — is simply an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures *through a Person, through the Word which became flesh.* And any thought of an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures in this respect extending to and having to include an opening up of the New Testament Scriptures as well could only be *completely out of place, for there can be NOTHING in the New that cannot be found, after some fashion, in the Old.* If there were, *there COULD NOT be the necessary corresponding completeness between the written Word and the living Word at a time before the New Testament even began to be penned.*

The New Testament, *at any point, of necessity,* can only have to do with revelation which can be seen as having an Old Testament base. Revelation in the New Testament *must* bear the same inseparable connection with the Word made flesh as revelation in the Old Testament bears.

Thus, the existence of the Word made flesh *preceding* the existence of the New Testament clearly relates the truth of the matter concerning the content of the New Testament. *The New CAN ONLY BE an opening up and revealing of that previously seen in the Old.* To state or think otherwise is to connect the Word made flesh with one Testament and disconnect Him from the other — *an impossibility.*

In short, *the Old Testament is complete in and of itself*; the Word made flesh incorporates *this same completeness*, and the New Testament adds *nothing per se* to this completeness. Any supposed subsequent addition would be impossible, for *this would be adding to that which God had already deemed complete through the incarnation, the Word made flesh.*

(Note again that the Word became flesh before any part of the N.T. was written. Since the incarnation [the Word becoming flesh] is simply the O.T. Scriptures being manifested in another form, completeness in God's revelation of Himself, His plans, and His purposes *has to be seen in the O.T. Scriptures alone.*

If this is not the case, if the N.T. Scriptures add anything not seen after one form or fashion in the O.T., then the Word becoming flesh before a single word of the N.T. had been penned *could only be seen as incomplete.*)

The preceding is why Christ, shortly after His resurrection, began at "Moses and all the prophets" (an expression covering the whole of the O.T.) when He appeared to and began *making Himself known* to the two disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31). The living Word, using the written Word, began putting together different facets of *a word picture pertaining to Himself.* And He could have gone to *any part of the Old Testament* to accomplish the matter, for *the whole of the Old Testament was/is about Him.*

Through this means, those being addressed would be able to see one (the word picture) alongside the other (the Word made flesh). And, comparing the two, they would be able to come into an understanding of not only *the identity of the One in their midst* but an understanding of *that which had occurred in Jerusalem during the past several days as well.*

This is the manner in which God has put matters together in His

Word, making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to man. And this is why the Son — God manifest in the flesh, the Word made flesh — undertook matters after exactly the same fashion when making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to the two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection.

Then, the same thing is seen when He appeared to ten of the eleven remaining disciples (with Thomas absent) in Jerusalem a short time later (Luke 24:36-45; John 20:19-29).

And this is the manner in which all Scripture *must* be studied. The New Testament is simply an opening up of the Old Testament, whether dealing with the written Word or with the Word made flesh.

And when dealing with the rapture, particularly since it is referred to as “a mystery,” any proper study on the subject *MUST begin in the Old Testament, for that’s where all the basics can be found.*

Begin in the Old Testament, and you won’t go wrong. Begin elsewhere, and you likely will go wrong.

PART II

AS SEEN IN THE O.T. WORD PICTURE, FORMED FROM THE TYPES

The complete Old Testament word picture pertaining to the removal of Christians at the end of the present dispensation, commonly called “the rapture,” encompasses a number of types.

The Old Testament word picture begins with the account of “Enoch” being removed from the earth preceding the Flood (Gen. 5-11a) and progresses from that point through other types such as the accounts of “Lot and his family” (Lot, his wife, and his two virgin daughters) being removed from Sodom preceding the destruction of the cities of the plain (Gen. 18, 19), “Rebekah” being removed from Mesopotamia following the search for and procurement of the bride for Isaac but preceding Abraham’s remarriage (Gen. 24, 25), and “Ruth” appearing on Boaz’s threshing floor preceding the redemption of the inheritance (Ruth 3, 4).

Each type presents *a different facet of the matter, showing a different part of the complete Old Testament word picture, with the*

complete picture being seen only through viewing all of the types on the subject together, comparing Scripture with Scripture in this respect.

Enoch

In the type dealing with *Enoch* in Genesis chapter five, the genealogy in this chapter moves through *ten generations* — from Adam to Noah. Within this genealogy, Enoch was *the seventh* from Adam, and Noah *the tenth*.

“Seven” and “ten” are two of several numbers used in Scripture to show *completeness*, with each showing a different aspect of completeness. “Seven” shows *the completeness of that which is in view*, and “ten” shows *numerical completeness*. In each case, at a terminal point in each of the two sets of generations — *seven generations* extending to Enoch, and *ten generations* extending to Noah — Divine intervention into the affairs of man is seen.

At a terminal point in the first set of generations, a man was removed from the earth alive; then, at a subsequent terminal point in the second set of generations, a man (along with his family) passed safely through a time of destruction, with the remainder of the world perishing during this time.

That to which this introductory, overall type points (the antitype) is simple and easy to see, though this type only presents particular facets of the complete picture.

“Enoch” being removed from the earth preceding the Flood typifies *Christians* being removed from the earth preceding the coming Tribulation; and “Noah” passing safely through the Flood typifies *Israel* passing safely through the coming Tribulation, with Gentile world power destroyed and Israel then occupying the nation’s proper place in relation to the remainder of mankind (*cf.* Gen. 9:26, 27; 10:10; 11:1-9).

The things seen in Gen. 5-11 form a foundational type upon which all subsequent Scripture dealing with the subject must rest (similar to Gen. 1:1-2:3 forming a foundational framework upon which all subsequent Scripture rests). And, in complete accord with that established in this foundational type, the things foreshadowed by events in the type will occur in the antitype *when matters have been brought to completion relative to both the Church and Israel.*

The Church at this time, typified by “Enoch,” *the seventh from Adam*, will be removed; and Israel at this time, typified by “Noah,” *the tenth from Adam*, will pass safely through the worldwide destruction which will follow the Church’s removal. At a future time, God will intervene in the affairs of man once again, supernaturally bringing matters foreshadowed by events in this complete, overall type to pass.

This is the first part of the picture presented in Scripture. Then, from here, to begin seeing a more complete, developing picture, an individual has to move to subsequent types dealing with the subject.

Each subsequent type presents a different facet of the picture and further adds to that which, in the end, sets forth *a complete word picture, given to shed light upon and help explain the antitype*.

Lot and His Family, Rebekah

Lot and his family, in Gen. 18, 19, were removed prior to the destruction of the cities of the plain; and in Gen. 24, *Rebekah* was removed following a successful search for a bride for Isaac (a search and removal which followed Sarah’s death [ch. 23] but preceded Abraham again taking a wife [ch. 25]).

The first type (from Gen. 18, 19) clearly reveals Christians being removed *prior to the destruction of Gentile world power* (cf. Luke 17:28, 29), and the second type (from Gen. 24, 25) clearly reveals Christians being removed *prior to God’s restoration of Israel* (cf. Rom. 11:25, 26).

Some students of the Word, going no farther than this in the types — working from an incomplete word picture — have concluded that the Church is destined to pass through most or all of the Tribulation. They look upon the future destruction depicted by the Flood and the destruction of the cities of the plain as foreshadowing a destruction occurring at or near the end of the Tribulation. And, understanding matters in this respect, they look upon Enoch’s removal preceding the Flood and Lot and his family’s removal preceding the destruction of the cities of the plain as typifying Christians being removed at or near the end of the Tribulation, preceding a destruction occurring at this time.

Then, the antitype of Rebekah’s removal preceding God’s restoration of Israel in Gen. 24, 25 would be understood in a similar sense, for God will not actually restore Israel until the Tribulation has run its course.

Ruth

However, when the typology from the Book of Ruth is added to the word picture — *showing Ruth appearing on Boaz's threshing floor prior to the redemption of the inheritance* — viewing this type in the light of the antitype (I Thess. 4:13-5:10; Rev. 1:10ff; 4:1ff), additional light is cast upon particularly *the timing of events shown by the previous types*.

And this additional light — a vital and necessary part of the complete word picture — will show, beyond question, *that any interpretative ideology which uses the previous types to teach that the Church will go through any part of the Tribulation is erroneous*.

The type in the Book of Ruth and the antitype in the Book of Revelation clearly show *EXACTLY the same chronology* — *the Church appearing on Christ's threshing floor, at His judgment seat (cf. Ruth 3, Rev. 1-4), prior to the redemption of the inheritance (cf. Ruth 4, Rev. 5ff)*.

The Church is seen being dealt with following the rapture in Rev. 1:10ff and 4:1ff. Then the scroll containing the terms for the redemption of the inheritance is introduced in ch. 5, with the redemption of the inheritance brought to pass through the breaking of the seals on this scroll in chs. 6ff (*ref. Part IV in this introduction, along with the main body of the book [Chapters I-IX]*).

And the judgments brought to pass through the breaking of the seals on this scroll, as clearly seen in Rev. 6-19, have to do with *ALL of the judgments occurring throughout the seven-year Tribulation and immediately afterwards, at the time of Christ's return*, not just those occurring near or shortly following the end of the Tribulation.

Also, in line with the timing of some of the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll, contrary to that which is widely taught, *Christ's bride WILL NOT, His bride CANNOT, be with Him at the time of His return*.

Christ WILL NOT have completed the redemption of the inheritance at the time He returns at the end of the Tribulation. The judgments dealt with when the seventh seal is broken *WILL NOT occur UNTIL FOLLOWING His return, FOLLOWING the Tribulation (i.e., the judgments occurring when the seven trumpets are sounded and the seven vials are poured out [two descriptions of the same judgments])*.

(This is made plain several ways:

Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation is seen dealt with three different places in the Book of Revelation — at the time of the breaking of the sixth seal [before the breaking of the seventh seal; 6:12-17], again in chapter 14 [vv. 14-21], and again in chapter 19 [vv. 11-21]. All three references describe different things about the same scene, which occurs at the end of the Tribulation.

Then, several of the judgments, clearly necessitating Christ's presence on earth — which has to do with the gathering of the nations for, and including, what is often called "the battle of Armageddon" — are judgments of the seventh seal [the sixth and seventh trumpets and vials (9:12-10:7; 11:15-19; 16:12-21)].

Thus, to see Christ's bride accompanying Him at the time of His return would run counter to that which Scripture has to say about Christians having any part in the redemption of the inheritance (which covers the complete Tribulation and time shortly following), for Christ's dealings with Israel and the nations at the time of His return are part and parcel with completing this redemption.

Ruth was NOT with Boaz during any part of the redemption of the inheritance. Nor, remaining with that seen in this type, can Christ's bride be with Him during any part of the redemption of the inheritance.

Aside from the preceding, *there is absolutely NOTHING in Scripture which would lead one to believe that Christ's bride will be with Him at this time* (this is usually taught mainly through a somewhat strained interpretation of I Thess. 4:17 and Rev. 19:14). And the only reason that the subject is even being mentioned in this introduction to the book is because Christ's bride returning back to the earth with Him is something almost universally taught throughout Christendom, though taught not only without any Scriptural basis whatsoever but also in spite of that which Scripture does have to say on the subject.

Note two other types with respect to the place occupied by the bride at the time of Christ's return.

In Genesis, Asenath, Joseph's wife, was in another part of the palace when Joseph dealt with his brethren (chs. 44, 45); *she was NOT with him.*

And, in Exodus, Zipporah, Moses' wife, only went part way with Moses when he returned to Egypt to deal with his brethren (chs. 3,

4); *she was NOT with him at this time in Egypt.*

Nor can Christ's bride be with Him at this time in the world.

Then, as previously seen, the type in this same respect is dealt with in a different manner in the Book of Ruth, though the matter remains the same as previously seen with Joseph's and Moses' dealings with their brethren.

And it has to remain the same, for the matter was set in Genesis and continued after the same manner in Exodus.

(Note: In the preceding respect, *the typology of the Book of Ruth ALONE [ref. the foreword] will show that the Church CANNOT POSSIBLY be here on earth during ANY PART of the Tribulation, or at the time Christ completes the redemption of the inheritance by completing the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the scroll FOLLOWING His return.*

Chapters V-VIII in this book deal with the redemption of the inheritance in far more detail. The material is only being introduced at this point in the book — *material which is vital to a proper understanding of the rapture and that which follows, placing everything in a proper perspective.*)

Harmony, the Complete Word Picture

And it should go without saying that *harmony must exist* in the chronology of events seen in the types in the Books of Genesis and Ruth.

The chronology of events seen in these types must be in complete agreement with one another, along with that seen in the antitype in the New Testament — an agreement which will show the Church being removed PRECEDING any part of the Tribulation, necessitating the whole of the Tribulation being in view through the destruction depicted by events during both Noah's and Lot's day.

In this respect, Enoch's and Lot's removal, preceding respective destructions during their day, foreshadows *the removal of Christians preceding any part of the coming Tribulation.*

And, along with the preceding, viewing matters *from the standpoint of the complete word picture, along with the antitype*, this removal must be seen as one which will include *ALL CHRISTIANS*, faithful

and unfaithful alike (that is, not only those having walked with God, *as Enoch*, but also those having involved themselves in the affairs of the world, *as Lot*).

Scripture plainly states:

“For we must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ [note ALL seven Churches in Christ’s presence in Rev. 1:12, 13, 20, following v. 10]; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord [Where? Note the context. This terror occurs *at the judgment seat* (cf. Heb. 10:30, 31)], we persuade men...” (II Cor. 5:10, 11a).

The division of Christians relative to matters pertaining to faithfulness or unfaithfulness, *according to Scripture*, occurs *at the judgment seat following the removal of Christians from the earth*, not by a supposed selective resurrection and/or rapture (a companion erroneous teaching pertaining to Christians going through the Tribulation [not all Christians in this case, but many]).

And it is plain from the chronology of events set forth in the type in the Book of Ruth and in the antitype in the Book of Revelation (the same chronology, of necessity, is seen in both) that events surrounding the judgment seat *must occur at the end of the present dispensation, preceding the Tribulation*.

Thus, a complete word picture on the one hand and that which the word picture foreshadows on the other hand is *one of the major ways that God has structured His Word*; and through this structure, God has revealed *numerous things* which He would have man know about His plans and purposes.

Accordingly, to arrive at a proper understanding of the things which God has revealed, man *MUST* study the Word after the fashion in which it has been structured. He *MUST* set the complete word picture from the Old Testament alongside the antitype in the New Testament and run all the checks and balances, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

ONLY in this manner can man avail himself of a major part of God’s revealed Word to find out exactly what the Scriptures themselves teach.

ONLY in this manner can man avail himself of the complete Word picture EXACTLY as God originally set it forth in His Word.

That which man may have to say about anything within the whole of the matter is of *NO MOMENT*. Only that which Scripture reveals is of *ANY MOMENT whatsoever*, and that which Scripture reveals is of *INFINITE MOMENT*.

PART III

AS SEEN IN THE N.T. ANTITYPE, IN I THESSALONIANS 4, 5

In I Thess. 4:16, 17, the Lord Himself is seen descending from heaven, though not coming all the way to the earth. Christ, after descending to a place above the earth, will “shout” (*lit.*, ‘issue a command’). The voice of “an archangel” (a chief angel [*cf.* Dan. 10:13, 21]) will sound, and “a trumpet” will be blown.

Resulting from Christ’s command, “the dead in Christ” (those having died throughout the 2,000-year dispensation, Christians) will be raised. Christ, Who is “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25), *must be present* to give the command in order for the dead to be raised (*cf.* John 5:28, 29; 11:25, 43). Then, living believers — those Christians alive at the end of the present dispensation — will be caught up together with resurrected believers to meet the Lord in the air.

The One New Man

Near the end of the past dispensation, God interrupted His dealings with Israel seven years short of completion, set Israel aside, and began to call *an entirely new nation* into existence. This new nation is not Jewish; nor is this new nation Gentile. Rather, this new nation is comprised of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, who have become *new creations* “in Christ” (II Cor. 5:17); and these *new creations* “in Christ” form *one new man* (Eph. 2:11-15).

During the present dispensation, God is dealing with this *new man*, not with Israel. And this *new man* — referred to as *a nation* (*cf.* Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10) — is exactly as Scripture describes. *It is a nation completely separate from all other nations on earth — separate from either Israel or the Gentile nations* (Gal. 3:26-29).

And God has set aside an entire dispensation in which He will deal *solely with this new man*.

(In the preceding respect, there is *absolutely no place* in Christendom for distinctions to be made between saved Jews and saved Gentiles. Both are *new creations* “in Christ,” part of *the one new man*, wherein distinctions between those comprising this *new man* cannot exist [Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-15; 3:1-6].

But in Christendom today, completely contrary to Scripture, certain individuals from both groups [from saved Jews, and from saved Gentiles] attempt to form distinctions between the two groups.

For example, there are congregations of saved Jews calling themselves “Messianic Jews” or “completed Jews” [both misnomers], distinguishing themselves from saved Gentiles. And there are groups comprised of saved Gentiles who look askance at saved Jews, somewhat forcing these saved Jews to meet together in separate places, often forming the previously mentioned “Messianic congregations.”

All of this — by saved Jews or by saved Gentiles — forms no more than *vain attempts to build up a middle wall which has been broken down by Christ Himself* [Eph. 2:14].

And, as well, there is *absolutely no place* in Christendom for the *new creation* “in Christ” to go back to the old creation in Jacob [cf. Isa. 43:1, 7; II Cor 5:17] and attempt to bring things from this old creation over into the new — the robes, the candles, rituals, attempting to keep the Sabbath and/or the Jewish festivals, etc. [cf. Matt. 9:16, 17].

And a different form of the preceding is equally true, something often seen among the saved from certain Jewish groups — saved Jews viewing themselves as *a saved part of the Jewish nation, a first-fruit*, rather than a part of *the one new man*, attempting to involve themselves in things belonging to the old creation in Jacob.

[Note that the preceding (last paragraph) *WILL BE TRUE of the 144,000 in Rev. 7, 14* (saved during the last seven years of the previous Jewish dispensation, following the completion of the present dispensation and the removal of *the one new man* via the rapture).

But this is *NOT TRUE AT ALL of saved Jews during the present dispensation*, preceding this time. Saved Jews during the present time are part of *the one new man* and will be removed with saved Gentiles, equally part of *the one new man*, with *NO DISTINCTION (now or then) existing between the two*].

God has set Israel aside for a dispensation; and He is, today, dealing with *the one new man* “in Christ,” not with Israel. And for those comprising *the one new man* [whether saved Jews or saved Gentiles] to go back to Israel [a nation set aside] and bring things having to do with this nation over into things having to do with *the one new man* is not only *COMPLETELY OUT OF PLACE* but serves to break down distinctions which God established between the two creations, adding to an already existing confusion.)

The Spirit of God is in the world today searching for a bride for God’s Son, with the search being conducted among those comprising *the one new man*, with *NO DISTINCTION* made between saved Jews and saved Gentiles. And once the Spirit has completed this work, *the one new man* will be removed, with a view to this *new man* being dealt with — again, with *NO DISTINCTION* made between saved Jews and saved Gentiles — in relation to the reason he had been called into existence.

Then, and *ONLY THEN*, God will resume His dealing with Israel (during seven unfulfilled years, completing not only Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week but Man’s Day as well).

God’s dealings with both *Israel* (*the old creation in Jacob*) and *the Church* (*the new nation, the one new man, the new creation “in Christ”*) *MUST be kept separate and distinct from one another*. To have God dealing with either *Israel* during the present dispensation, or *the Church* once God resumes His dealings with Israel, is *completely foreign* to the way in which Scripture sets forth God’s dispensational dealings with man.

Israel has been set aside, and God is presently dealing with a new nation; and, following the completion of God’s present dealings with this new nation, He will remove this nation, turn back to Israel, and complete His dispensational dealings with Israel. The whole of the matter is really that simple.

The one new man — comprised of those “in Christ,” *all Christians* — will be removed at the end of the dispensation. And this will be for reasons having to do with two nations — both *the one new man* and *Israel*.

God will complete His dealings with one nation (*the one new man*), *in the heavens*, in relation to this nation’s calling; and God will

complete His dealings with the other nation (*Israel*), *on the earth*, in relation to this nation's calling.

The former nation possesses *a heavenly calling* and the latter *an earthly calling*; and it is only fitting that God will complete His dealings with each *in the place to which they have been called*.

The preceding is the clear teaching seen in both the Old Testament types and the New Testament antitypes, or anyplace else in Scripture. Biblical distinctions pertaining to both *Israel and the Church MUST be maintained, and Scripture MUST be allowed to speak for itself in that which has been revealed about both*.

In the Lord's Day

If the entire *one new man* "in Christ" (comprised of both faithful and unfaithful Christians living throughout the dispensation) was not removed at the end of the dispensation (as seen in I Thess. 4:13-18), Paul could not have written that which is recorded in the verses which immediately follow (5:1-9). These verses continue from chapter four and have to do with both faithful and unfaithful Christians, removed from Man's Day and placed together *at the same time and place in the Lord's Day*.

Man's Day has to do with man upon the earth throughout a 6,000-year period. It has to do with that time when matters have been allowed to remain under Satan's control, with man having his way and sway in the kingdom under Satan.

On the other hand, *the Lord's Day* has to do with the Lord conducting affairs in His kingdom *throughout all time — past, present, and future* ("future," to the end of the Millennium, remaining within the time-frame set forth in the opening thirty-four verses in Genesis).

The Lord's Day runs concurrent with Man's Day for 6,000 years, though not encompassing affairs on earth during this time (when fallen man finds himself associated with Satan's rule and reign). Only when Man's Day ends, will the Lord's Day encompass affairs on the earth; and it will do so for a succeeding 1,000 years (for Christ and His co-heirs will then rule and reign over the earth, in the stead of Satan and his angels).

Note that Abraham, through provided revelation (Gen. 22:4-14;

Heb. 11:8-19) and following death, saw the Lord's Day (John 8:56). This was almost 4,000 years ago, in the middle of Man's Day, as it existed upon the earth.

This would be true because Abraham, at both times, found himself disconnected from Man's Day upon the earth, with the Lord's Day in view. He either found himself looking beyond Man's Day into the Lord's Day (through God's revealed Word) or removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day (following death).

And exactly the same thing would be true relative to Christians, whether through provided revelation or following death during the present time or when Christians are removed from the earth at the time of the rapture. Events pertaining to the rapture show this to be the case in no uncertain terms, with Christians removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day (while Man's Day continues on the earth).

Christians removed from the earth at the time of the rapture will find themselves in the Lord's Day (I Thess. 4:13-5:4), though Man's Day will still have at least seven years to run upon earth. And I Thess. 5:1ff clearly shows that the rapture (4:13-18) will include both faithful and unfaithful Christians. Both are seen together in the Lord's Day, with faithful Christians experiencing "salvation" and unfaithful Christians experiencing "sudden destruction," "wrath" (vv. 3, 9).

And either "salvation" or "wrath" would be in relation to that in view — *occupying or being denied a position with Christ in the kingdom.*

(There is a common but fallacious interpretation of I Thess. 5:1-4 which relates these verses to unsaved individuals left behind at the time of the rapture, to go through the Tribulation [with the advocates of this teaching referring to *the Tribulation* as "the Day of the Lord," or "the Lord's Day"].

This though cannot possibly be correct. Not only is such a teaching *out of line with the context* but the Lord's Day cannot begin on earth *until after Man's Day has run its course*. It cannot begin *until the Tribulation is over*.

Scripture is quite clear concerning the time when the Lord's Day begins on earth. The Lord's Day begins on earth in connection with judgments at the time Christ returns to the earth [not at some point in time during the Tribulation, preceding Christ's return], and the Lord's Day will continue as long as this present earth exists.

Time in relation to the succeeding new heavens and new earth, following the Messianic Era, is called “the Day of God,” *when God will be “all in all”* [Joel 2:27-32; 3:9-16; Mal. 4:5, 6; I Cor. 15:24-28; II Thess. 2:2, 3; II Peter 3:10-13].)

Only when Man’s Day ends — at the end of the Tribulation, at the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week — can the Lord’s Day replace Man’s Day upon the earth. At that time, Man’s Day will end on earth, and the Lord’s Day will begin on earth.

This change will occur because *the Lord will then be present and reign supreme over the earth*, with the whole of God’s affairs in His kingdom being brought under the scope of time referred to by the Lord’s Day.

PART IV

AS SEEN IN THE N.T. ANTITYPE, IN REVELATION 1-4

Christians at the time of the rapture will be removed from the earth to appear before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven. And events of this judgment will occur *immediately following the rapture, before events of the Tribulation begin on earth*.

Christ is not judging today. Rather, He is ministering as *High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of Christians*. And He will not act in the capacity of Judge *until* He completes His present high priestly ministry, which will last throughout the present dispensation.

Thus, Christians will not be judged *until the present dispensation has run its course and Christ returns for His Church*. Once these things occur, the judgment of Christians will ensue; and this judgment, as seen in the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation, will be completed before God resumes His national dealings with Israel during the Tribulation.

Subject Matter and Structure of Revelation

The Book of Revelation has to do with *an unveiling of the Son, which has been made known a certain way*, through the means stated in the English text (KJV), “signified.” This is simply another way, as

through “signs” (a similarly related way), or through the types, that God has made His Word known to man.

And, when studying the Book of Revelation, if individuals would give more thought to the opening verse of the book — relating the subject matter of the book, along with how the book has been structured — *they would have far, far less trouble with interpretation in the book.*

The word “signified” (v. 1) — “...and he sent and *signified* it by his angel unto his servant John” — relating how the book has been structured, is a translation of the Greek word *semaino*, which is the verb form of the word for “sign” (*semeion*). The Apostle John introduced, opened up, and developed matters in his gospel account through *signs*. And in the Book of Revelation, he introduced, opened up, and developed matters *in a quite similar manner.*

God, throughout His revelation to man, shows an affinity for the use of *types, numbers, signs, and metaphors* to make Himself, His plans, and His purposes known. And *this MUST be recognized*, else man will find himself failing to go beyond the simple letter of Scripture (*cf.* II Cor. 3:6-4:6).

Man, for example, will find himself understanding *Biblical history* but failing to understand the God-designed *typical significance* of that history. Or if *numbers, signs, or metaphors* are used — which they often are — he will find himself failing to understand the God-designed significance of these as well.

At the very outset, God makes it clear that the Book of Revelation has been structured in a *particular manner*, closely related to the manner in which the Spirit had led John to structure his gospel.

The Gospel of John was built around eight signs, taken from among the numerous signs which Jesus had previously performed during His earthly ministry; and, as evident from the revealed purpose for these signs (John 20:30, 31), *they were recorded and directed to the Jewish people during the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel* (which occurred between 33 A.D. and about 62 A.D.).

To understand how the word *semaino*, translated “signified,” is used introducing the Book of Revelation, note how John uses this same word three times in his gospel (12:33; 18:32; 21:19). The context leading into each verse provides an illustrative statement which allows that stated in the verse to be understood.

Note the first of these three usages, within context:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying [from *semaino*] what death he should die”
(vv. 32, 33).

Aside from Rev. 1:1 and the three verses in John’s gospel, the only other usages of the word *semaino* in the New Testament are in Acts 11:28; 25:27. And the same thought is set forth through the use of the word in these two passages, though the illustrative statement is inferred in the first usage.

Thus, “signified,” a translation of *semaino*, has to do with making something known through a manner which carries the reader *from a somewhat indirect means to a direct means, using an illustrative statement as a means of explaining a matter.*

This is seen accomplished in the Book of Revelation centrally through the use of numerous *numbers* and *metaphors*, though *other illustrative means* are used as well. And all illustrative means of this nature in the book are, they would have to be, in line with the meaning of the word *semaino* and the manner in which this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

Christ as Judge

In Rev. 1:13, Christ is seen dressed in the type garments worn by both a *priest* and a *judge*; but the position of the girdle about the breasts rather than around the waist indicates that Christ, in this passage, is exercising a *judicial* rather than a priestly role. A priest would be girded about the waist, signifying *service*; but the girdle placed about the shoulders or breasts indicates a *magisterial* function (*cf.* John 13:2-5; Rev. 15:6).

Aside from the preceding, the entire scene is *judicial*, not priestly. *Brass, fire, and a sword* are mentioned in connection with Christ’s appearance, which speak of *judicial activity*. And Christ’s countenance is described by the expression, “as the sun shineth in his strength,” which has to do with His glory, to be manifested during that coming day of His power (a 1,000-year period of judging those upon the earth

[cf. Ps. 2:1-9; Rev. 2:26, 27]).

Then, more information is given, which will help to ascertain exactly what is being depicted by the scene at hand. The Apostle John was transported into “*the Lord’s day [the Day of the Lord]*” (v. 10), and the vision of Christ which he saw depicts Christ as He will appear *following* the completion of His high priestly work, *anticipating* His long-awaited regal work.

The entire scene in Rev. 1:13-18 is prophetic, depicting Christ as *Judge in the midst of the seven Churches at the conclusion of the present dispensation, anticipating that coming day when He will exercise governmental power and authority over the earth.*

The chronological arrangement of events opening the Book of Revelation sets forth the fact that God will deal with the Church in judgment *before* He deals with Israel and the nations after this fashion (cf. I Peter 4:17-19). The Church will be removed from the earth and taken into the heavens; and the Church will be dealt with judicially before the Tribulation begins on earth.

A review of the first five chapters of the Book of Revelation reveals that there will have to be an interval of time between the removal of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation. That is, the present dispensation will run its course, the Church will be removed, and certain events will then transpire in heaven (while the Church is in heaven) before the Tribulation begins on earth (which, when it begins, will fulfill seven uncompleted years of the previous dispensation).

These events — occurring while the Church is in heaven, preceding the beginning of the Tribulation on earth — concern *the Church coming under judgment* (as revealed in chapters one through three); and these events also concern *the relinquishment of crowns* which Christians will wear during the Messianic Era (ch. 4), along with *preparations to redeem the domain* over which Christians will rule at this time (ch. 5).

(The event marking the beginning of the Tribulation on earth is not the removal of the Church, as is often taught, but the ratifying of a seven-year covenant between the man of sin and many in Israel. The Tribulation, which will ensue following the ratifying of this covenant, will last exactly seven years, completing the full four hundred ninety years of Daniel’s prophecy concerning Seventy Sevens “determined” upon the Jewish people [Dan. 9:24-27].)

The Complete Church

The seven Churches in the presence of Christ in Revelation chapter one depict *the Church as a whole* coming under judgment at the conclusion of the present dispensation; and the fact that this judgment will occur in heaven and has to do with issues pertaining to the judgment seat of Christ becomes evident as one studies the opening chapters of this book.

“Seven” in Scripture is *God’s number*. It is a number showing *completion*. It is used more specifically to show *the completion of that which is in view*, and in this case, the Church is in view, with “seven Churches” showing *the complete Church* (all Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike).

The seven Churches named in the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation, though referring to seven existing Churches in the Gentile world during the first century (in Asia [1:4]), depict *completion in relation to the Church*. These seven Churches represent Christianity *as a whole* — both on earth during the present dispensation (chs. 2, 3) and in heaven at the conclusion of the dispensation (chs. 1-4, as a whole).

Chapter one introduces the matter at hand, (judgment awaiting *all Christians*); chapters two and three then continue from chapter one and form a commentary on this judgment; chapter four has to do with events following this judgment but preceding the Tribulation; and chapter five deals with the redemption of the inheritance and leads into that section of the book covering the Tribulation (6:1ff).

(Note: When studying the Book of Revelation, look for the book’s own built-in interpretation, as in chapters one through three. A unit of truth will be given; then, following Scriptures will provide commentary upon this unit of truth, allowing the Holy Spirit Himself to interpret that which He gave through John [*e.g.*, cf. 12:1-6 and 12:7-17; cf. 12:1-17 and chs. 13, 14; cf. 12:3; 13:1-18; 17:1-7 and 17:8-18].

In relation to the subject at hand [chapters 1-3], note that the complete Church is introduced in chapter one, at the end of the dispensation, removed from Man’s Day on earth and placed in the Lord’s Day in heaven. And only *ONE THING is in view concerning the Church at this time, a time immediately following the rapture — JUDGMENT*.

Chapter one forms the revealed unit of truth. Then chapters two and three form commentary on this revealed unit of truth as it was previously introduced and presented in chapter one, *continuing with THE SAME central subject previously dealt with — JUDGMENT*.

To deal with these opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation after any other fashion is to deal with them after a fashion *alien to both their contextual connection and how Scripture is structured throughout.*

For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapter III, “Judgment in the Lord’s Day,” in this book.)

The trumpet beckoning to John in Rev. 4:1 can only be synonymous with the trumpet in Rev. 1:10. Chapter four drops back and begins at the same place as previously seen in chapter one — with the removal of the Church to be judged.

In this respect — because of the revealed events which follow in each instance — the trumpet in these two sections can only be the trumpet which will be heard when the Church is removed from the earth at the end of this dispensation, subsequently appearing in the presence of Christ to be judged, as revealed in chapters one through three (*cf.* I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16-5:9). Then, sequences of events, revealed throughout the remainder of the book, begin to unfold.

John, transported into the Lord’s Day and moved into a future time in chapter one, was instructed to record that which he saw and send the record to seven existing Churches in Asia. These Churches, along with a brief description of each, are seen on earth in chapters two and three; but the scene back in chapter one, as well, has them in the presence of Christ in heaven, at the end of the dispensation, about to come under judgment.

An overcomer’s promise is listed for each Church in chapters two and three, and in chapter one the Churches are seen as they are about to be judged relative to *works* in relation to these overcomer’s promises. Chapters two and three not only furnish the background material to show *why* and *on what basis* the judgment set forth in chapter one will occur, but, as previously seen, these chapters actually *have to do with that judgment.*

Note that several of these seven epistles begin with descriptions of Christ from chapter one, *as Judge* (*e.g.*, 2:1, 12, 18). Then note the structure of each of the epistles to the seven Churches. All seven are structured *exactly the same way:*

- 1) I know thy works.
- 2) Judgment is then seen to be on the basis of these works.
- 3) This judgment is with a view to showing whether the Christian has overcome or has been overcome.

4) There is an overcomer's promise concluding each epistle; and these overcomer's promises are *millennial*, *NOT eternal*, in their scope of fulfillment.

(That the overcomer's promises are fulfilled in a Millennial rather than eternal respect is *really NOT open to question*, many notwithstanding.)

Aside from these promises having to be fulfilled within the scope of the septenary structure of Scripture [*ref. indented data, top of p. 34, Ch. III, in this book*] — seen in the opening two chapters of both Genesis in the O.T. and John in the N.T. [which should begin the N.T. rather than Matthew], along with this structure pervading all Scripture — note the promises in Rev. 2:11, 26, 27; 3:21. Conditions and/or scenes such as those dealt with in these promises *CANNOT exist beyond the Millennium during the eternal ages.*)

Christians will be judged on the basis of *works*, with *a view to showing whether they have overcome or have been overcome*; and this will be with *a view to their realizing or being denied regal promises and blessings in the Messianic Era which follows.*

As previously seen, John's experience of being transported into the Lord's Day in chapter one is synonymous with his being removed from the earth at the beginning of chapter four. But judgmental scenes and events depicted in chapters one through three are not repeated in chapter four. Rather, events pertaining to the judgment seat shift to related events which will immediately follow this judgment.

The scene in heaven throughout chapter four provides additional details concerning the seven Churches in the presence of Christ in chapter one.

(For information on Rev. 4 — the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne — refer to Chapter IV, "Crowns Relinquished in the Lord's Day," in this book.)

All Christians, comprising the complete Church, will appear in the presence of Christ in that future day. And the things seen in these opening chapters have to do with that which Christians will both see and experience at that time.

By way of summation, to grasp exactly what is being taught in these opening chapters of the Book of Revelation, keep several things in mind:

1) The main tenor of thought throughout these chapters is “*JUDGMENT,*” *first upon the Church, then upon Israel and the nations.* The book begins with events occurring in that future day when Christians will be judged, after being removed from the earth; and the book then leads into the judgments of the Tribulation which are to come upon the earth-dwellers (Israel and the nations). These things (affecting the Church, Israel, and the nations) will come to pass at the conclusion of the present dispensation, preceding the Messianic Era.

2) All *seven Churches* are seen in Christ’s presence during this time, even the lukewarm, naked Church of Laodicea which had shut Christ on the outside (1:12, 13, 20; *cf.* 3:14-21). The seven Churches, denoting *COMPLETENESS, both upon the earth (chs. 2, 3) and in heaven (chs. 1-3),* reveal that *EVERY CHRISTIAN will be removed from the earth at the termination of the present dispensation to appear before Christ in judgment.*

This is completely in line with any Scriptural teaching on the subject. The widespread teaching that either all or part of the Church will remain on earth during the Tribulation has no basis whatsoever in Scripture.

The Scriptures teach, unequivocally, that *THE COMPLETE CHURCH — all of the saved from the entire 2,000-year dispensation — will be removed from Man’s Day into the Lord’s Day before the Tribulation begins; and that THE COMPLETE CHURCH will, at this time, appear before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven — a judgment which, as previously seen, will be completed before the Tribulation begins on earth (Rev. 1-3).*

ONLY THEN, following the relinquishment of crowns in Revelation chapter four, does the redemption of the inheritance — Revelation chapters five and beyond — come into view.

And ALL of this is with a view to Christ and His co-heirs taking the kingdom presently ruled by Satan and his angels.

1

Caught into the Lord's Day

REMOVED FROM MAN'S DAY INTO THE LORD'S DAY

"I John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man... " (Rev. 1:9-13a).

(Beginning this book, two chapters will be spent discussing the Lord's Day in relation to both Man's Day and the rapture. And understanding the relationship of one to the other is *no small thing*.)

In the preceding introductory Scriptures, this would be understanding how John in Rev. 1:9ff, residing on a Mediterranean island during Man's Day, could suddenly find himself removed into Christ's presence during the Lord's Day. And if this is not properly understood, certain things about the rapture and that which occurs beyond will be skewed at the beginning.

And a skewed beginning CAN ONLY result in one thing. Additional teaching on the subject CAN ONLY become even more skewed.

Additional truth results from previous truth, NEVER from previous error.)

John was on the Isle of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea (a northern branch of the Mediterranean Sea lying between Greece and Turkey), for a specifically stated purpose: “for [‘because of’] the Word of God, and for [‘because of’] the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 9; cf. v. 2). John was the one whom God had chosen to receive and record “the revelation [‘the unveiling’] of Jesus Christ” (v. 1), further described in verses two and nine as “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” And John had been taken to the Isle of Patmos *for this specific purpose*.

The Isle of Patmos was about ten miles long and six miles wide, and there was a penal colony on this island in John’s day. The existence of this penal colony has given rise to a widely-held teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to this island by a Roman ruler because of his proclamation of the Word of God (usually understood as Domitian [who ruled from 81 A.D. to 96 A.D.]; and this Roman ruler is cited because of the widely accepted late date for the writing of the Book of Revelation).

The beginning of this teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to the Isle of Patmos can be traced back to at least the latter part of the second century, extending into the third century, a century or more after the Book of Revelation had been written. This was taught by several of the early Church fathers during this time (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius all taught this). And this same teaching has been passed down, taught through the centuries, and carried into modern times.

The teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to this island in the Aegean Sea though has *no basis in fact*. It is strictly *tradition*, and this teaching undoubtedly arose and has continued to be accepted down through the centuries because of a misunderstanding of the stated purpose for John being on this island, given in verse nine of the opening chapter. It is specifically stated that he was on this island for *one purpose*: “for [‘because of’] the Word of God, and for [‘because of’] the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

John, being on this island *because of the Word*, takes one back to that previously stated concerning the content of the book, in verses one and two. John was on the Isle of Patmos *for a purpose which he himself provides*, as the Spirit moved him to write. He was

there “because of” *the revelation (the unveiling) of Jesus Christ* (the manner in which the book opens, introducing the subject matter of the book), which is declared to be “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 2; cf. John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:10b, 13). And the thought behind “because of,” contextually, would have to be understood in the sense of John being there to receive and record God bringing *to completion all that He desires man to know and understand concerning His Son* — “the revelation [‘the unveiling’] of Jesus Christ.”

God seems to have an affinity for taking individuals whom He has chosen to isolated or out-of-the-way places to receive His revelation. Moses wrote the Pentateuch while in the desert; David wrote a number of Psalms while out in the hills being pursued by Saul; Ezekiel wrote from a place of exile, from Babylon; and Paul was seemingly taken to a place in Arabia to receive the revelation of the mystery, while later writing epistles from prisons.

Thus, it should not be thought strange at all to see God removing John from surroundings which the outside world offered and taking him to the remote Isle of Patmos to receive the capstone for all Scripture. In fact, something of this nature should be thought of far more as *expected* rather than strange.

But why *this particular island*? The answer is probably in its location. The Isle of Patmos, along with being a place removed from the outside world, was located out in a part of the Mediterranean Sea, with the “sea” being used in Scripture to depict *the Gentile nations*.

The Book of Revelation is first of all about *the Church*, as it presently exists among the nations and as it will exist once the Church has been removed from the nations (chs. 1-5, 19a, 20a); and the book is also about *Israel* out among the nations and that which will occur once Israel has been brought to the place of repentance (chs. 5-20a).

Thus, to see John removed from his surroundings and taken to an isolated, out-of-the-way place located out in the sea can only be seen as quite appropriate for the subject matter at hand. It can be seen as one of the many ways *significance* always surrounds acts of a triune God.

I Became in Spirit

Verse ten should literally read, “I became in spirit in the Lord’s day...” And John was not only removed in this manner from the Isle of Patmos into heaven but he was also moved forward in time as well. John was moved forward to a time at the end of the present dispensation.

(John’s removal from the Isle of Patmos into heaven is simply stated to have been “in spirit.” Chapter four [vv. 1, 2], depicting the same scene again, adds information. And whether this was an actual bodily removal or a removal by means of visions is unrevealed and immaterial to the literality of and teachings drawn from the subject matter at hand [*cf.* Dan. 7:1, 2; 8:1, 2; 10:1].)

John, once removed from the Isle of Patmos into heaven, was shown things which would occur relative to the Church (judgment, with a view to the impending Messianic Era) and corresponding things relative to the transfer of the government of the earth from angels to man (chs. 1b-4; *cf.* Heb. 2:5). And he was then shown things preparatory to the redemption of the inheritance, which had to do with both *heavenly* and *earthly* spheres of the kingdom about to exist under *Christ, His co-heirs, Israel, and the nations* (ch. 5).

John was then moved farther forward in time, into and through seven subsequent years (Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the Tribulation). And he was shown things which would transpire on earth relative to Israel and the nations during and immediately following these seven years (chs. 6-19).

And during this time, not only would “the inheritance” be redeemed *through judgment* (the judgments of and immediately following the Tribulation, judgments seen when the seals of the seven-sealed scroll in ch. 5 were broken) but “the bride” previously shown forth at the judgment seat *would become the Son’s wife*, allowing the Son to be in a position to reign (*cf.* Gen. 2:18).

(According to the manner in which God established matters in the beginning relative to man holding the sceptre in the stead of Satan and his angels, a sovereign cannot reign apart from possessing a consort

queen [Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24]. The man and woman must reign *together*, seated on the throne as *one complete being*.

Thus, God's Son today is *not* in a position to assume the sceptre and reign. He *must* have a wife to ascend the throne with Him, a wife which, in the antitype of Eve in Gen. 2, is not only *part of His body* but *will complete Him* [cf. Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23, 30; Heb. 2:10]. And the Son will not possess a wife in the manner seen in the type until the end of the coming Tribulation [cf. Ruth 3, 4].

A knowledge of this fact will address, resolve, and put to rest widely-held false teachings concerning a present existence of some type mystery form of the kingdom in which the Son is presently reigning; or, others become more specific and see the Son already seated on David's throne within this purported mystery form of the kingdom.

The preceding may sound strange to those properly instructed in things pertaining to the kingdom [cf. Matt. 13:52]. And so it should. Strange though or not, all of the preceding is widely held in Christian circles today, even taught in numerous Bible schools and seminaries. But the one Biblical fact concerning *the necessity* of the man and the woman ascending the throne *together* will, alone, show the fallacy of such teachings, for Christ *does not* presently have a wife to ascend the throne with Him.

Aside from the preceding, though there are two anointed Kings in relation to the earth today [Christ and Satan], as there were two anointed kings in Israel during the days of David and Saul, only *One* can hold the sceptre at any given time.

In the type, Saul held the sceptre *until* he was put down and his crown taken and given to David. *Only then* did David and his faithful men take the sceptre and reign in Israel [cf. I Sam. 31:1-6; II Sam. 1:4-10; 5:3].

And matters *can only be exactly the same in the antitype*. Satan will hold the sceptre *until* he is put down and his crown taken and given to Christ. *Only then* will Christ and His faithful co-heirs take the sceptre and reign over the earth.)

Then, beyond events of the Tribulation, John was moved even farther forward in time. He was moved through events immediately following the Tribulation, extending into the Messianic Era itself (ch. 20a). After that, revelation continues with John being shown events which will occur at the end of the Messianic Era relative to Satan, his angels, and his followers among men on earth, along

with the judgment of the unsaved dead (ch. 20b).

And that which John was shown doesn't stop with events at the end of the Messianic Era. Rather, John was moved even farther forward in time and shown things having to do with the eternal ages beyond the Messianic Era, when man will hold the sceptre relative to a rule extending beyond this earth, out into the universe itself (chs. 21, 22).

And a person being moved into another time and place and being shown events occurring during this future time, in this place, is not something new in Scripture. Ezekiel, in Babylonian captivity, was moved not only to another location (to Jerusalem) but was moved both back in time and forward in time.

Ezekiel, through visions, was removed from Babylon, placed in Jerusalem, and shown things which had occurred both before the captivity and which were yet to occur (Ezek. 8-11).

The captivity took place in stages, beginning about 605 B.C., but the Glory did not depart until almost twenty years later, in 586 B.C.

Ezekiel had been among the early captives transported to Babylon, and it was around the middle of this period (about 595 B.C.) when the Spirit entered into Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2), began showing him things (2:3ff), "lifted" him "up between the earth and the heaven," and carried him "in the visions of God to Jerusalem" (8:3).

Ezekiel, at first, was moved *back in time*, allowing him to see the abominations existing among the Jewish people which had resulted in the captivity. Then he was moved *forward in time*, allowing him to see the end result — the Jewish people not only in captivity but the resulting departure of the Glory (chs. 8-11).

"Time," rather than being a constant, is *relative*. Not only is this revealed in Scripture but man has been allowed to discover and see this even in his secular science. This is part of the theory of relativity which Albert Einstein (a Jew) was allowed to discover and demonstrate through the science of mathematics (showing a small part of that which God had previously established through His unchangeable laws in physics and mathematics).

And, if God so chooses (which He has done at times), He can take a man, place him in another location, and move him either

back in time or forward in time in that location. Man can't operate in this sphere, but the One Who designed and created all of this can.

Then, within the scope of God doing this, *one thing* which guarantees the future occurrence of that seen throughout the Book of Revelation is the fact that, in one respect, all of that seen in this book *has already occurred*. And changes can't take place in that which has already occurred.

Time and Place into Which John Was Taken

John was removed from the Isle of Patmos and was not only transported into the Lord's Day but was moved forward in time as well. John was removed from Man's Day on earth and transported into the Lord's Day in heaven (or, *the Day of the Lord*, as it is referred to numerous other places in Scripture).

And, in conjunction with this removal from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, John was moved forward in time to the end of the present dispensation, to the time of the removal of the Church preceding the Tribulation.

In relation to the earth, Man's Day will last for 6,000 years — extending from the creation of man to the end of the Tribulation. Then, when Man's Day has been brought to a close, the Lord's Day will begin.

But this has to do with Man's Day and the Lord's Day in relation to *the earth*. Moving outside the earth, a person would move outside the bounds of Man's Day and move into a day which has always existed — *the Lord's Day*.

Christ, for example, while on earth said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56; *cf.* Mark 12:27). Abraham, removed from Man's Day on earth, found himself in a place separate from Man's Day. He found himself in *the Lord's Day*. And exactly the same thing is seen concerning the removal of the Church at the end of the present dispensation in both I Thess. 4:13-5:4 and Rev. 1:10-20.

If man is removed from the earth at any time during Man's Day he finds himself in *the Lord's Day*. This is why Abraham found

himself in the Lord's Day in time past, and this is why the Church, once removed from the earth at the time of the rapture, will find itself in *the Lord's Day* as well.

(Note that Abraham, through provided revelation [Gen. 22:4-14; Heb. 11:8-19] and following death, *saw the Lord's Day* [John 8:56]. This was almost 4,000 years ago, in the middle of Man's Day, as it existed upon the earth.

This would be true because Abraham, at both times, found himself disconnected from Man's Day upon the earth, with *the Lord's Day in view*. He either found himself looking beyond Man's Day *into the Lord's Day* [through God's revealed Word] or removed from Man's Day and placed *in the Lord's Day* [following death].

And exactly the same thing would be true relative to Christians, whether through provided revelation or following death during the present time or when Christians are removed from the earth at the time of the rapture. Events pertaining to the rapture show this to be the case in no uncertain terms, with Christians removed from Man's Day and placed *in the Lord's Day* while Man's Day continues on the earth.)

Man's Day and the Lord's Day *cannot* run concurrently on earth. Man's Day, in this respect, has to run its course and be brought to a close before the Lord's Day can begin on earth.

(Any thought that the expression, "the Lord's day," in Rev. 1:10 is referencing a time other than *the Day of the Lord* is really not open for discussion. Such a thought is completely out of line with both the context and related Scripture.

The somewhat widely-held teaching that "the Lord's day" in this verse is a reference to the first day of the week, to Sunday, finds no support anywhere in Scripture. "Sunday" is never referred to as *the Lord's Day* in Scripture [unless this verse is the exception, which, contextually, it can't possibly be. Such a thought would make absolutely no sense relative to the subject at hand].

As will later be shown, this section of the Book of Revelation parallels I Thess. 4:13-5:4, where the expression "the day of the Lord" is used.

In this same respect, also note Ps. 118:24,

"This is *the day* which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

This verse is often quoted out of context and applied to *a day* during the present time, during Man's Day. This verse though is set within a Messianic passage and has to do with the future Messianic Era when the Lord's Day will replace Man's Day on earth. And any application to present time would have to involve a secondary application of the verse.)

It is commonly taught that either all or part of the coming Tribulation (Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week [Dan. 9:24-27], the last seven years of Man's Day) forms the beginning of the Lord's Day. Such a teaching has Man's Day and the Lord's Day existing at the same time on earth during the last seven years of Man's Day.

Not only is this *not possible*, and not only is this *not taught* anyplace in Scripture, but Scripture teaches *just the opposite* relative to the timing of the beginning of the Lord's Day on earth.

In the Book of Joel, following the Day of the Lord being introduced in connection with judgment befalling the nations (1:15; 2:1), the timing of the beginning of the Day of the Lord is seen. In Joel 2:27-3:21, the beginning of the Day of the Lord on earth is clearly seen to be *following Christ's return to the earth at the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week, after Man's Day has run its course*. Joel's prophecy, in actuality, *cannot* be understood after any other fashion.

(A place where many go seeking to show that the last seven years of Man's Day, Daniel's Seventieth Week, is referred to in Scripture as *the Day of the Lord* is I Thess. 5:2-4. They seek to make these verses relate to the unsaved remaining on earth following the removal of the Church, seen at the end of the preceding chapter [vv. 13-18]. But, understanding these verses both contextually and in the light of other Scripture [e.g., Joel's prophecy or II Thess. 2:2ff], it is quite evident that this cannot be the case. These verses, continuing from the previous chapter, have to do with two types of Christians [faithful and unfaithful] removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day at the end of the present dispensation.

Also, many seek to do this same thing with Rev. 1:10, saying that John was removed into heaven and shown events of the Tribulation, which they relate to the mention of the Lord's Day in this verse. Such individuals seek to teach that the Lord's Day in chapter one relates to events of the Tribulation, beginning in chapter six, which they see as the Lord's Day.

But exactly the same thing can be said here that was said about the incorrect understanding of I Thess. 5:2-4. Contextually, and in the light of other Scripture [again *ref.* Joel's prophecy or II Thess. 2:2ff], neither can be understood as they are often taught.

The breaking of the first seal, which begins the Tribulation, is future at the time of the scene in Rev. 1:10. Thus, the thought of the Lord's Day being used in Rev. 1:10 because John was transported into that future time is self-defeating. As clearly seen from information in Rev. 1-5, though John was transported into a future time, he was transported into a time *BEFORE* the Tribulation begins. *Yet, he was transported into the Lord's Day.*

Revelation 1:10, contextually, has to do with Christians removed from the earth at the end of the present dispensation and placed in the Lord's Day, for this is the scene presented in the verses immediately following [vv. 11-20]. And events of the Tribulation here on earth, seen beginning in chapter six, do not occur during the Lord's Day. Rather, they occur during the last seven years of Man's Day.)

That Which John Saw

John being removed from the earth into heaven foreshadows the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation. Not only was he removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day but a *trumpet* is seen connected with this removal in both Rev. 1:10 and Rev. 4:1, 2 where the same scene is repeated (for reasons which are discussed in Chapter IV of this book). And this is in complete keeping with I Thess. 4:13-5:9, where Christians are removed from the earth in connection with a trumpet (4:16), being removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day (5:2-4).

John, through his experiences, depicting the Church being removed into heaven at the end of the dispensation, then relates things about the appearance of the Church in Christ's presence in that day. John sees "seven golden candlesticks," and in the midst of the seven candlesticks he sees *Christ in all His Glory*, described as One Whose "countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (v. 16); or, as previously described by Paul when He saw Christ enswathed in this same covering of Glory, as he traveled from Jerusalem to Damascus: "above the brightness of the ['midday']

sun" (Acts 26:13).

The "seven candlesticks" are stated to be *the seven Churches* (vv. 11-13, 20, with details provided about each in chs. 2, 3). The number "seven" is one of five numbers used in Scripture to show *completeness* in one form or another (the others are *three, ten, twelve, and forty*).

The number "seven" shows *the completeness of that which is in view*, and this is a number used particularly concerning the judgments seen occurring throughout a large part of the book beginning in chapter six. There are *seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials*, showing *God's complete judgment upon Israel and the nations during this period*.

This is what it will take (God's complete judgment, occurring in the manner presented in this book) to bring Israel to *the place of repentance*, which will, in turn, allow numerous necessary events to occur prior to the ushering in of the Messianic Era.

All seven Churches seen in Christ's presence at this time depict *the complete Church* being removed from the earth at the time of the rapture. The Church in Philadelphia (which had kept *the word of Christ's patience*) and the Church in Laodicea (which is described as *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*) are seen together in Christ's presence following the rapture, both awaiting the same thing — judgment, with a view to the Messianic Era.

It is widely but erroneously taught that only part of the Church (the faithful) will be removed at the time of the rapture (an event which those teaching along these lines usually see occurring before the Tribulation), with the remaining Christians left behind to go through either part or all of the Tribulation (as to whether it is *part* or *all* depends on who is doing the teaching; this false teaching takes numerous forms).

As any corruption of Biblical doctrine, erroneous teachings concerning the rapture emanate from a failure to begin with the Old Testament types and properly understand these types in the light of their New Testament antitypes. Beginning with the types and progressing in a correct manner from that point, *it would not be possible to teach a selective-type rapture from Scripture*.

And the preceding would be true of any Biblical doctrine. One

has to begin with the Old Testament types, properly understand these types, and then move on into the New Testament antitypes and see the proper relationship between the types and the anti-types. If Christians would do this, *there would be far more uniformity of interpretation of Scripture throughout Christendom.*

God has interwoven types throughout Biblical history for *an evident reason.* They are there *to help man properly understand the antitypes.* And any Christian ignoring the types is not only failing to study Scripture after the manner in which God structured His Word but he is doing this to his own peril and to the peril of any to whom he might minister.

The importance of correctly studying Scripture after the fashion in which it has been structured cannot be overemphasized.

2

Things Seen, Heard in the Lord's Day

THINGS WHICH ALL CHRISTIANS WILL ONE DAY SEE AND HEAR

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” (Rev. 1:12-19).

Everything about the revealed identity and description of Christ in Rev. 1:12-18 is both *Messianic* and *judgmental* in nature. God's dispensational work relative to the Church is presented as *complete at this time*. The Spirit will have *completed* His 2,000-year search for a bride for God's Son; and *the complete Church* (shown by *the seven candlesticks*) — all Christians, both the resurrected and the ones living at that time — will have been removed from Man's Day on earth and placed in the Lord's Day in heaven.

Everything, from this point forward, not only moves beyond the Spirit's work of procuring a bride for the Son but it also moves beyond Christ's work as High Priest on behalf of Christians — a work being performed *solely for Christians during the present dispensation alone*.

And since Christ's high priestly work on behalf of Christians *cannot exist beyond the present dispensation* — beyond the time Christians are removed into the heavens (as seen in Revelation chapter one), bringing the dispensation to a close — the popular view which depicts Christ as High Priest in Rev. 1:12-18, rather than Judge, *cannot possibly be correct*. Rather, matters at this point can only have to do with Christ's future work as *Judge*, which will occur after the dispensation has been completed but preceding the Messianic Era.

And this is *exactly* how matters are clearly presented in the latter part of this first chapter — *the complete Church in Christ's presence, awaiting judgment, with a view to the Messianic Era*.

The Son of Man

With the Church in Christ's presence in the Lord's Day, Christ is introduced in Rev. 1:13a by the title, "Son of man." That which follows this introductory title in verses 13b-16 is *a description* of the "Son of man" as He will appear in that coming day after the Church has been removed from Man's Day on earth and placed in Christ's presence in the Lord's Day in heaven.

"Son of man" is *a Messianic* title, first seen in Scripture in Ps. 8:4, then in Dan. 7:13. Both of these Old Testament verses are set within Messianic passages and establish, in *an unchangeable fashion*, exactly how the title *must* be understood throughout the eighty-eight times that it appears in the New Testament.

The title *must* be understood in the New Testament *after the exact manner in which it was previously introduced in the Old Testament*. That is to say, *after being introduced as a Messianic title in the Old Testament, "Son of man" must be understood as a Messianic title throughout its usage in the New Testament*. This is simply one of the many ways in which God has structured His Word, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture.

The title appears eighty-four times throughout the gospel accounts, where Christ used the title numerous times referring to Himself. Then, outside the gospel accounts in the New Testament, the title is only used four times — Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6 (a quotation from Ps. 8:4); Rev. 1:13; 14:14.

Christ used the title in Luke 19:10 to describe *His mission* at the time of His first coming — “to seek and to save that which was lost” (a Messianic title associated, contextually, with salvation for the Jewish people in relation to the proffered kingdom).

The title is used in connection with *Christ's betrayal, death, and resurrection* in Matt. 12:40; 20:18; 26:2 (note that salvation provided through Christ's finished work at Calvary is for a purpose; salvation has to do with man ultimately being placed back in the position for which he was created, which will be realized in the Messianic Era).

The title is used pertaining to events surrounding *Christ's second advent* in Matt. 24:27-44; Luke 12:40 (events surrounding Christ's return, with a view to the Messianic Era).

And the title is used relative to the Father having committed *all judgment* unto the Son in John 5:22-27 (judgment such as that of Christians at Christ's judgment seat, with a view to the Messianic Era).

The broad use of the title, “Son of man,” throughout Christ's earthly ministry at the time of His first coming would serve to illustrate a little-appreciated fact. *EVERYTHING surrounding His first coming — His birth, His ministry to Israel, His death, burial, resurrection, and His ascension — had Messianic ramifications.*

John 1:11 would serve to illustrate the point in one fashion:

“He came unto his own [neuter in Gk. text, *His Own things*], and his own [masculine in Gk. text, *His Own people, the Jewish people*] received him not.”

His Own things had to do with those things associated with the title, “Son of man.”

His Own things had to do with His being born “King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2); these things had to do with the message

proclaimed throughout His earthly ministry, a message to the Jewish people pertaining to the kingdom (Matt. 4:17-25; 10:5-8; Luke 10:1ff); they had to do with the throne of David (Luke 1:31-33; cf. II Sam. 7:12-16; Zech. 6:12, 13); they had to do with the title placed over His head at the time of His crucifixion (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19); and they had to do with the message which He proclaimed following His resurrection, preceding His ascension (Luke 24:25-27, 44; Acts 1:3).

Then note Christ's question and the disciples' response in this same respect in Matt. 16:13-16:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The reference to "Christ" in Peter's response had to do with acknowledging Jesus as *the Messiah*, the One Who would rule and reign; and the reference to "Son" had to do with *His firstborn status*. He was God's firstborn Son, the One Who would exercise the rights of primogeniture (kingly, priestly, and double portion rights), all carrying *Messianic ramifications* in complete keeping with the titles "Messiah" and "Son of man."

Peter had acknowledged the Son of Man's true identity — the One Who would rule and reign as the great King-Priest over the double portion of the Father's goods, in both heavenly and earthly spheres of the kingdom. And Peter's statement prompted Christ to respond by saying,

"...Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (v. 17b).

In Revelation chapter one, the Spirit moved John to introduce

Christ as *Judge* through calling attention to His Messianic title. Then the Spirit moved John to describe the “Son of man” as He will appear in that coming day. And this is the person Whom all Christians will one day see, be introduced by this same Messianic title, Who will be seen exactly as described in the account.

(Events of that coming day cannot possibly occur after any other fashion than seen in Revelation chapter one, for John, having been moved forward into that future day and time, has already seen these things occur. And *no change* can take place in that which has already occurred.)

And the “Son of man,” as well, is the person Who will subsequently return to the earth at the complete end of Man's Day in order to bring all things portended by this title to pass, concluded by the ushering in of the Messianic Era (*cf.* Rev. 19b-20a).

1) *Manner in Which Clothed*

Christ, as “Son of man,” is seen “clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps [‘breasts’] with a golden girdle” (v. 13b).

This garment could describe the type clothing worn by either *a priest or a judge*. And the introductory title, “Son of man,” could easily relate to either, for there is really no realm of Christ's ministry at any point in time that does not, after some fashion, have for its goal *the Messianic Era*.

It matters not whether events during past, present, or future time are being dealt with (future time preceding the Messianic Era), *all of God's work* from the very beginning in Genesis chapter one has *one goal in view*. *All work* (restorative work) throughout the six days in this chapter — which foreshadows all work (restorative work) throughout the six days, the 6,000 years of Man's Day — has *one goal in view*. And that is clearly set forth in this opening section of Scripture, establishing a foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests.

The seventh day, the Sabbath, a day of rest, followed six days of restorative work in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture. And, in that which this opening section of Scripture foreshadows, a seventh day, a seventh 1,000-year period — the Sabbath rest

awaiting the people of God (Heb. 4:4-9), the Messianic Era — will follow six days of restorative work, 6,000 years of restorative work.

Thus, the title “Son of man” could be used of Christ relative to His ministry either as *High Priest* or as *Judge*, allowing this title to be used of Christ relative to work both present and future.

As *High Priest*, performing a work solely for Christians, Christ is providing a present cleansing for the “many sons” whom He is about to bring “unto glory” (Heb. 2:10). He is providing a cleansing for all Christians who avail themselves of that being provided, which would be seen particularly in matters surrounding His bride, for whom the Spirit is presently searching (*cf.* Gen. 24:1ff; John 13:8-11; I John 1:5-10). And this is a work which, as all His works preceding the Messianic Era, has *the Messianic Era in view*.

As *Judge* in a future day, all Christians will stand in His presence to render an account. And the Spirit’s work during the present dispensation will, exactly as seen in the type in Gen. 24, be shown to have been successful.

The works of Christians will be tried “by [‘in’] fire.” And through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, numerous Christians will be shown qualified to be among those comprising that part of Christ’s body which will not only be revealed as His bride but complete the Son, allowing Him to reign (*cf.* I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11; Heb. 2:10).

(Exactly as in the type [Gen. 2:21-23], the second Man, the last Adam will have a bride taken from His body which, when presented back to Him will provide a *completeness* not heretofore existing, allowing Him to ascend the throne — the man and the woman together — as one complete being.)

Though both the title “Son of man” and the description of Christ in “a garment down to the foot” could relate to or describe Christ as either *High Priest* or *Judge*, two things in the text show that *only the latter* can possibly be in view.

First, note the timing of the scene. Events depicted, contextually, can only occur *beyond* the present dispensation. And as previously shown, Christ’s ministry as High Priest is for Christians at a particular time, during time covered by the present dispensation, not

beyond. Thus, the scene *cannot possibly* have to do with Christ's high priestly work, for Christians alone, beyond the time Christ deals with them in this respect, are in view.

Second, the girdle is seen about Christ's breasts, which is the position of the girdle on the dress of *a judge*, not a priest. A priest wore the girdle about his waist, and would often use the girdle to tuck things into (*e.g.*, a towel, parts of his priestly robe) as he went about his work. This is the apparent scene when Christ girded himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet in John chapter thirteen, foreshadowing His future priestly work on behalf of Christians.

(Note in Rev. 15:6 that the seven angels having the seven last plagues [the concluding judgments during the Tribulation] are each clothed in "pure and white linen [*lit.*, 'bright clean linen']" and are girded with "golden girdles" *about their breasts*. The scene is one of *judgment*, and the girdles are seen in their proper place for this type activity.

These two places — Christ in Rev. 1:13 and angels in Rev. 15:6 — are the only two places in the book where a scene of this nature is presented. And Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture, leaving only one way that Rev. 1:13 can be understood.)

2) *Descriptive Characteristics*

The description of the One seen in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, following His identifying title ("Son of man") and the description of His dress, begins with a statement which can only refer to both *His longevity and holiness* — "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow" (v. 14a). The One Who has always existed and always will exist, the One without beginning or ending (John 1:1, 2, 14), the One without sin Who judged sin at Calvary (II Cor. 5:21), is about to judge Christians relative to works (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11).

It is common in Scripture to introduce a member of the Godhead through the means seen here, through stating something characteristic about the person.

Note, for example, how the prayer often referred to as "the Lord's prayer" in Matt. 6:9-13 begins: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (v. 9b). The Father is addressed, and a characterizing statement about the Father follows. Then

the subject of the prayer begins: “Thy kingdom come...” (v. 10a).

Or, note how each of the seven letters to the Churches begins in Revelation chapters two and three. Each begins with a descriptive statement concerning Christ, taken either directly from chapter one or from that portended by the things stated in this chapter. Only then does the subject matter of each epistle begin.

And, as in Matt. 6:9-13, after one statement concerning a member of the Godhead in Rev. 1:14 (“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow”), the text then goes immediately into the subject matter at hand — *JUDGMENT*. The One in the midst of the seven candlesticks is seen having eyes “as a flame of fire,” feet “like unto fine brass,” a voice “as the sound of many waters,” a sharp two-edged sword coming from “his mouth,” and a countenance described “as the sun shining in his strength.”

“Fire,” “brass,” and “a sword” all speak of *different aspects of JUDGMENT*.

“Fire” and “brass” are seen relative to *a judgment for sin in the tabernacle ministry in Israel*. Fire burned on the altar in the courtyard in connection with sacrifices, and both the altar and the laver (also in the courtyard) were constructed of brass. This is where sin was judged through sacrifices and washings.

Then note the use of “a sword” in *a judgmental scene at the time of Christ’s return* in Rev. 19:15.

During Christ’s earthly ministry, on one occasion the Pharisees and chief priests sent men to take Him and bring Him into their presence. But the men returned empty-handed, saying, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:32, 45, 46).

On a subsequent occasion, when Judas led a band of men to take Christ, the men were caused *to fall backward to the ground* at the sound of His voice when He identified Himself by saying, “I am he [*lit.*, ‘I Am’]” (John 18:3-8).

(The correct translation of Jesus’ response in John 18:5, 6, 8 is “I Am,” not “I am he,” identifying Himself with the God of the O.T. in Ex. 3:14. And there is a repeated emphasis on the pronoun, “I.” Brought over into English, the response would be similar to saying, “I Myself, I Am.”)

And Peter experienced Christ’s piercing eyes after he had,

three times, denied the One Whom, only a short time earlier, he had emphatically declared that *he would never deny* (Matt. 26:35; Luke 22:33).

It is recorded in Luke 22:61, following this triad of denials, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter..." And it is evident from the text that Peter fully observed and experienced the Lord's actions.

The word for "look" in the Greek text is not just the regular word for "look" (*blepo*). Rather, it is an intensified form of this word (*emlepo*). Christ didn't just look at Peter. He looked into Peter's eyes in a manner which *penetrated his very being*. And Peter knew it, *he experienced it*, which caused him *to go out and weep bitterly*.

Every Christian in that coming day will stand before Christ as *Judge*, with His piercing eyes, "as a flame of fire," and His voice, "as the sound of many waters." And Peter's reaction to Christ's piercing and penetrating look in a past day will be the experience of numerous disobedient Christians in a future day, causing them to do *exactly* the same thing which Peter did — *go out and weep bitterly*.

Then, as if that will not be enough, His countenance, with a body enswathed in a covering of glory, will be "as the sun shineth in his strength" (v. 16); and judgment meted out will consist of completely righteous decisions and determinations by the One Who has existed from eternity, identified with the God of the Old Testament.

Seven Stars, Seven Candlesticks

Christ is seen holding *seven stars* in His right hand as He stands in the midst of *seven candlesticks*. He holds one and walks in the midst of the other. And that which the metaphors are used to represent is clearly stated in the closing words of chapter one, immediately prior to the seven short epistles to the seven Churches in chapters two and three:

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are *the angels of the seven Churches*: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are *the seven Churches*" (v. 20).

The Book of Revelation is filled with angelic activity, and there is no reason to think that these seven angels represent anything other than angels. They are specifically stated to be angels of Churches, and in chapters two and three, each epistle is addressed to the angel of a particular Church.

This would be in perfect keeping with the reference to angels in Heb. 1:14:

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation [*lit.*, ...‘to minister for the sake of the ones about to inherit salvation’].”

And note something about the seven epistles in chapters two and three. The things in these two chapters form a continuation from chapter one. And though it is evident that *a history of Christendom* is shown through activity in these seven Churches in the first century, these seven epistles, *in their contextual setting, can ONLY SHOW MORE PARTICULARLY things future — things about the judgment seat, continuing from chapter one.*

Each epistle is structured *EXACTLY the same way:*

- 1) *I know thy works.*
- 2) *A call to repentance, or to heed the Lord's command.*
- 3) *Then, an overcomer's promise.*

That dealt with at the judgment seat will be:

- 1) *Works, which will show...*
- 2) *Whether those being judged did or did not repent or obey the Lord's command.*
- 3) *And this will be with a view to realizing or not realizing the overcomer's promises, which have to do with realizing or not realizing an inheritance with Christ during the coming kingdom.*

Angelic activity seen in Heb. 1:14 is with a view to exactly the same thing seen in Revelation chapters one through three relative to Christians. And an angel occupying an appointed position in relation to each of the seven Churches would be in perfect keeping with this thought. In that respect, there would be an angel placed

over each Church, and there would be other angels ministering to Christians within each Church, with the ministry of all the angels having *one goal in view* — Christians overcoming during Man's Day in order that they might realize an inheritance during the Lord's Day (*cf.* Heb. 2:5).

(A popular interpretation of the seven angels is to identify them as *the pastors* of the seven Churches. This would be somewhat based on the fact that the Greek word translated "angel" [*aggelos*] means "messenger" and is used of men in that respect a few times in Scripture [Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; James 2:25]. However, this type understanding of *aggelos* occurs in only a scattering of the numerous times that the word appears in the N.T., referring mainly to "angels," not men.

In the Book of Revelation, the word *aggelos* appears sixty-six times beyond chapters one through three, and the word is not used a single time throughout this remaining part of the book referring to men [unless possibly in a verse such as Rev. 10:1]. Also, to say that the word *aggelos* in chapters one through three refers to the pastors of the seven Churches would be out of line with the manner in which the N.T. presents pastors in the Churches.

In the N.T., when pastors are spoken of in connection with Churches, there is no such thing as a Church with one pastor. Churches in the N.T. are always seen having more than one pastor, or elder [*cf.* Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14].)

Thus, that depicted in Revelation chapters one through three evidently has to do with angelic activity in the Churches, angelic activity among Christians during the present dispensation. And this activity has to do with a ministry among Christians, with a view to Christians overcoming and realizing an inheritance with Christ during the coming age.

A history of the Church throughout the dispensation is presented through the manner in which chapters two and three are structured; but, more particularly and contextually, the two chapters simply present *a continuation from chapter one* and have to do with details surrounding the coming judgment of Christians, with material in the chapters dropping back and including the necessity of present preparation.

Write...

After John had seen the complete Church in heaven, appearing before Christ in judgment, he was told to "Write..." And that which he was told to write provides *a threefold outline of the book*.

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter [*lit.*, 'after these things']" (v. 19).

"The things which thou hast seen" could only refer to the things in chapter one, preceding verse nineteen, for that is all John had seen thus far.

Then, "the things which are," will have to be understood two ways, in keeping with the two ways chapters two and three are to be understood:

1) "The things which are" would, first of all, have to be understood as the things which John was witnessing at that time, in the future, in the Lord's Day (which would be the things which he had seen in the previous verses, *i.e.*, in this respect, "the things which are" would be the same as "the things which thou hast seen").

John had seen *the complete Church in heaven appearing before Christ in judgment*. And this, of necessity, would have to extend into and include that seen in chapters two and three — *the seven epistles to the seven Churches*.

2) Then, "the things which are," as well, would have to do with the secondary manner in which chapters two and three are to be understood — *showing a history of Christendom relative to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom during the present dispensation*.

This history would begin with Ephesus, which *had left its first love*, and end with Laodicea, which was "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*" (2:4; 3:17).

In this respect, "the things which are," from John's perspective, though at a future time, *would reach back into the present dispensation*.

(Refer to the next two chapters in this book, Chapters III, IV, for additional information on the preceding.)

Then, “the things which shall be hereafter [Gk., *meta tauta*, ‘after these things’]” could only refer to events beginning in chapter four where this expression (*meta tauta*) is used twice in the first verse. “The things which shall be hereafter [‘after these things’]” would refer to events occurring *after the present dispensation, after subsequent events surrounding the judgment seat (chs. 1-3); and these following events would encompass that seen throughout the remainder of the book (chs. 4-22).*

3

Judgment in the Lord's Day

ALL CHRISTIANS TO APPEAR BEFORE CHRIST IN JUDGMENT

“Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus... Smyrna... Pergamos... Thyatira... Sardis... Philadelphia... Laodicea write...”
(Rev. 2:1a, 8a, 12a, 18a; 3:1a, 7a, 14a).

The seven epistles directed to seven Churches in Asia in Revelation chapters two and three form a continuation from introductory, foundational material in chapter one. And if this connection between chapter one and chapters two and three is not understood, the main thrust of that presented in these seven short epistles will be missed.

In the first chapter, the seven Churches are seen in heaven in Christ's presence *in the Lord's Day*, not here on earth separated from Christ's presence (a personal, bodily presence, as seen in this chapter) during Man's Day (v. 10).

And these seven Churches are further seen in Christ's presence when He is exercising a position as *Judge* (a future role which Christ will enter at the conclusion of the present dispensation), not a position as High Priest (Christ's office and work throughout the present dispensation in the heavenly sanctuary, on behalf of Christians).

Thus, the entire scene is not only *future and judicial* but *removed from the earth and in the heavens*. Since *the complete Church*, shown by the number of the Churches (“seven,” showing *the completeness of that which is in view*), is seen in heaven, this can only have to do with events following the removal of the Church from the earth at the end of the dispensation; and since the complete Church is seen in Christ's presence at this time, with Christ occupying a judicial role, this can only have to do with the future appearance of all Christians before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10, 11).

This, in turn, provides the basis for the continuation of the same subject matter in chapters two and three, where specific information is provided relative to each of the seven Churches previously introduced in chapter one. And though it is evident as well that *a history of Christendom* is shown through activity in these seven Churches existing in the first century at the time John penned these two chapters, the epistles, in their contextual setting, *CAN ONLY SHOW more particularly things future — things surrounding the judgment seat, continuing from chapter one.*

(For additional information on “*why*” *Rev. 1-3 MUST be understood in this manner*, refer back to the section titled, “The Complete Church,” beginning on p. xxx in the introduction to this book.)

Each of the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three, following a brief descriptive depiction of the Son, is structured *EXACTLY the same way*:

- 1) *I know thy works.*
- 2) *A call to repentance, or to heed the Lord’s command.*
- 3) *Then, an overcomer’s promise.*

(Note also in chapters two and three that *Christ speaks to the Churches as Judge* [e.g., cf. 1:13-16, 20; 2:1, 12, 18], *a role which He will not occupy until the present dispensation has drawn to a close.*)

And this is in perfect keeping with the judicial scene presented in chapter one, introducing chapters two and three, with chapter one providing necessary foundational material which would allow an individual to properly understand Christ’s words to the seven Churches within their contextual setting.

That dealt with at the judgment seat will be:

- 1) *Works, which will show...*
- 2) *Whether those being judged did or did not repent or obey the Lord’s command.*
- 3) *And this will be with a view to realizing or not realizing the overcomer’s promises, which have to do with realizing or not realizing an inheritance with Christ during the coming kingdom.*

I Know Thy Works

The basis for all judgment in Scripture is *WORKS*. God judged sin at Calvary on the basis of *His Son's finished work* (John 19:30); Christians will be judged at the end of the present dispensation on *the basis of works* (I Cor. 3:12-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11); Israel will be judged following the future Tribulation on *the basis of works* (Ezek. 20:34-38; 44:9-16); Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation will be judged on *the basis of works* (Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:4-6); and even the unsaved will be judged following the Millennium on *the basis of works* (Rev. 20:11-15).

FAITH though cannot be separated from *WORKS* in the preceding respect (except for the unsaved, who are in no position to exercise faith), for "without faith *it is impossible to please him [God]*" (Heb. 11:6a).

But, in relation to *JUDGMENT*, God looks at the final analysis of the matter. *WORKS emanate out of FAITH, with works forming that which results from faith* (James 2:14-26). And it is *these resulting WORKS which are at the forefront when JUDGMENT is in view*.

A saved person can either exercise faithfulness or unfaithfulness, *with works emanating from both*. In I Cor. 3:12, this is set forth in *the two types of works* presented. *One type* is depicted by the words "gold, silver, precious stones," and *the other type* is depicted by the words "wood, hay, stubble."

Works will be tried by *fire* at the judgment seat (v. 13). That depicted by "gold, silver, precious stones," *emanating out of faithfulness*, will pass through the fire unscathed; but that depicted by "wood, hay, stubble," *resulting from unfaithfulness*, will be consumed by the fire.

Those individuals shown to have possessed works described by the former ("gold, silver, precious stones") will experience the end result of the salvation of their souls, which will allow them to have a part in activities attendant the bride and Christ's coming reign. But those individuals shown to have possessed works described by the latter ("wood, hay, stubble") will, instead, "suffer loss" (the loss of their souls), though they themselves will be "saved [their eternal salvation unaffected]; yet so as by ['through'] fire" (I Cor. 3:15).

Relative to the unsaved, "faith" is not in the picture. But,

still, even though “faith” is absent, all that can remain to come under judgment are *works*. Thus, the unsaved, as the saved, are judged on the basis of *works*, for there is nothing else upon which they could be judged.

The unsaved can’t be judged on the basis of prior *unbelief* in Christ, no more so than can the saved be judged on the basis of prior *belief* in Christ. According to John 3:18, the unsaved *have already been judged* (as the matter pertains to Christ and His finished work at Calvary, for they have not believed), and no judgment awaits the saved (also as the matter pertains to Christ and His finished work at Calvary, for they have believed).

This remains true of both the saved and the unsaved because God has already judged sin in the person of His Son. Thus, this is *a completed and closed matter, for God has already been satisfied*. And, resultingly, there can be no further judgment on this issue:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘is not judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned already [‘has already been judged’], because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.”

The second word “condemned [‘judged’]” and the subsequent word “believed” (both used relative to the unsaved) are both in the perfect tense in the Greek text, pointing to action completed in past time with the results of this action existing during present time in a finished state.

Consequently, for the unsaved, this will *never* be an issue in future time. It can’t be an issue in future time. Such would be impossible. Relative to their eternal destiny, the unsaved have already been judged (past) because of unbelief (past). *Nothing* surrounding judgment, as it pertains to this matter, can be carried beyond this point in past time.

And exactly the same future non-judgmental situation exists for the saved relative to their eternal destiny, for the same reason. The saved, exactly as the unsaved, have already been judged. But in their case, *belief*, not unbelief, enters into the matter. And, exactly as in the case of the unsaved, *nothing* surrounding judgment, as it pertains to this entire matter, can be carried beyond this point in past time.

For the saved though, unlike the unsaved, judgment has taken place through a Substitute Who has paid sin's penalty (death) on their behalf. And everything surrounding the matter has been taken care of *in past time*, by Another, with *God being satisfied*.

(In the preceding respect, as seen in John 3:18, because judgment *has already taken place for the saved, through a Substitute, there can be no past judgment for the individual per se.*

But, for the unsaved, since a Substitute is not in view, this past judgment would have to pertain to the individual himself. And this is why this verse refers to a past judgment for the unsaved alone.)

Because the basis for all "judgment" in Scripture is *WORKS*, and because *JUDGMENT* is centrally in view in Revelation chapters two and three (contextually, continuing from chapter one), Christ's words in each of the seven epistles begins with the statement, "I know thy works." With *JUDGMENT* centrally in view — *not judgment relative to their eternal salvation (an impossibility) but judgment relative to that which lies out ahead, relative to the Messianic Era — these epistles could begin no other way.*

Repent...Heed the Lord's Command

God's Son, described in Revelation chapter one, Whose eyes were as "a flame of fire," knew exactly what had been and was presently occurring in each of the seven Churches. The Son, with exactly the same full knowledge (omniscience) possessed by the Father — for He was, is, and always will be the Father manifested in the flesh — knew all there was to know about everyone and everything in each of the seven Churches.

And after He states to each, "I know thy works," *He makes their works known, dealing with those in each Church on the basis of their works.*

EXACTLY the same thing will occur yet future relative to that which this section of the book deals with. All Christians will stand before Christ in judgment, EXACTLY as the matter is revealed in chapter one. They will stand before the One Whose eyes are as "a flame of fire," eyes which can and apparently will penetrate into the

very soul of each individual (*cf.* Luke 22:61, 62).

Then again, the material in Revelation chapter one can be understood in *an even more specific manner*, for that stated in this chapter concerning the Church in Christ's presence is *NOT* just a statement concerning how things will be in that future day. Rather, *this is THE ACTUAL SCENE surrounding the future appearance of all Christians in Christ's presence, before His judgment seat.*

John was moved from the present time into a future time, in the Lord's Day. And in this future time, in the Lord's Day, he was allowed to see different things occurring before they actually occurred.

But that can be turned around, saying, the things which John was allowed to see, yet to occur, will have to occur for the simple reason that they have already occurred. And one can no more change these things set in the future (which have already occurred) than he can change things set in the past (which, as well, have already occurred).

The first thing which John saw in this respect was Christians appearing before Christ in judgment. In other words, that seen in the latter part of chapter one is not just something similar to or like that which will occur. Rather, *THIS IS that which will occur!*

And John was shown these things — *recording that which will occur/has already occurred*, to be made available to *all Christians* during the opening years of the present dispensation (directed to "seven Churches," showing *completeness*) — in order that *all Christians* throughout the dispensation might have an eye-witness account of that which they will one day experience (though, in another frame of reference, within "time" [which is *relative*, not a constant], that which they have already experienced), leaving them even further without excuse at the judgment seat.

This introductory material then allows the seven epistles to seven Churches in Asia, which immediately follow, to *each be structured after a manner which continues the thought of JUDGMENT from chapter one.*

And not only is this structure seen in each of these seven epistles, but at least *two other things* can be seen in these epistles as well, which reflect on events during present time, preceding events surrounding the judgment seat:

1) The order in which these epistles appear depicts a *history of the Church throughout the dispensation* (from Ephesus, which left its “first love,” to Laodicea, described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”).

2) Dealing with these seven existing Churches in the manner seen not only allowed the Lord to deal directly with *all the Churches during the time in which John lived* but also to provide vital information for *all the Churches which would exist throughout subsequent time during the complete dispensation*. And, as both the text and context clearly show, *this would be with a view to FUTURE JUDGMENT and THE MESSIANIC ERA*.

Everything about these epistles — their structure, that stated about each, the order in which they were given, the reason for the call to repent, the reason for the exhortation and commands — points out ahead to *THE JUDGMENT SEAT* and then to *THE MESSIANIC ERA* beyond.

The deterioration seen within the existing Churches and also seen in the order of their arrangement in chapters two and three necessitates *the call to repentance, the exhortations, and the commands*. Then, this call for repentance, the exhortations, and the commands look ahead to *THE JUDGMENT SEAT*; and all of the overcomer's promises are *MESSIANIC* within their scope of fulfillment.

Everything at the end of Scripture remains *in complete keeping* with that seen at the beginning of Scripture — *a seventh day of rest following six days of restorative work*.

And there is *nothing* within these seven epistles which moves beyond that point within the scope of their fulfillment (*i.e.*, there is *NOTHING* in these epistles which moves beyond the seventh day, the Messianic Era). There is *NOTHING* in these epistles about eternal life, the ages beyond the Messianic Era, etc.

ALL of the material in these epistles is about events occurring during time within that foreshadowed by *work* during the six days in Genesis chapter one, progressing to that foreshadowed by *rest* during the seventh day in Genesis chapter two, not about things which will occur during the eternal ages beyond this time.

(For a correct and proper interpretation throughout Scripture in the preceding respect, one must remain within the time-frame set forth in the first thirty-four verses in Scripture, in Gen. 1:1-2:3 [six and seven days foreshadowing six and seven thousand years]. A septenary structure is set forth in these opening verses, establishing at the very outset a foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests [refer to Chapters I-IV in the author's book, *The Study of Scripture*].

There are a few places in Scripture which deal with events outside the scope of the septenary structure in Gen. 1:1-2:3 [*i.e.*, events both preceding Man's Day and events following the Messianic Era]. But when Scripture does move outside the septenary structure set forth at the beginning [*e.g.*, Ezek. 28:14-19; Rev. 21, 22], it is always quite evident that this is being done.

And this has apparently been done at times so that man can better tie the whole of the matter together, understanding why things existed as they did preceding Man's Day on the one hand, and understanding the goal toward which everything moves following the Messianic Era on the other hand, when the Son delivers the kingdom up to His Father [I Cor. 15:24-28].)

To Him That Overcometh

The manner in which most interpret the seven overcomer's promises, one to each of the seven Churches in chapters two and three, centers around these promises relating to one's eternal salvation. Most erroneously interpret these promises as either:

- 1) A call to unsaved individuals within the seven Churches to be saved and realize these different promises.
- 2) Or, as statements to saved individuals in these Churches, showing that they will realize these different promises simply on the basis of the fact that they have been saved.

And I John 5:1-5 forms a section usually referenced in an effort to substantiate the second part of the preceding.

This line of erroneous teaching emanates mainly from man's failure to see anything in Scripture except salvation by grace, *i.e.*, saved-unsaved issues. Practically everything is made to relate to this one subject.

And this type teaching, brought over into the seven epistles in

Revelation chapters two and three, results in not only the Church often being viewed from an incorrect perspective (usually seeing the Church comprised of both saved and unsaved individuals) but it also leaves little room for the overcomer's promises to be viewed from a correct perspective.

However, contrariwise, within the New Testament usage of the word "Church," as it is used relating to *the one new man* "in Christ," there is no such thing as a Church comprised of both saved and unsaved individuals. A person is either within or without the Church, depending on his saved or unsaved state. He is either a Jew, a Gentile (both without the Church), or a Christian (saved Jews and saved Gentiles within the Church [I Cor. 10:32]).

Nor, after the manner in which the word "Church" is used in the New Testament, can unsaved individuals be thought of as *professors* instead of *possessors* and find themselves within the Church. Scripture knows nothing about *professors* as opposed to *possessors*. Scripture knows only *possessors* (the saved) and *non-possessors* (the unsaved), *with ONLY possessors (the "called") comprising the Church*.

The overcomer's promises, in the preceding respect, would, thus, relate to *CHRISTIANS ALONE*. Further, these promises are worded after a fashion which clearly reveals that Christians can go in either of two directions relative to the promises. They can either *overcome* and realize the promises or they can *be overcome* [by the world, the flesh, and/or the Devil] and fail to realize the promises.

(The word "Church" is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, a compound word which means "called out" [*ek*, meaning "out"; and *klesis*, meaning "to call"]. The word is used 115 times in the N.T., and in all except five instances it is used of Christians.

It is used of the nation of Israel or those in Israel three times [Matt. 18:17; Acts 7:38], and it is used of a gathering of mainly unsaved Gentiles twice [some Jews present (Acts 19:32, 39)]. And in the five instances where the word is not used of Christians it could be better translated "assembly," understanding that "the assembly" was a *called out group* [Israel *called out* of the nations (Acts 7:38), or individuals *called out* of this nation (Matt. 18:17), or individuals *called out* from a Gentile nation (Acts 19:32, 39)].

The Hebrew text of the O.T. uses a corresponding word, *qahal*, which the Septuagint [Greek version of the O.T.] usually translates by using *ekklesia*. *Qahal* is found 112 times in the O.T., almost an equal number of times that the corresponding word, *ekklesia*, is found in the N.T. *Qahal* is usually translated in the English text as “assembly” [Deut. 9:10; 18:16] or “congregation” [Deut. 23:1-3; I Kings 8:14], and sometimes as “company” [I Sam. 19:20]. The word is used mainly of Israel or those in Israel, though a few times it is used of groups from among Gentile nations [Gen. 35:11; Ezek. 23:46, 47; 26:7; 38:4, 7, 13, 15].

Thus, when the Greek text of the New Testament uses the word *ekklesia*, where Christians are involved [110 of the 115 times that the word appears], it is dealing with *the saved alone* [the saved of the present dispensation, those comprising *the one new man* “in Christ”].

The word “Church” [*ekklesia*] is *NEVER used in the N.T. referring to an assembly of both Christians and Jews* [including saved Jews comprising the nation during the time of the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel (from 33 AD to about 62 AD)] or *to an assembly of both Christians and Gentiles*. Rather, the word is *ALWAYS used ONLY as a reference to those forming the one new man “in Christ,” which is neither Jew nor Gentile* [Gal. 3:26-29; Col. 3:10, 11].

In this respect, the Church [the *ekklesia*] of the N.T., having to do with *Christians alone*, is one thing; and the usage of a corresponding word in the O.T. [*qahal* (usually translated *ekklesia* in the Septuagint)], and the usage of *ekklesia* having to do with Israel or those in Israel three times in the N.T., is another thing entirely. The word *Church* in the N.T., when referring to the saved who are taken from among both the Jews and the Gentiles during the present dispensation [110 of the 115 times the word is used], began on the day of Pentecost in 33 AD and will be removed at the end of the dispensation.

And any type teaching to the contrary is no more or no less than man’s flawed ideology brought over into his understanding of Scripture, seeking to interpret, through natural means, that which is spiritually discerned. Scripture though is to be interpreted *SOLELY from the spiritual side of matters, NEVER from the natural*. Scripture is to be interpreted *in the light of Scripture, comparing that which is spiritual with that which is spiritual* [I Cor. 2:10-13], with man’s thoughts and ideas on the matter of *NO MOMENT WHATSOEVER*.)

As previously stated, I John 5:1-5 is often erroneously referenced by those seeking to show that the thought of *overcoming* in

Revelation chapters two and three has to do with one's eternal salvation. And the thought of *a bringing forth from above*, used three times in these verses, is seen as synonymous with overcoming and dealt with accordingly.

But, in actuality, though *overcoming* and *being brought forth from above* in these verses have an inseparable connection, they neither refer to the same thing nor do they have to do with one's eternal salvation. Rather, both have to do with *the saved alone*. *And it is ONLY through being brought forth from above, rather than from below, that a Christian can overcome (the world, the flesh, and/or the Devil).*

Or, the converse of the preceding is equally true. *A Christian being brought forth from below rather than from above CAN ONLY be overcome by the world, the flesh, and/or the Devil.*

The expression, "born of God" or "begotten of him," referring to *a bringing forth from above*, is used ten times in I John (2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:1 [three times], 4, 18 [twice]). The expression also appears in three other New Testament books—four times in John's gospel (1:13; 3:3, 5, 7), once in James (1:18), and two times in I Peter (1:3, 23).

And *every time* that the expression is used in John, James, I Peter, and I John, both textually and contextually, *the saved*, not the unsaved, are in view.

(Refer to the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above*, for a comprehensive treatment of this subject in all four N.T. books.)

I John 5:1-5 is actually a companion passage to John 20:30, 31. These two verses in John's gospel have to do solely with Israel during the time of the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel, providing the reason for the eight signs in John's gospel. And I John 5:1-5 (apparently written at or about the same time as John's gospel) would seemingly have to do with Israel during this time as well, though not beyond this time. But, unlike John 20:30, 31, it would also have to do with Christians throughout the dispensation since the epistle was written centrally to Christians and signs are not in view in the passage (*ref. the author's book, Signs in John's Gospel*).

In this respect, I John 5:1-5 has to do with instructions concerning how Christians can *overcome the world* — “by faith” (v. 4), with instructions given elsewhere concerning how Christians can *overcome the flesh by mortification* (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5) and *overcome the Devil by resistance* (James 4:7; I Peter 5:9).

And, as in all of the other passages pertaining to being brought forth from above, the unsaved are NOT in view at all in any of these passages having to do with overcoming.

(For a more comprehensive treatment of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, refer to the author’s book, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapters V-XI.

All sixteen chapters of this book contain supplementary material for Revelation chapters one through four, with a particular emphasis on the seven Churches in chapters two and three. In this respect, material on these seven Churches, covering seven chapters in the book, is dealt with within a context which covers nine other related chapters.)

4

Crowns Relinquished in the Lord's Day

GOLDEN CROWNS CAST BEFORE GOD'S THRONE

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats ['thrones']: and upon the seats ['thrones'] I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold...

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne..." (Rev. 4:1-4, 10).

(Chapters IV through VIII in this book deal with material in Revelation chapters four and five [Chapter IV with material in Rev. 4 and Chapters V-VIII with material in Rev. 5, leading into ch. 6, then ch. 10].

Properly understanding certain things in both Revelation chapters four and five, *within context* [following that seen in chs. 1-3 but preceding that dealt with in chs. 6ff], is *CRUCIAL* to a proper understanding of the Book of Revelation, and thus the subject matter of this book, *The Rapture and Beyond*.)

Immediately following events seen in chapters two and three, attention is again called to that previously seen in chapter one — John being removed from Man’s Day and placed in the Lord’s Day (cf. 1:10; 4:1, 2a).

Scripture, in its structure, has a way of repeating things at times in order to provide a base for supplying additional information or details on a subject. And repeating that seen in chapter one at this later time in the book, in chapter four (following events seen in chs. 1b-3), would have to do with Scripture providing additional information relating to *the Church following events surrounding the judgment seat*.

In chapter one — immediately after John had been removed from Man’s Day and placed in the Lord’s Day, along with being moved forward in time — he was shown *the complete Church in Christ’s presence, with Christ presented in His future judicial role, not in His present high priestly role*. And, since this is clearly *a judicial scene following the rapture*, that which is dealt with in these verses can only refer to *one thing*. These verses in chapter one can only refer to:

1) *The complete Church, all Christians throughout the dispensation (shown by the number of the Churches [seven, showing the completeness of that which is in view]), being removed from the earth at the end of the dispensation (shown by John’s removal).*

2) *The complete Church appearing in Christ’s presence to be judged (shown by Christ appearing as Judge, with the seven candlesticks [the seven Churches] appearing in His presence).*

Then, simply continuing from chapter one, the central subject of the subsequent two chapters *has been established*. This central subject, continuing into chapters two and three, *clearly has to do with Christians before the judgment seat*.

But the manner in which the Churches are set forth in these two chapters — beginning with *Ephesus* which had left its “first love” (2:4) and ending with *Laodicea* which is described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (3:17) — it is also evident that a history of the Church throughout the dispensation is shown as well.

And, with these things in mind, the Spirit of God leading John to begin chapter four at the same point as seen in chapter one would not only provide *a base for additional revelation surrounding Christians following the judgment seat* but it would also provide a means for setting forth the same thing clearly taught a number of other places in Scripture — *the removal of the complete Church at the end of the dispensation.*

That is, viewing chapters two and three from *a historical perspective* (depicting a history of the Church throughout the dispensation), chapter four, beginning at the same point as seen in chapter one, shows *the removal of the complete Church at the end of the dispensation.* And this is something which can be seen in a clearer respect in chapter four than it can in chapter one because, *from a historical perspective,* the complete dispensation is seen immediately preceding, in chapters two and three.

Then, the removal of the Church at this point in time would also show *the removal of the Church before the beginning of the Tribulation* (seen beginning in chapter six). And this, as well, would be in complete accord with that seen elsewhere in Scripture.

(The removal of the Church, as seen in Rev. 1:10ff, shows one facet of the matter. *This shows the Church — all Christians — being removed preceding the Tribulation to appear before Christ in judgment, with the Messianic Era in view.*

The removal of the Church, as seen in Rev. 4:1, 2, shows another facet of the matter. *This shows the Church — again, all Christians — being removed at the end of the dispensation, allowing for the seven churches in chapters two and three to show a history of the complete Church throughout the preceding dispensation.)*

The Heavenly Scene

Immediately after attention has been called to the same event seen in Rev. 1:10 (in Rev. 4:1, 2a), John, rather than seeing a judicial scene (as in ch. 1), now sees a rainbow encircled throne, with God seated on the throne (vv. 2b, 3). And surrounding this throne, John sees twenty-four other thrones and twenty-four crowned “elders” seated on these thrones (v. 4).

(The significance of attention called to a rainbow encircling God's throne at this point in the book can be seen in the first mention of a rainbow in Scripture [Gen. 9:13-17]. The rainbow appeared in Genesis following the completion of God's judgment [the Flood], and the same thing is seen in Rev. 4:3 relative to the completion of the judgment of Christians in chs. 1b-3.)

At this point in the book, events pertaining to the dispensation in which the Spirit spent 2,000 years searching for a bride for God's Son are complete (*chs. 2, 3, viewed from a historical perspective*). As well, events surrounding the judgment seat are also complete (*chs. 1b-3, viewed from the manner in which chs. 2, 3 are introduced in ch. 1b*). And, because of the reason for the dispensation and the judgment seat, and because of the point toward which all Scripture moves, the logical place where one would expect activity to now be centered at this point in the book would be concerning *bringing about the realization of that stated in Heb. 2:5*:

"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

And events having to do with bringing to pass that stated in this verse is exactly what can be found in Revelation chapters four and five.

In the latter part of Rev. 4:2, immediately following the repetition from chapter one concerning the removal of the Church (vv. 1, 2a), John begins to describe various things about God's throne, which he both sees and hears — "lightnings," "thunderings," and "voices" coming out of the throne, and "lamps of fire burning before the throne" (v. 5). And "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne" John sees four living creatures who "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come"; and these living creatures "give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever" (vv. 6-9).

Then the scene returns to the twenty-four elders, who arise from their thrones, fall down before God, worship Him, relinquish their crowns to the One Who originally placed them in regal positions,

and express adoration to the One worthy “to receive glory and honor and power” (vv. 4, 10, 11).

If an apex is to be found in the Book of Revelation, aside from the actions of the mighty angel in chapter ten and events surrounding Christ's return in chapter nineteen (also seen in chs. 6, 14), the action of these twenty-four elders would have to be considered. The action of these angels in Revelation chapter four is *significant beyond degree in relation to the central message of this book*.

Crowns, Regality, Government

“Crowns” have to do with *regality*, and *the government of the earth* is in view throughout the Book of Revelation. At this point in the book, the judgment of Christians, with a view to *regality*, will have just occurred; and, with a view to this same *regality*, Christ, following this, is seen as the One about to redeem the forfeited inheritance through taking the seven-sealed scroll from God's right hand and breaking the seals (chs. 5ff).

Angels have ruled over the earth since time immemorial — since that time when God established the government of the earth in the beginning. Angels will still be exercising authority over the earth at this point in the book, following the judgment of Christians. And angels will continue ruling *until* Christ and His co-heirs (forming His bride) take the kingdom, following Christ's return to the earth.

Accordingly, neither Christ nor Christians will receive the crowns which they are to wear during the Messianic Era *until after* Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

The crown which Christ will wear during the Messianic Era is presently being worn by Satan, as he continues to exercise power over the earth. And the crowns which Christians will wear in that day are presently being worn by two segments of angels — the angels presently ruling with Satan, and the angels who refused to follow Satan when he sought to exalt his throne.

When Satan sought to exalt his throne — following his being placed over the earth, with a large contingent of angels ruling the earth with him — only one-third of these ruling angels followed

Satan and fell with him, with the other two-thirds refusing to follow him (cf. Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:3, 4).

(Note the way Rev. 12:4a is worded: "And his [the dragon's, Satan's] tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven [referring to angels (cf. Job. 38:7; Rev. 1:20)] and did cast them to the earth...")

This "third part," after millenniums of time and separation [separation of one-third from the other two-thirds], *is still recognized at this future time as only part of a larger group, only part of all the angels originally ruling with Satan.*)

And though the angels not following Satan didn't continue ruling with him, they *could not* immediately relinquish their appointed positions. Rather, they *had to* retain their positions for a time, remaining crowned.

A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler retain his crown until the one replacing him is not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne. *Only then* can an incumbent ruler relinquish his crown.

(For example, note the account of Saul and David, forming a type of Satan and Christ.

Saul, though disqualified following his refusal to slay Amalek, retained his crown and continued to reign until David was not only present but ready to ascend the throne. Then, Saul's crown was taken, given to David; and David, along with certain faithful men, ascended the throne and reigned in the stead of Saul and those who had ruled with him [I, II Samuel].

And it will be exactly the same in the antitype. Satan, though disqualified, will retain his crown and continue to reign until Christ is not only present but ready to ascend the throne. Then, Satan's crown will be taken, given to Christ; and *Christ, along with certain faithful individuals, will ascend the throne and reign in the stead of Satan and those who had ruled with him, both before and after his fall* [Rev. 19:11-20:6].)

This same established principle must prevail relative to both the angels refusing to follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne and those who did follow him. This entire contingent of angels (both fallen and unfallen) must retain their crowns until those

who are to replace them, those who are to wear these crowns, are not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne.

These relinquished crowns though will be worn *only after* Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, overthrows Satan and his angels, and forcibly takes their crowns. *Only then* will Christ be in possession of *all the crowns* which He and His bride are destined to wear as they ascend the throne and rule the earth.

This entire scenario of events, as it pertains to the government of the earth, is introduced in Revelation chapter four and brought to a conclusion in chapter nineteen.

This transfer of power is introduced immediately following events surrounding the judgment seat when, *for the first time in the history of the earth, those who are to ascend the throne with God's Son will have been called out of the larger body of Christians and revealed.*

Those shown worthy to take the crowns worn by Satan and his angels up to this point in time will then be on the scene, ready to ascend the throne. *And for the first time in the history of the earth, angels can relinquish their crowns.*

This is *the first order of activity* seen in the Book of Revelation occurring immediately following issues and determinations at the judgment seat. And so it should be, for, according to Rom. 8:19-23, the entire creation (as it pertains to the earth, both the material creation and redeemed man) presently groans and travails, awaiting "the manifestation of the sons of God" (a new order of sons — taken from among *redeemed man*, not angels).

Revelation chapter four is the point in the book where this manifestation of a new order of sons has its beginning. It begins here by the relinquishment of crowns (for those comprising this new order of sons will have been revealed), making possible a later full manifestation of regal activity by man at the time of Christ's return.

Thus, with the introduction of crowns cast before God's throne in Rev. 4:10, 11, *only one group of individuals* could possibly be in view (if one remains within context and keeps in mind the earth's government in both history and prophecy).

These twenty-four elders can only represent *angelic rulers* (cf. Heb. 2:5). *Angels alone* will possess crowns in relation to the government of the earth at this time (as they do during the present time).

(Some Bible students, on the basis of the pronouns used in Rev. 5:9, 10 — “us” and “we” [KJV] — have understood the twenty-four elders to represent redeemed men, not angels. However, the majority of the better Greek manuscripts render the pronouns in v. 10 as “them” and “they” [ref. ASV, NASB, NIV, Wuest, Weymouth], giving rise to the thought that the pronoun “us” in v. 9 is probably a scribal insertion, being spurious [ref. Alford, Lenski].

But the matter is really not left to manuscript evidence alone. That the pronouns “them” and “they” are correct is evident from the context. Note that the song in vv. 9, 10 is apparently sung not only by the “twenty-four elders” but also by the “four beasts [‘living creatures’]” as well. Then, other angels join them in vv. 11ff, with all of the angels together voicing additional, related statements.

Aside from the preceding, it would make absolutely no sense whatsoever to understand these twenty-four elders as referring to a segment of redeemed mankind. Man couldn’t possibly be crowned at the time of events in Rev. 4, 5, else he would be crowned before Christ is crowned [note that Christ is to wear the crown which Satan presently wears, which Satan will still be wearing at this time]. Also, man is to wear the crown he receives, not relinquish it before God’s throne as seen being done by the twenty-four elders.

Also, the Greek word translated “elders” in Revelation chapter four is *presbuteroi*, the same word used for “elders” in the Church in the New Testament epistles. The word refers to *older ones* [relative to that being dealt with]. In the Church, the reference is to *older ones in the faith*; in Revelation chapter four, the reference is to *older ones in the governmental structure of the earth* [evident since they are crowned, seated on thrones, with the government of the earth being the only government which could possibly be in view].

The preceding alone would prevent the twenty-four elders from being viewed as men, particularly as Christians, necessitating that they be viewed as *angels*. Jews, with their past O.T. theocracy, would have some claim to being seen as older ones [*presbuteroi*] in relation to the government of the earth; but *Christians have NEVER been associated with the government of the earth in any manner, having no claim.*

Man, at this point in the book, has yet to even come into such a position; angels, on the other hand, have held positions of this nature since time immemorial.)

And at this point in the book, through the action of the twenty-

four elders casting their crowns before God's throne, the way will be opened for God to transfer the sceptre from the hands of angels into the hands of man.

In this respect, these crowns cast before God's throne can only have to do with *the government of the earth*. And, at this point in the book, crowns can be worn by *angels alone*. *The Son* will not yet have taken the kingdom, though the Father is about to take the sceptre from Satan's hand and place it in His Son's hand (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14; Luke 19:12, 15; Rev. 11:15; 19:11ff).

These crowns are relinquished *to God* (cast before God's throne) — with a view to man ruling in the kingdom — so that God can appoint those who had previously been shown qualified through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat [chs. 1b-3] to positions of power and authority with His Son; and those whom the Father appoints will wear these crowns in His Son's kingdom.

These crowns are cast before God's throne (cf. 4:1-4; 5:1-7) because *the Father alone* is the One Who places and/or removes rulers in His kingdom (Dan. 4:17-37; 5:18-21).

He alone is the One Who placed those represented by the twenty-four elders in the positions which they occupy; and *He alone* is the One Who will remove those represented by these elders from the positions in which He originally placed them and assign other individuals to positions in the kingdom, in their stead (Matt. 20:20-23).

The transfer of the government of the earth, from the hands of angels into the hands of man, in reality, is what the first nineteen chapters of the Book of Revelation are about; and, as well, this is what the whole of Scripture preceding these nineteen chapters is also about.

In this respect, these twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne forms *a key event which one must grasp* if he would properly understand the Book of Revelation and Scripture as a whole.

Christ and His wife, in that coming day, will rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels. And, in the process of ruling in this manner, they will wear *all the crowns* worn by Satan and his angels prior to his fall — both angels who did not follow Satan and those who did follow him.

Action of the Elders

Thus, that which is depicted through the action of the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:10, 11 is, contextually, self-explanatory. This has to do with *the government of the earth, it occurs at a time following events surrounding the judgment seat but preceding Christ breaking the seals of the seven-sealed scroll, and it occurs at a time when Satan's reign is about to be brought to a close.*

After events in Revelation chapters one through three have come to pass, *for the first time in man's history*, the person (the bride) who is to rule with the One to replace Satan (Christ) will have been made known and shown forth. *And events in the fourth chapter reflect that fact.*

Only *ONE THING* could possibly be in view at this point in the book, for the bride will not only have been made known but will be in a position for events surrounding the transfer of power to begin. The twenty-four elders *casting their crowns before God's throne CAN ONLY depict the angels who did not go along with Satan in his rebellion relinquishing their crowns, with a view to those comprising the bride wearing these crowns during the Messianic Era.*

But the crowns worn by Satan and those angels presently ruling with him are another matter. These crowns will have to be taken from Satan and his angels *by force* when Christ returns to overthrow Gentile world power at the end of the Tribulation (a power exercised during Man's Day under Satan and his angels [Dan. 10:13-20]).

(The fact that angels represented by the twenty-four elders are not presently ruling with Satan can be shown not only by their present position — in God's presence, in heaven — but also by the Greek word which is used for the type crown which they are seen wearing.

There are two words in the Greek text for "crown" — *stephanos*, and *diadema*. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, with *regality* in view, one major distinction stands out concerning how these two words are used. *Diadema* refers to the type crown worn by a monarch, one presently exercising regal power. *Stephanos*, on the other hand, is used in an opposite sense. It is used to show someone crowned but not presently exercising regal power.

For example, the crown seen on Christ's head in Rev. 14:14, preceding His reign, is referred to by the word *stephanos* in the Greek text. A crown on Christ's head at this time could only anticipate His impending reign [cf. Matt. 27:29 (a *stephanos* of thorns)].

A similar thought is set forth by the crown resting on Antichrist's head at the beginning of the Tribulation in Rev. 6:2, referred to through the use of the word *stephanos*. This man, though evidently occupying a powerful position at the beginning of the Tribulation [for he is the one who will ratify the covenant in Dan. 9:27], is not seen achieving his aspired position of world power until near the middle of the Tribulation, at which time he is seen wearing a *diadem* [Rev. 12:3].

Then, when Christ returns to the earth to take the kingdom, He will have many crowns upon His head; and the Greek text uses *diadema* rather than *stephanos* to refer to these crowns, for Christ will be returning as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" [Rev. 19:12, 16].

The twenty-four elders in chapter four cast crowns referred to as *stephanos* before the throne, indicating that, though crowned, these elders were not exercising regal power at this time [though the fact that they were seated on thrones and crowned portends *regal power* at some point in time [*in past time, as shown by their present positions and subsequent actions*]].

And the many crowns which Christ will have on His head at the time of His return are evidently these same crowns [Rev. 19:12]. But, anticipating that day when Christ reigns, the Book of Revelation uses the word *diadema* to refer to these crowns, for *Christ will be exercising regal power at this time*, with Satan about to be overthrown.

The crowns [*diadems*] on Christ's head in Rev. 19:12 though will not be worn by Christ when He rules the earth, for He is to wear the crown presently worn by Satan [the incumbent ruler] in that day. Rather, these crowns are undoubtedly reserved for those forming the bride [whom the Father will have previously appointed to various positions of power and authority with His Son]; and the Son will give these crowns to His co-heirs following that time when the remainder of the crowns having to do with the earth's government are forcibly taken from Satan and his angels.)

Twenty-Four, Thirty-Six

The identity of *the twenty-four elders* is shown not only by *their actions* and *the place* in which this occurs in the book but also by *their number*. Comparing Revelation chapters four and twelve (4:4,

10, 11; 12:3, 4), it appears evident that the original government of the earth — originally established by God prior to Satan's fall — was representatively shown by *three sets of twelve, thirty-six crowned rulers*. "Three" is the number of *Divine perfection*, and "twelve" is the number of *governmental perfection*.

Those angels who did not follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne would be represented by the twenty-four elders — *two sets of twelve, showing two-thirds of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan*. And the angels who did go along with Satan, presently ruling with him, would be represented by *a third set of twelve, showing the other one-third of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan* (Rev. 12:3, 4).

In this respect, these three representative sets of twelve would show *Divine perfection in the earth's government*. And also in this respect, this same perfection in the structure of the earth's government has not existed *since Satan's attempt to exalt his throne*.

But, this structured perfection will one day *again* exist in the earth's government. When Christ and His wife ascend the throne, crowns worn by those represented by all three sets of twelve will be brought together again. *Then, Divine perfection will once again exist in the government of the one province in God's universe where imperfection has existed for millenniums (cf. Col. 1:16-20)*.

(For additional and other type information on the twenty-four elders in Revelation chapter four, refer to the author's books, *So Great Salvation*, Chapter II, "Because of the Angels," or, *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapter XII, "Crowned Rulers.")

5

The Seven-Sealed Scroll

CONTAINING GOD'S REDEMPTIVE TERMS FOR THE INHERITANCE

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book [‘a scroll’] written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book [‘the scroll’], and to loose the seals thereof?

And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book [‘the scroll’], neither to look thereon.

And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book [‘the scroll’], neither to look thereon.

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book [‘the scroll’], and to loose the seven seals thereof.

And I beheld, and, low, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

And he came and took the book [‘the scroll’] out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne” (Rev. 5:1-7).

(All of Revelation chapter five is taken up with events surrounding the introduction of a *seven-sealed scroll*, with the seals of this scroll beginning to be broken in the next chapter.

Properly understanding that which is in view through the introduction of this seven-sealed scroll and the breaking of the seals on the scroll is *ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY* to properly understand all which has preceded and follows in the Book of Revelation.

The judgments seen in succeeding chapters, beginning in chapter six, are the judgments unleashed through the breaking of these seven seals; and these judgments, in turn, are God’s terms for the redemption of the inheritance.)

Attention is often called to the importance of understanding and referencing the Book of Daniel when studying the Book of Revelation, or conversely. And this would be a correct way to view matters, for these are companion books; and both cover the same material, from different perspectives, with one book shedding light upon the other when Scripture is compared with Scripture.

That which is often overlooked though is the fact that the Book of Daniel is only one of a number of books in the Old Testament holding this type connection with the Book of Revelation.

Complete books other than Daniel (e.g., Jonah), or *parts of books*, from the section of Scripture referred to as *the Prophets* (Isaiah through Malachi) would hold this same type connection with the Book of Revelation as well. And in this chapter, particular attention will be called to a section from one of these books, the Book of Jeremiah, which forms a *major key* to properly understanding Revelation chapter five.

Then, beginning in Genesis and continuing to the Prophets, one finds that section of Scripture often referred to as *Historic* (Genesis through Esther), followed by the section referred to as *Poetic* (Job through the Song of Solomon). And the same thing can be said about these two sections of Scripture that was said about *the Prophets*. Numerous parts of both sections reflect on material in the Book of Revelation.

In the first of these two sections, aside from Genesis, note particularly three books where this can be clearly seen — *Exodus*, *Ruth*, and *Esther*. These three books have been singled out because almost the complete contents of each foreshadow that seen in different parts of the Book of Revelation, with a section in one of the books particularly foreshadowing events seen in Revelation chapter five.

Exodus, in this manner (historic events typically foreshadowing future events), deals centrally with *Israel* during the Tribulation, with Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation, with the overthrow of Gentile world power following Christ's return, and with the subsequent establishment of the Messianic Kingdom (paralleling events seen in Rev. 6-20a).

Esther, as well, deals with the same thing as *Exodus* — centrally with *Israel* during and immediately following the Tribulation. And

Esther, through the same means and in the same manner as seen in Exodus, parallels the same part of the Book of Revelation as Exodus, showing other facets of the matter.

Ruth though is different. Rather than dealing with Israel, *Ruth*, through the same means and in the same manner as seen in both Exodus and Esther, foreshadows God's dealings with *the Church*. And the time covered by this book deals with the Church throughout not only the present dispensation but with the Church at the judgment seat, with the Church following the judgment seat, and with Christ and His bride in the Messianic Kingdom.

And, though *Ruth* deals with *the Church* rather than Israel, *Ruth* is the one book among the three mentioned which deals with events foreshadowing that seen in Revelation chapter five. And if one would rightly understand that seen in this chapter, one must first understand that which God revealed to an unknown author some twelve hundred or more years before these things were shown to John. One must let *Scripture interpret Scripture, allowing God Himself to explain the matter through other revelation which He has provided on the subject.*

With all of the preceding in mind, two sections of Scripture from two Old Testament books will comprise most of the material in this chapter.

The first will be a section from the Book of Jeremiah (from chs. 30-33, but particularly from ch. 32), which, through an Old Testament account of circumstances and events of a similar nature to that seen in Revelation chapter five, shows exactly what is transpiring in this chapter in the Book of Revelation.

And *the second* will be a section from the Book of Ruth (from all four chapters of the book, but particularly from ch. 4), which, as seen in Jeremiah, will illustrate the working out of that introduced in Revelation chapter five, showing different but corresponding facets of the matter.

There are *two aspects* to that which occurs through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five — *redemption of land*, and *a corresponding marriage*. Jeremiah, in his book, seemingly only deals with one aspect (redemption of land), but the other aspect (marriage) is clearly seen in the

context. And the writer of Ruth deals with both aspects together, at the same time.

Then, beginning in Revelation chapter five and viewing that seen in this book in the light of that seen in both of these Old Testament books, the whole of the matter is opened up and dealt with in this closing book of Scripture.

And this is exactly as interpretation in the Book of Revelation, or anywhere else in Scripture, *must* exist. *Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture* — the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament, the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, parts of the Old Testament in the light of other parts of the Old Testament, parts of the New Testament in the light of other parts of the New Testament.

(Note that a division of the Old Testament into three parts — *Historic, Poetic, and the Prophets* — refers to *form*, not to *content*. Prophecy, via typology, is dealt with throughout the Historic section, with other means, along with typology, used in the Poetic section and in the Prophets. And this is why Christ, in Luke 24:25-27, 44 could refer to Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets together, in the sense that *different things surrounding the same Subject are dealt with throughout*.

All wrote about *Christ*, His first coming, His second coming — Moses through one means, the writers of the Psalms through another means, and the Prophets through yet another means.)

As evident from Ruth chapter four (in the light of the larger context, chs. 1-3), along with comparing that seen in Jeremiah chapter thirty-two (in the light of the larger context, chs. 30-33), the seven-sealed scroll which the Son took from His Father's right hand in Revelation chapter five (the N.T. parallel) could only be identified as *one thing* and could only have to do with *one thing*. As will be shown, this scroll could only be identified as *the title deed to the earth*, and it could only contain *the redemptive terms for the earth* — the inheritance awaiting the Sons of God (Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption]).

Beyond the preceding, this redemption of the inheritance is inseparably tied to *marriage* — the marriage of God to Israel, and the marriage of Christ to His bride. There can be no future reign

of Christ over the earth apart from God again taking Israel as His wife and the Son, as well, taking a wife. And both are inseparably tied to the breaking of the seals on this scroll.

John's apparent knowledge of these things, as they pertained to that which the Father held in His right hand in Rev. 5:1, would account for his actions in verse four — *much weeping* — when no one “in heaven, nor in [‘upon’] earth, nor under the earth” (v. 3) was found worthy to break the seals on the scroll. John evidently knew exactly what this scroll had to do with, along with the implications of the seals either being broken or not being broken — which could only have come from his familiarity with the Old Testament and the corresponding Mosaic Economy.

(To illustrate that this scroll contains *the redemptive terms of the earth*, before seeing this from two Old Testament books, note Rev. 10:2. In this verse, an angel is seen holding the scroll from chapter five *after all of the seals had been broken, leaving the scroll open*; and, in a display of power, filled with symbolism — with “his right foot upon the sea [the nations], and his left foot on the earth [‘the land’]” — this angel claims *the redeemed inheritance, the earth, with its inhabitants* [Ps. 2:8], for the One Whose right it is to rule.

For more information on the preceding, refer to Chapter VIII in this book.)

The earth in a forfeited and unredeemed state was the same earth which, in the distant past, preceding man's creation, had been reduced to a ruin because of Satan's attempt to exalt his throne above that of his God-appointed position over the earth; this was the earth which, 6,000 years ago, had been restored for man, whom God created to replace the incumbent ruler; and this was the earth which had been reduced to a ruined state once again because of man's subsequent fall (*cf.* Gen. 3:6, 7, 17, 18). And Revelation chapter five takes one to the point where the inheritance (the earth) is about to be redeemed (*cf.* Ps. 2:8), allowing the earth to be “delivered from the bondage of corruption,” with *a new order of Sons* then holding the sceptre (Rom. 8:18-23).

Not only *must man be redeemed*, but *the earth must be redeemed as well*. That which God requires for both *man* and *the earth* must be brought to pass in each instance.

Man's redemption is wrought through Christ's finished work at Calvary; and *the earth's redemption* is wrought through subsequent actions of the only One qualified to act in the realm of redemption (cf. Acts 3:21; Col. 1:16, 20), through His breaking the seals of the seven-sealed scroll which He is seen taking from His Father's right hand in Rev. 5:7 (Rev. 6:1ff).

The Books of Jeremiah and Revelation

(The accounts in the Books of Ruth and Jeremiah form the only two places in the Old Testament where the matter seen in Revelation chapter five is dealt with in the sense of being carried out, showing exactly what is in view in this closing book of Scripture.

The account from Jeremiah will be dealt with first, for this account provides details concerning how matters were handled as they pertained to the scroll itself. Then, the account in Ruth provides other details not seen in Jeremiah. And both together, within their contextual settings, provide the necessary Old Testament word picture to properly understand that seen in Revelation chapter five.)

In the Old Testament, redemption (a purchasing, a buying back) existed for both *individuals* and *sections of land*.

Other than redemption necessary for all mankind through death and shed blood, because of Adam's sin, other forms of redemption were dealt with in the Mosaic Economy. Provision of this nature existed for the redemption of *two types of individuals* — for a wife who had lost her husband, and for a person who found himself in a position of servitude or slavery. Then, provision existed for the redemption of *sections of land* which had been sold. And there were laws governing both the redemption of individuals and land (Lev. 25:1-55; 27:16-25; Deut. 25:5-9).

A scroll (or two scrolls) was prepared for the redemption of *land*, but there is no indication that scrolls were used for the redemption of individuals (something which, of course, would be completely out of place for the redemption of a wife).

Scrolls of this nature had to do with *title deeds to sections of land* and contained *the redemptive terms for these sections*, which could be quite different in each scroll. And there is a classic example of

how this was carried out in Jeremiah chapter thirty-two through events occurring in Jeremiah's life shortly before the final part of the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.

Zedekiah, the king of Judah at this time, had imprisoned Jeremiah because of his prophecies concerning the Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah had prophesied that the city of Jerusalem, along with the Jewish king (Zedekiah), would be given "into the hand of the king of Babylon" (Nebuchadnezzar). This didn't set well with Zedekiah; and, as a result, he imprisoned Jeremiah (vv. 1-5).

Then, while imprisoned, the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, relating that his cousin would approach him about redeeming a piece of property which had been sold to someone else; and the Lord instructed Jeremiah, who possessed "the right of redemption" (*a blood relative*) to redeem the property, to act in this capacity (vv. 7, 8).

This act would leave Jeremiah owning the property (possessing "the right of inheritance" [v. 8]) — someone who knew that the property would shortly be in enemy hands, rendering it worthless. But Jeremiah had prophesied that the Babylonian captivity would only last *seventy years* (Jer. 25:11, 12); and following these seventy years there would be a return to the land, something which he had also previously prophesied (Jer. 29:10-14; chs. 30-33 [though a return of all the Jewish people was later revealed to be *seven times longer, 490 years*, in Dan. 9:24-27; cf. Dan. 9:2; see Chapter XII in the Author's book, *The Time of the End*, for a discussion of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy]).

Then, aside from the property being in enemy hands for the next seventy years, a year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8ff) — which occurred every fiftieth year — would occur while the Jewish people were in Babylonian captivity. And, during this year, unredeemed property would automatically revert back to its original owner, apart from any redemptive action. In this respect, it would seem almost out of place for Jeremiah to redeem the property before the captivity.

But God had *a reason* for instructing Jeremiah to redeem the property before the captivity (though it would have reverted back to its original owner during the time of the captivity).

Note that this account appears in the midst of a section in Jeremiah which, though Gentile captivity was at hand, has to do with the Jewish people one day being restored to their land, along with the things which God would do for His people in that day (*ref. chs. 30-33*). And God, through having Jeremiah redeem this section of land, *was using another means to make this fact known to His people.*

The preceding is made clear through that which God stated at the completion of Jeremiah's purchase. His purchase is seen in Jer. 32:9-14. Then note what the Lord stated in verse fifteen, immediately following this purchase:

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."

This same thing — *a promise, through this means, concerning a future restoration of the Jewish people* — is reiterated again in verses forty-two through forty-four in this same chapter (see also Jer. 33:7-17):

"For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord."

(As well, contextually, Jeremiah's purchase of a field moves beyond God reiterating, through another means, His promise concerning a restoration of the Jewish people. The larger picture seen in Jeremiah — in chs. 30-33 — has to do with *God remarrying Israel and a restoration of the kingdom, with God taking Israel as His wife once again in a restored theocracy.*

Refer to the next chapter in this book, Chapter VI, for details concerning the preceding.)

In the account of the transaction during Jeremiah's day, two pieces of paper were brought out, one sealed and the other remain-

ing open (both having to do with *the unredeemed title deed to the property*). Both pieces of paper contained the same thing — *the redemptive terms for the section of land in question*. The redemptive terms could be read on the open piece of paper. Then, once the redemptive terms had been met, the sealed piece of paper (forming a sealed scroll) could be opened.

Jeremiah purchased the field, allowing him to open the sealed scroll. He then either made notations on this scroll or a new piece of paper, along with the unsealed scroll or a new piece of paper. In turn, one of these was rolled up and sealed, with the other left open (both having to do with *the redeemed title deed to the property*). Then both scrolls (with notations on both, indicating Jeremiah's purchase), for preservation purposes, were placed in "an earthen vessel [clay jar], that they may continue many days [which could only have been with a view, at that time, to the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity]" (vv. 7-14).

In later years, only one piece of paper was used for redemptive scrolls (titles to property) of this nature, with the redemptive terms appearing on both sides. One side, forming the inside of the scroll, would be hidden from view once the scroll had been rolled up and sealed. And the other side, forming the outside of the scroll, would have the redemptive terms written in a place where they could be read without unsealing the scroll.

With all of the preceding in mind, note the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five.

First, in Jeremiah, there were two scrolls — one sealed, the other remaining open. In the Book of Revelation, in keeping with this practice seen in later Jewish history, the redemptive terms of the scroll are seen *written on both sides of one scroll* (5:1). One side was *sealed*, and the other side was *open* where the redemptive terms could be read.

And the Father handing the scroll to His Son *clearly implies* a recognition and an acknowledgement of *the Son's full qualification to act in this capacity — as Redeemer* — having previously paid the price to take the scroll, break the seals, and redeem the inheritance (5:5ff).

Second, this scroll in the Book of Revelation can only have to do with *land and land rights*, for, within the realm of redemption, scrolls were not used for individuals (a widowed woman, or a servant or slave). They were used for the only other thing which could be redeemed — *land*.

Third, in the account in Jeremiah, *a field* was being redeemed (vv. 7-9). In the account in the Book of Revelation, it is the same — *a field*, with *the field* being “the world” (Matt. 13:38).

And that seen in the Book of Revelation — *redemption in relation to the title deed to the earth* — will form the outworking of that foreshadowed in Jeremiah when the Jewish people return from their dispersion among the Gentiles, not at the end of Jeremiah’s seventy-year prophecy but at the end of Daniel’s four-hundred-ninety-year prophecy (*cf.* Jer. 33:7-26).

The Books of Ruth and Revelation

The Book of Ruth begins with a Jewish family in Moab, driven from their own land because of a famine in the land (1:1). And the reason for this famine and the departure of this Jewish family from their land is given in verses such as Lev. 26:14, 15, 32, 33 and Deut. 28:15, 64-67.

This book though, rather than having to do with God’s dealings with Israel, foreshadows, through typical means, His future dealings with *the Church*. And God’s dealings with the Church after this fashion begin specifically in verse four of the first chapter, where two Moabite women become members of this Jewish family in Moab, brought to pass through their marriage to the two sons in the family (*cf.* Rom. 11:15-25). Then, from this point forward, events in the book foreshadow God’s dealings with the Church during a time which would not even begin until well over a millennium later.

(Note that events such as those which occurred in the Book of Ruth took place under God’s sovereign control of all things. And events as we have them in this book were later recorded by an unknown author as he was borne along by the Holy Spirit [II Peter 1:21], allowing the

same Spirit to have these events to draw upon at later points in time in order to lead Christians into an understanding of the deep things of God [cf. Isa. 40:21; Acts 15:18].)

Ruth chapter one, in that foreshadowed by events seen in this chapter, deals with *two types of Christians* — *one faithful, the other unfaithful (typified by the actions of Ruth and Orpah)*. And these two women, *alone*, portray *all Christians*, for there is no third class of Christians. A Christian is either *faithful* or *unfaithful*, never partly one or the other. *There is no middle ground between the two*. Scripture is clear that if a person is not for Christ he is against Christ; if he does not gather with Christ, he scatters abroad (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23; Rom. 14:23).

A separation is made in chapter one (Orpah who turns back, and Ruth who goes on). And the remainder of the book deals with Ruth alone, showing not only the manner in which *faithful Christians* conduct themselves during the dispensation but, as well, that which awaits *faithful Christians* following the dispensation.

Chapter two deals with *faithful Christians* during the present dispensation, laboring in the field; chapters three and four then deal with *faithful Christians* beyond the present dispensation.

Chapter three has to do with *prepared Christians* appearing before Christ at His judgment seat, seen in Revelation chapters one through three (though Rev. 1-3 presents matters surrounding unprepared Christians as well).

Then, the first part of Ruth chapter four has to do with the subject at hand in Revelation chapter five. And both of these sections in the Books of Ruth and Revelation have to do with that seen in Revelation chapters six through nineteen.

Then, the latter part of Ruth chapter four has to do with that seen in the first part of Revelation chapter twenty — *with Christ's 1,000-year reign, as the Son of David, during the long awaited Messianic Era*.

On the Threshing Floor

Events surrounding Ruth's appearance before Boaz, on his

threshing floor in Ruth chapter three move beyond events surrounding a separation of the wheat from the chaff. And these subsequent events have to do with three things: *redemption, marriage, and regality*.

Once on the threshing floor at this time, Ruth, through her words and actions, made known a dual request — a request for both *the redemption of a forfeited inheritance* and for *marriage* (cf. Deut. 25:5, 6; 27:20; Ruth 3:8-13; Ezek. 16:8). And, as seen at the end of the Book of Ruth, with the lineage of Boaz and Ruth traced to King David (their great grandson), *regality* is brought into the picture (Ruth 4:13-22).

(The thought of *redemption, marriage, and regality* [from the Book of Ruth, or from the Book of Jeremiah, as well as from the opening chapters of Genesis] — foreshadowing that seen in the breaking of the seals of the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five — is developed more fully in the next chapter of this book, Chapter VI.)

Boaz was to redeem the forfeited inheritance and, in the process, take Ruth as his wife. And, because of Ruth's prior actions (proper preparation, allowing her to now be in a position to make this request), Boaz, in keeping with laws governing the Jewish people, was required to honor Ruth's request.

In the type, once the prepared bride was revealed on the threshing floor and the request was made, Boaz was seen honoring the request. And exactly the same thing is seen in the antitype in the Book of Revelation, with the antitype providing more detail and covering a broader scope of events than this one type covers (though without understanding the type, it is next to impossible to properly understand this in the antitype).

(Note that Orpah [typifying unfaithful Christians] is not seen beyond the first chapter in the book, for she could have *no part* in that awaiting Ruth [typifying faithful Christians] — which had to do with *the redeemed inheritance, marriage, and regality*.)

The antitype begins with events surrounding “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” as introduced in Rev. 1:1-8, with this revelation

occurring during time covering *numerous events within a period lasting slightly over seven years*. And, as seen in this book, events surrounding “the revelation of Jesus Christ” *begin* with the removal of all Christians from the earth to appear before Christ in judgment (1:10ff) and *end* at least seven years later with Christ’s return to the earth and subsequent events connected with His return, leading into the Messianic Kingdom (19:11ff).

The type in the Book of Ruth doesn’t deal with the removal of Christians from the earth, with the unfaithful at the judgment seat, or with an actual judgment per se (though reference is made to judgment through a separation of the wheat from the chaff, along with the time when Ruth appeared [midnight]); nor does the type deal with that seen in Revelation chapter four (the twenty-four elders arising from their thrones and casting their crowns before God’s throne).

(For a discussion of the significance of that seen through the twenty-four elders arising from their thrones and casting their crowns before God’s throne, refer back to Chapter IV in this book.)

Rather than dealing with all of the things seen in the antitype in the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation, the type in the Book of Ruth deals only with the things emanating out of findings and determinations at the judgment seat, as these things have to do with *faithful Christians*. The type deals with *prepared Christians* at the judgment seat (which necessitates their prior removal from the earth) and that which will result from the dual request which they, following the separation of the wheat from the chaff, will make in Christ’s presence — *a prepared bride, through her presence, requesting both a redemption of the inheritance (lost through Adam’s fall, resulting in his death) and marriage* (seen in Rev. 5-19).

And, beyond this dual request being made, the type, in this same respect, deals only with that which Christ will do in that coming day when this request is made (based on *His death and shed blood* [Rev. 5:6, 9, 12, 13]) — *honor the request by redeeming the inheritance and by taking the revealed bride as His wife*.

Christ will honor this dual request in that coming day, in

fulfillment of that foreshadowed by the type, for exactly the same reasons as seen in the type. A prepared, revealed bride will be present; and, the Son, to remain true to His Word and fulfill the many promises in this Word to the bride (e.g., the overcomer's promises in Rev. 2, 3), will act accordingly.

Thus, the redemption of the inheritance in Ruth chapter four has to do with *exactly* the same thing introduced in Revelation chapter five. Matters begin in chapter five, are worked out in chapters six through nineteen (through judgment), and chapter twenty brings events *to exactly the same regal place* events in the Book of Ruth are brought following the redemption of the inheritance in the type (*ref. Ruth 4:13-22*).

(Many things in the preceding will become more evident later in this chapter and in the next chapter of this book. For a more detailed discussion, refer to the author's book, *Ruth*.)

1) *Redemption of the Inheritance*

Comparing the type and the antitype, the order of events, beginning with the rapture, can clearly be seen.

The rapture immediately *follows* the time of the harvest (present dispensation, seen in Ruth ch. 2), has to do with the removal of all Christians from the earth to appear before the judgment seat (Rev. 1:10ff), and *continues* with the revelation of the bride following this judgment (seen in Ruth ch. 3).

And this revelation of the bride *MUST PRECEDE the redemption of the inheritance* (seen in Ruth ch. 4), *for it is the bride who, by her presence, requests BOTH a redemption of the inheritance and marriage.*

Ruth chapters three and four center on the revelation of the bride and the redemption of the inheritance, with the bride becoming *the wife* of the redeemer through this redemptive process. And the first nineteen chapters of the Book of Revelation are seen centering on exactly the same thing, with everything occurring within the scope of time covered by "the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In the Book of Revelation, an entire chapter is given over to presenting Christ as the One both able and willing to redeem the inheritance and, in the process, take the previously revealed

bride as His wife.

Following events surrounding the judgment seat (chs. 1-3) and the casting of crowns before God's throne (ch. 4), the search is conducted for one "worthy" to redeem the inheritance (ch. 5). And, the only One found throughout the whole of God's creation — "in heaven...in ['upon'] earth...under the earth" (v. 3) — was "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," though revealed in relation to the redemptive process about to occur as "the Lamb that was slain" (vv. 4-12).

(Within the course of the subject matter of the Book of Revelation — "the revelation of Jesus Christ" — two things are seen at the forefront: *judgment*, and *redemption*. In connection with the first [*judgment*], Christ is seen as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah"; and, in connection with the second [*redemption*], Christ is seen as "the Lamb that was slain."

This is why Christ is referred to in this two-fold manner in chapter five, for *the redemption of the inheritance will occur through judgment*. And the One Who breaks the seals of the scroll must be seen acting in both capacities — in a *judicial* capacity [as *the Lion*], but also in a *redemptive* capacity [as *the Lamb*].

However, within Christ's work at this time, the emphasis, by far, is on *the redemptive* rather than *the judicial* nature of the events. Revelation 5:5 is the only place in the entire book where Christ is referred to as *the Lion*, but He is referred to twenty-eight times in this book as *the Lamb*. Thus, the emphasis in the book is not on judgment per se, but on *redemption emanating out of judgment*.)

The future marriage of Christ and His bride will occur exactly in accord with the type set forth in Ruth chapter four, not in accord with the way things are done in the modern world, whether in the East or in the West.

As Boaz purchased Ruth through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance, so will Christ purchase His bride through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance (forfeited by the first Adam in Genesis chapter three [cf. Rom. 8:20-22]). And, as Ruth became Boaz's wife through this redemptive process, so will it be with Christ and His bride. The bride (having previously been revealed at the judgment seat) will become Christ's wife through His redemption of the forfeited inheritance.

The redemption of the forfeited inheritance is seen occurring in Revelation chapters five through nineteen. The seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five contains the redemptive terms of the forfeited inheritance (the earth), and chapters six through nineteen reveal judgments and events during the time when the seals are being broken and these terms are being carried out.

Then, near the end of this time, the wedding festivities of the Lamb are seen occurring (Rev. 19:7-9), with a view to the redeemed bride becoming Christ's wife once the work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance has been completed (Rev. 19:11-21).

(That the redemption of the inheritance cannot be completed until Christ returns and overthrows Gentile world power [Rev. 19:11-21] is made plain from judgments seen when the seventh seal is opened. Some of these judgments have to do with events surrounding the overthrow of Gentile world power following Christ's return. This matter is dealt with in Chapters XVI-XVIII in the author's book, *The Time of the End*. Also see pp. xvii-xix in the introduction to this book.

And since the bride becoming Christ's wife is part and parcel with the redemption of the inheritance, the bride cannot appear as Christ's wife until following His return and the overthrow of Gentile world power, as seen at the end of Revelation chapter nineteen.)

Thus, though God completes His dealings with Israel within the scope of time covered by and immediately following Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy in Revelation chapters six through the first part of chapter nineteen, judgmental matters on earth at this time also pertain to the Church as well, though the Church will be in heaven.

This book begins with the Church removed into heaven and judged, followed by the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne (chs. 1-4). Then this book continues with the search for One worthy to loose the seals of the seven-sealed scroll — containing the redemptive terms of the forfeited inheritance (ch. 5). And, in succeeding chapters, covering Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the book deals with *the redemption of the inheritance and with the bride being revealed as Christ's wife once this redemptive process has been completed*.

The redemption of the inheritance in Revelation chapters six through nineteen has to do with *the domain over which Christ and His wife, His consort queen (ch. 19), will rule during the succeeding Messianic Era (ch. 20)*. And it is in the preceding respect that events in these chapters have to do with the Church as well as with Israel, though the Church will be in heaven when these events unfold on earth.

Also note that when Scripture deals with the “marriage” of Christ and His bride, as in Rev. 19:7-9, the reference is always to *the festivities surrounding the marriage*, not to the marriage itself. There will be no marriage ceremony per se, as we think of marriage in our modern-day culture. There wasn’t one in the type, and there won’t be one in the antitype either. And this is an easy matter to see in both the type (Ruth 4) and the antitype (Rev. 5-19).

The wedding festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son — which portend, and in this case necessitate, a marriage — will occur in heaven *very near the end of the redemption of the forfeited inheritance*. But, as previously seen, the entire redemptive process must be carried out before the bride can become Christ’s wife.

In this passage, the marriage festivities are seen occurring *immediately preceding the completion of the redemption of the forfeited inheritance* (chs. 6-19). Christ’s return and the subsequent overthrow of Gentile world power, as seen in Rev. 19:11-21, *completes the redemption of the inheritance*; and this will be followed by the long-awaited Messianic Era, during which time Christ will reign as King and His wife as consort queen (20:1ff).

(Note that when the type in the Book of Ruth and the antitype in the Book of Revelation are viewed together, the chronology of events in connection with the rapture and beyond is easy to follow.

The rapture, the removal of Christians from Man’s Day into the Lord’s Day, from earth into heaven, occurs first.

[The timing of the rapture, as it relates to the Tribulation, has, over the years, come under question by some Bible students. Suffice it to say, a person simply *cannot* take the complete word picture in the Old Testament (seen through viewing all of the various types on the subject together), set it alongside the New Testament antitype, and come to any conclusion other than seeing the complete Church (all Christians) being removed *preceding* the Tribulation.

A person *must* understand that the rapture is *the first* of the revealed events in “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” else he will fail to properly understand numerous things about the succeeding revealed events. If one goes wrong with the timing of this beginning event in “the revelation of Jesus Christ” — the rapture, in relation to the Tribulation (which has to do with *the redemption of the inheritance and marriage, necessitating a prior removal of the Church from the earth and a revelation of the bride at the judgment seat*) — he will find himself being forced into other erroneous interpretations numerous places throughout the events which follow.]

The rapture is followed by *the judgment of Christians* [all Christians (II Cor. 5:10; cf. Rev. 1:10-20)], *the revelation of the bride at the judgment seat* [with resulting events (e.g., crowns cast before God’s throne)], *the redemption of the inheritance* [being concluded and brought into full realization at the time of Christ’s return and the overthrow of Gentile world power], and *the bride becoming Christ’s wife* [with marriage part and parcel with the redemption of the inheritance].

Then the Messianic Era can be ushered in, with God’s firstborn Sons — Christ, Israel, and the Church [which will have been adopted into a firstborn status at this time] — occupying their proper regal positions on and over the earth.)

2) Result of the Redemption

The result of the redemption of the inheritance — type or antitype — is *regal* in nature. In the type, Ruth became Boaz’s wife, and Boaz’s lineage is traced to King David (Ruth 4:13-22). In the antitype, the bride will become the wife of the Lamb, Who, with His consort queen, will reign as the greater Son of David (II Sam. 7:12, 13; cf. Matt. 9:27; 12:23; Luke 1:31-33).

The result of the redemption of the inheritance, as seen in the antitype, will be *reverential awe and excitement in heaven, undoubtedly of a nature not heretofore seen.*

John first heard “a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, *Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; For true and righteous are his judgments...*” (Rev. 19:1-3).

Then John saw the twenty-four elders, along with the four

living creatures, as they “fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, *Amen; Alleluia*” (v. 4).

Then John heard a voice coming out of the throne which said, “*Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great*” (v. 5).

This was then followed by John hearing a voice which he described as that of “a great multitude... many waters... mighty thunderings, saying, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*” (v. 6).

Then, for the first time since the inheritance began to be redeemed, the bride comes back into view. And the one previously seen as the bride is now seen as the one about to become *the wife of the Lamb* — the one about to become the wife of the One Who will shortly complete the redemption of the inheritance, the One Who through a completion of the judgments contained in the seven-sealed scroll at the time of His return will take the bride as His wife.

Note how all of this is anticipated in Rev. 19:7-9:

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage [‘marriage festivities’] of the Lamb is come, and his wife [Gk., *gune*, meaning ‘woman,’ (marital status unknown through the use of this word); but here, contextually, still Christ’s bride, not yet His wife (*ref.* NASB, NIV)], hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed [*lit.*, ‘array herself’] in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints [*lit.*, ‘righteousnesses of the saints,’ or ‘righteous acts of the saints’].

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper [or ‘marriage banquet, festivities’] of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

And John, having previously been shown all the various things surrounding “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” beginning with the removal of Christians from the earth, now finds himself *at this climactic point*. The completion of the redemption of the inheritance is about to occur, the previously revealed bride is about

to become the Lamb's wife, and the marriage festivities (with a view to ensuing events) can at last begin. And John, having been shown these things and finding himself at this climactic point, could do no more than fall at the feet of the one who revealed these things to him (v. 10).

Thus, the entire sequence of unfolding events in the Book of Revelation — foreshadowed by unfolding events in the Book of Ruth — can only be seen as *regal* in nature, in complete keeping with the way man was introduced at the time of his creation.

God's first statement relative to man — an entirely new creation in God's universe, one created in His Own "image" and "likeness" — was, "let them [the man and the woman together] have dominion [Heb., *radah*, 'rule']" (Gen. 1:26). *The first man, the first Adam, was to reign as king, with his wife reigning at his side as consort queen.* And, though the fall ensued before man took the sceptre, with the domain remaining under Satan's rule, God's purpose for man's creation in the beginning remained unchanged.

And this purpose is seen being brought to fruition 6,000 years later in the Book of Revelation. Following events seen in the first nineteen chapters of this book, *the second Man, the last Adam, will reign as King, with His wife reigning at His side as consort queen* (ch. 20a).

The Spirit is in the world today searching for a bride for God's Son. Once the bride has been procured, all Christians will be removed from the earth. And the bride will then be singled out and revealed at the judgment seat (Rev. 1-3). Crowns will then be relinquished by one group of angels, with a view to man, after 6,000 years of sin and death, at last finding himself in a position to realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning (Rev. 4).

The inheritance will have been redeemed — the domain over which Satan and his angels presently rule, but the domain over which Christ and His consort queen will be about to rule (Rev. 5-19).

Then, once the inheritance has been redeemed, the bride will be revealed as *Christ's wife*. And ensuing events (which will include crowns forcibly taken from Satan and his angels at the time of their overthrow) will lead into the Messianic Era, when *the King with His consort queen, at long last, hold the sceptre* (Rev. 20a).

6

Redemption, Marriage, Regality

THAT INVOLVED IN THE REDEMPTION OF THE INHERITANCE

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book [‘a scroll’] written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book [‘the scroll’], and to loose the seals thereof?

And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book [‘the scroll’], neither to look thereon.

And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book [‘the scroll’], neither to look thereon.

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book [‘the scroll’], and to loose the seven seals thereof.

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

And he came and took the book [‘the scroll’] out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne” (Rev. 5:1-7).

(Background material for this chapter can be found in the preceding chapter, Chapter V.)

“Redemption” in the title of this chapter has to do with *the earth*, not with man (though the nations, brought out from under Satan’s rule [as the earth], are included in this same redemptive respect as well [cf. Ps. 2:8; Rev. 10:1-6]). It has to do with that which occurs through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five, which has to do with *the redemption of an inheritance belonging to man, though not presently in man’s possession.*

And, in connection with the redemption of this inheritance, the redemption of the earth, *two marriages* are seen — one between *God and Israel* (which will follow Israel's repentance, resulting from judgments associated with the redemption of the inheritance), and the other between *Christ and His bride* (which will follow a revelation of the bride at the judgment seat).

Both are part and parcel with the redemption of the inheritance. Both are inseparably tied to this redemption, with both occurring in an automatic sense in connection with the completion of this redemption.

That is to say, *with a redemption of the inheritance having occurred, two marriages will also occur.*

One (redemption) cannot occur without the other (marriage), as seen in the account of Boaz redeeming the inheritance (a field, belonging to the family) and taking Ruth as his wife in the process in Ruth 4:1-10 (foreshadowing, in type, one of the two marriages — Christ and His bride).

Then, *redemption* (of the inheritance, the earth) and *marriage* (God and Israel, Christ and His bride) lead into the realm where everything has been moving since man's creation and fall almost 6,000 years ago, as seen in the opening three chapters of Genesis.

Both *redemption* and *marriage* lead into *regality*, with man, at long last, realizing the purpose for his creation in the beginning — *ruling the earth, the redeemed inheritance, in the stead of Satan and his angels.*

In this respect, *redemption, marriage, and regality* form the subject at hand in Revelation chapters five through the first part of chapter twenty, or in the four chapters of the Book of Ruth, or in Jeremiah chapters thirty through thirty-three.

Redemption has to do with *the domain which is to be ruled, the earth (which included the nations on the earth)*; then, *marriage* and *regality* have to do with *those who will rule the redeemed domain — Christ in the midst of Israel on earth (His Father's restored wife), seated on David's throne; and Christ with His wife in the heavens, seated on His Own throne* (Joel 2:27; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21).

Beginning in the Book of Genesis

The whole of the matter — *redemption, marriage, and regality*

— has its foundation in the opening chapters of Genesis, where that seen in later Scripture is introduced after exactly the same fashion that it is later seen. *It must be this way*, for the foundation is set forth in a perfect, unchangeable manner at the beginning; and the remainder is simply detail and commentary which progressively builds upon the previously laid foundation.

Beginning in the opening verses of Genesis, after God created the earth and subsequently brought it into a ruined state because of Satan's sin (Gen. 1:1, 2a), *He then restored the earth for man immediately prior to man's creation* (Gen. 1:2b-28; cf. Isa. 45:18). That would be to say, *He redeemed the earth, with a view to man (with his wife), ruling the restored domain*. Thus, *redemption* (restoring the ruined earth), *marriage* (Adam and Eve together), and *regality* (ruling the restored domain) are seen at the beginning of Scripture, *providing THE CENTRAL FOCUS for the remainder of Scripture*.

But Satan, the incumbent ruler of the domain, stepped in and brought about man's fall. And because of man's fall, man became *a ruined creation*; and, as occurred when Satan had previously fallen, the material creation once again found itself in *a ruined state* (Gen. 3:1-19). And, for man to realize the purpose for his creation, this necessitated *redemption, not only for himself but also for the material creation over which he was to rule*.

And this is what God then set about to do. God stepped in and began to act in the first realm, relative to man's redemption. God clothed Adam's and Eve's naked bodies (they had lost the covering of Glory previously enswathing their bodies) with coats of skin from one or more animals, requiring death and shed blood (Gen. 3:21).

And God's judgment upon sin in this manner, on man's behalf — requiring death and shed blood for redemption — is not only seen immediately following man's fall in Eden but also throughout the next 4,000 years, culminating in the Son's finished work at Calvary.

(E.g., note the very next chapter, Gen. 4, with events foreshadowing that which would occur 4,000 years later — Cain slaying Abel, Israel slaying Christ; the blood of Abel crying out from the ground [an

unredeemed ground, under a curse], and the blood of Christ speaking better things than that of Abel's [which would allow the One Who died and shed His blood to redeem not only man but also to ultimately effect redemption for the ground from which Abel's blood had cried; *cf.* Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24; Rev. 5:6, 9, 12, 13; 6:1].)

But any action toward redeeming the earth would not occur for 6,000 years (*i.e.*, action in connection with God's immediate judgment upon sin at the beginning by once again bringing the material creation into a ruin). Redemption for the material creation, through the judgment which God now required, rendered by the only One Whom God recognized as qualified to act in this realm, would not occur until the end of Man's Day. And it would occur through the act of the second man, the last Adam, the One Who died and shed His blood.

This is what Revelation chapters five through nineteen are about. They are about *effecting a redemption* of the creation subjected by man's fall to "the bondage of corruption" (Rom. 8:20, 21), bringing to pass "the times of restitution ['restoration'] of all things" (Acts 3:21). And this, among other related things, will allow the Son to reign at the end of the redemptive process, as seen in Revelation chapter twenty.

(Relative to man's redemption, no difference exists today from that which existed in Eden almost 6,000 years ago. The whole panorama of salvation, past, present, and future — spirit, soul, and body — requires death and shed blood throughout. God's requirements were set at the beginning, they were set perfect, and, accordingly, no change can ever occur.

In the past aspect of salvation, the salvation which we presently possess [having to do with man's spirit], the death of God's Son and His shed blood are required [Christ's finished work at Calvary].

*In the continuing aspect of salvation [present, to be realized in the future], the salvation of the soul, death and shed blood are, as well, required. But now it is death in relation to the individual. Now it is the death of the old man [*cf.* Rom. 6:1-13; Col. 2:12; 3:1-10]; and, as well, it is also Christ's shed blood as before, but not His blood relating to His finished work at Calvary; now it is His blood on the mercy seat in heaven; now His work as High Priest is in view [*cf.* John 13:4-12; Heb.*

4:14-16; 9:11, 12; I John 1:6-2:2] — a work on behalf of those presently being saved [a present Divine work, which has to do with the saving of the soul]. And this present work can occur only because those presently being saved have “passed from death unto life” [past aspect of salvation] and can now be dealt with in the spiritual realm.

And *the redemption of the body*, as seen in Rom. 8:23 [not to be confused with the resurrection of the body], has to do with the future adoption into a firstborn status and is part and parcel with the salvation of the soul.

All is based on and requires death and shed blood.

[Ref. the author’s books, *Salvation of the Soul* and *God’s Firstborn Sons*, for more information on the preceding.]

Relative to the redemption of the earth, as well, no difference exists today from that which existed in Eden. This is evident from comparing the past redemption/restoration of the pre-Adamic earth with the future redemption/restoration of the post-Adamic earth.

When God brought about a judgment upon and a subsequent restoration of the pre-Adamic earth, man did not yet exist. His creation occurred *following* the redemption/restoration of the earth. Thus, man did not fit into the equation, and God could redeem/restore the earth simply on the basis of His past judgment of sin through reducing the earth to a ruin, as occurred before man’s creation.

Once man appeared on the scene though, reducing the earth to a ruin once again [judgment, allowing for redemption] was no longer sufficient in and of itself, as before. Judgment now must not only befall *the earth* but *man* upon the earth as well. And, as with man’s present redemption, death and shed blood must be involved in the future redemption of the earth in this respect, *for not only is man now inseparably involved but this future judgment will befall man, not the earth.*

“Judgment” upon the earth itself is *past*. This judgment occurred almost 6,000 years ago, in Gen. 3:17-19 [with the absence of death and shed blood, as also seen in the previous judgment of the earth in Gen. 1:2a]. But judgment upon those dwelling on the earth, *now inseparably connected with a redemption of the earth, through judgment, is still future* [and this part of the earth’s judgment, resulting in redemption, will necessitate *death and shed blood* (for death and shed blood *must* exist where man is involved, else there can be no redemption)].

Note how this is set forth in chapter five following a search for

One worthy to take the scroll and break the seals on the scroll. Christ was the only One found worthy — in heaven, on earth, or under the earth — to take the scroll from His Father's right hand, break the seals of the scroll, and bring about the earth's redemption *through judgment upon the earth-dwellers* [5:1ff]. And doing this, He is seen acting in two realms [providing the reason why He was the only One found worthy, for He was the only One Who could act in these two realms] — as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” *effecting judgment* [5:5] and as “the Lamb that was slain,” *effecting redemption/restoration* [5:6, 9, 12, 13; 6:1], which will occur *through judgment*.

This redemption/restoration of the earth will occur at the end of the 6,000 years. And this is what is so vividly described in Revelation chapters six through nineteen, which results from the breaking of the seals of the seven-sealed scroll introduced in chapter five.

Redemption of the domain — the earth — was provided for the first man, the first Adam, prior to the time that he was to reign; and redemption of the same domain will be provided for the second Man, the last Adam, prior to the time that He is to reign.)

With the preceding in mind, attention can now be directed to how this whole panorama of events is dealt with in the Books of Ruth, Jeremiah, and Revelation. That seen in the Books of Ruth and Jeremiah draws from that seen in Genesis and, with Genesis, provides the necessary information for one to understand that seen in the Book of Revelation. And the Book of Revelation, in turn, draws from all three books in this same respect.

Continuing with this type understanding of the matter, note everything in a larger context in both the Books of Ruth and Jeremiah, as this material reflects on that seen being carried out in the Book of Revelation.

Ruth deals with one aspect of the matter — *with Christians in relation to the redemption of the inheritance and marriage, followed by regality*.

Jeremiah deals with the other aspect of the matter — *with Israel in relation to the redemption of the inheritance and marriage, followed by regality*.

And Revelation brings both of these Old Testament accounts together and deals *with both Christians and Israel in relation to the*

redemption of the inheritance and marriage, followed by regality.

And the whole of the matter rests upon and provides detail and commentary for that which began to be revealed in the opening chapters of Genesis.

Continuing in the Book of Ruth

Everything in the Book of Ruth moves toward a *goal*, seen in chapter four. Thus, in a larger sense, *the entire book* deals with that realized at the end of the book — Boaz redeeming the inheritance (a field belonging to Elimelech's family [which had to do with a family property inheritance; cf. Josh. 19:1-51]), Ruth becoming Boaz's wife through the process of this redemption, and with regality brought into the picture.

The book, from beginning to end, moves toward or deals directly with *redemption (of a forfeited family inheritance), marriage (of the prospective bride [Ruth] to the redeemer of the inheritance [Boaz]), and regality (the redeemer and Ruth together, with regality seen through their great grandson, King David).*

Ruth and Orpah, through marriage, became members of Elimelech and Naomi's family in the first chapter of the book. But, because of the deaths of all three male members of the family, all three women lost any access that they might have had to *an inheritance, a field*, belonging to the family (which was now in another person's possession, requiring *redemption* if ownership was to revert back to the family).

(It is evident from comparing Scripture with Scripture that *redemptive work of this nature required headship*, which could be exercised only by a *male member of the family*.)

Taking this back to the beginning in order to lay a proper foundation, it wasn't Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit that brought about the fall [though indirectly it did, for this left Adam without a choice other than to also partake of the fruit (e.g., cf. Gen. 2:15-17, 21-24; II Cor. 5:21; I Tim. 2:13, 14)]. Adam, as *the federal head of the human race*, had to partake of this fruit to bring about the fall [Rom. 5:12-14].

In this respect, the fall occurred at the time Adam partook of the fruit, not at the time Eve had previously partaken of the fruit. It was

at the time Adam partook of the fruit that both Adam and Eve lost the covering of Glory which had previously enswathed their bodies, which they tried to replace with fig leaves [Gen. 3:6, 7].

The fall occurred through *one man's* "disobedience" [partaking of the forbidden fruit] as redemption subsequently occurred through *one Man's* "obedience" [culminating in His finished work at Calvary]. As in the fall, so must it be in redemption. *Headship, as it would be seen in the Man alone, must be seen throughout* [Rom. 5:15-19].

And this would not only be true as it pertained to the fall and subsequent redemption of man, as seen in Romans chapter five, but in the redemption of *individuals* [a slave or a widowed woman] or *land* in the Mosaic Economy. *Only males* are spoken of in connection with these types of redemption in Leviticus chapters twenty-five, twenty-seven, and Deuteronomy chapter twenty-five [e.g., "Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him..." (Lev. 25:49a)].

Generic thoughts or terms are not being used in these passages when referring to individuals. Rather, from the way that the whole of the matter surrounding redemption is handled in Scripture, beginning in Genesis, these passages can only have to do with *redemption, requiring headship [which can be exercised only by a male]*.

And understanding this fact is a major key to understanding the redemption of the inheritance and Ruth's widowhood in the Book of Ruth — not only in the text at hand but throughout the Book as different facets of the matter are seen and dealt with.)

Following Elimelech's death, the family rights to the field (as these rights had to do with redemption, resulting in a change of ownership) passed to his wife, Naomi, evident from that stated in Ruth 4:1-5. But, as is also evident, neither Naomi nor her daughters-in-law could redeem the property (with Ruth later revealed to be the only daughter-in-law that could have anything to do with the property in this respect [Orpah had previously turned back to the things of the world and, though still a member of the family, *was no longer in view relative to the property, the family inheritance;* thus, the book does not deal with her beyond the first chapter]).

As previously shown, *a male member of the family (exercising headship) was required if the inheritance was to be redeemed*. This is why Naomi immediately showed such an interest in Boaz when Ruth, at the end of the day, told Naomi in whose field she had

been gleaning. Naomi knew that *Boaz, a near kinsman, could not only redeem the field but could redeem Ruth's widowhood as well* (Ruth 2:19ff).

Christians in like manner, though members of the family (God's family), have lost access to their inheritance — the earth, over which *the new creation* "in Christ" was brought into existence to rule as co-heir with the One Who would redeem the inheritance. And this access was lost in time past, long before *the new creation* "in Christ" had been brought into existence. It was lost through the first man, the first Adam's fall. The earth (the forfeited inheritance) is now in another's possession. It is now in Satan's possession, in possession of the incumbent ruler of the earth.

God had restored the earth for man. The earth, in a chaotic and ruined state, resulting from Satan's sin, had been removed from this state, which could only be viewed as an act of *redemption* (which is the idea behind *restoration*, whether pertaining to man or the earth).

Man had been created to rule this restored domain. And, though man found himself in a position to wear regal garments and reign, the fall occurred before he wore these garments and held the sceptre.

(Note that any vestiges of "sin," which would necessitate *ruin* [death as well where man is concerned] could not have existed in connection with the material creation at the time of man's creation. Bringing conditions of this nature to pass would have necessitated a redemption/restoration so complete that *nothing* would then exist relative to the ruin of the pre-Adamic earth. *Nothing* associated with the pre-Adamic ruin could have been brought over into a post-Adamic world [e.g., the entire fossil record existing today, which has to do with *dead things* (which is associated with *sin, decay*)] could not be dated back farther than man's creation and subsequent sin]. The preceding would have had to be the case for several reasons.

First, God created man from *the ground*, and He would not have created sinless man from that which was still connected, in any way, with the earth's previous ruined state. Further, man, who knew no sin, was to rule the restored domain; and man, who knew no sin, would not be placed on an earth which still retained some past connection

with sin, which would be the case with an unredeemed earth. Things of this nature would be one reason why God did not create man *until after He had restored the earth.*

And this same type removal of the earth from that connected with sin, as well, can be seen in that which will occur yet future. The earth will be redeemed/restored — it *must* be redeemed/restored — *before* man, once again, finds himself enswathed in Glory and in a position to wear regal garments and reign.)

But once Satan had brought about man's fall, things relative to both man and the earth changed completely. Sin and death entered into the picture, and man found himself in a ruined state, separated from God; and, as a result, the earth became in a ruined state once again, exactly as had previously occurred following Satan's fall (Gen. 1:2a; 3:6-10, 17-19; Rom. 8:20, 21).

Now, both *man* and *the earth* needed redemption, restoration. Man now not only found himself separated from God but he, because of that which had occurred, forfeited the domain over which he was to rule; and he was *completely incapable* of acting relative to redemption/restoration in either realm.

As previously shown, God began to act almost immediately relative to man's redemption (Gen. 3:21), but the redemption of the earth was another matter. Aside from the immediate judgment upon the earth in Gen. 3:17-19, redemptive work for the earth (which would be brought to pass through subsequent judgmental activity) was put on hold for 6,000 years.

In the type from the Book of Ruth, during the interval of time between access to the inheritance being lost beyond retrieval in chapter one and the inheritance being redeemed in chapter four, certain events are seen. These events, from a typical standpoint, have to do with Christians and cover time during the present dispensation and at the end of the dispensation (slightly over 2,000 years).

These events have to do with Ruth gleaning in Boaz's field, foreshadowing Christians gleaning in Christ's field, the world; these events have to do with Boaz, at the end of the harvest, redeeming the inheritance (a field) and taking Ruth as his wife, foreshadowing Christ, at the end of the harvest, redeeming the

inheritance (a field, the earth) and taking the bride (comprised of Christians) as His wife; and these events have to do with regality, seen at the end of Ruth chapter four in the type and seen in Revelation chapter twenty in the antitype.

Continuing in the Book of Jeremiah

The account in Jeremiah deals with Israel in relation to the forfeited inheritance. But because of Israel's actions at the time of Christ's first coming (rejecting the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, with resulting consequences), the account contains a reference to *Christians* as well (as the account in the Book of Ruth, through "Naomi," contains a reference to *Israel* as well).

(Through God's promises to Abraham and his seed through Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons, Israel in the Old Testament was made the repository for *both heavenly and earthly promises and blessings*, which were to be realized in *both heavenly and earthly spheres of the kingdom* [cf. Gen. 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:12-14; Heb. 11:8-16].

An earthly theocracy existed for about eight hundred years in the Old Testament, from Moses' day to the time of the Babylonian captivity seen in the Jeremiah text under discussion. This kingdom existed from the time that the Glory indwelt the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle at Mt. Sinai during Moses' day to the time that the Glory left the Temple and ascended back into the heavens from the Mt. of Olives at the time of the Babylonian captivity [Ex. 40:33-38; Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23].

At Christ first coming, He offered the other sphere of the kingdom to the Jewish people, *the heavenly sphere, the kingdom of the heavens* [Matt. 3:1, 2; 4:17; 10:5-7]. This is what they rejected, and this is what was taken from the nation [Matt. 21:33-45], not the earthly sphere, the kingdom covenanted to David.

And this heavenly sphere of the kingdom is presently being offered to *the new creation* "in Christ" — Christians — a creation which God called into existence [following Israel's rejection] to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected [cf. Eph. 2:11-15; 3:1-11; 6:10-18; I Peter 2:9, 10].

Thus, with the preceding in mind, one can easily see how the Church is alluded to in Jeremiah's prophecy dealing with Israel. In Jer. 33:22, both spheres of the kingdom are seen. And though both spheres would have pertained to Israel alone at the time this was written, a different

situation exists following the heavenly sphere of the kingdom being taken from Israel.)

The account of Jeremiah's redemption of the inheritance in the first part of chapter thirty-two (vv. 6-14) is set in the middle of a larger section having to do with Israel's future restoration and that which God will do for the nation in that coming day, following Israel's repentance (chs. 30-33).

God will regather His people, provide cleansing from all their iniquities, make a new covenant with them, and place them in their own land. All four chapters are filled with God's promises in this respect.

Then, once a cleansed nation has been restored to the land under a new covenant, the nation will realize a redeemed inheritance, as the restored wife of Jehovah, within a restored theocracy.

The Jewish people realizing a redeemed inheritance in that day is shown by God instructing Jeremiah to redeem a piece of property immediately prior to the Babylonian captivity being completed, with a view to redeemed inheritances of this nature being realized when the people returned from captivity (Jer. 32:15, 42-44). That's what Jeremiah's redemption of the inheritance is about.

Jeremiah's redemption of the inheritance simply showed another part of that which God would one day do for His people. Not only would a cleansed people be restored to the land under a new covenant, but God would redeem the inheritance (in this instance, the earth, over which Israel would rule in a restored theocracy); and God would again take Israel as His wife (a necessity for a restored theocracy to exist).

In that coming day, Jeremiah describes God's attitude toward and the actions of His restored people in these words:

"And it [a restored nation in a restored land] shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

Thus saith the Lord, Again there shall be heard in this place which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without

man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,

The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride [God and Israel, in a larger sense], the voice of them that say, Praise ye the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for his mercy endureth forever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord" (33:9-11).

Thus, Jeremiah's prophecy follows the same order as that seen beginning in Genesis and continuing in Ruth. Jeremiah presents the redemption of *a field* (with "the field," as in Ruth, pointing to and foreshadowing *the world, the earth* [Matt. 13:38]). And this redemption is set within a larger context having to do with *Israel during the Messianic Era*.

The larger context presents *Israel as the restored wife of Jehovah* (33:11). And occupying this position, in connection with a redeemed inheritance (*a field, foreshadowing the redemption of the earth yet future, through which God will again take Israel as His wife*), *Israel will exercise regality in relation to the redeemed inheritance in a restored kingdom*.

Ending in the Book of Revelation

All of the preceding is brought together in the Book of Revelation, where the outworking of the matter is seen. And the redemption of the inheritance, taking possession of *a clear title deed to the earth*, occupies a large part of this book — from chapter five through chapter nineteen.

In a direct manner, the redemption of the inheritance — seen by the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll, and that which ensues — occupies all of chapters five and six, chapters eight through ten, the latter part of chapter eleven, and chapters fifteen and sixteen. In an indirect manner, the redemption of the inheritance is seen in all of the remaining material, beginning with chapter seven and ending with chapter nineteen.

The redemption of the inheritance, allowing the Son to hold the title deed to the earth, is *the crux* of what this last book in Scripture is about. Through this means, not only will the inheritance be redeemed but the Father will have taken to Himself a wife once

again (restored Israel); and the Son, as well, will have taken to Himself a wife (the one being acquired by the Spirit during the present dispensation). And because of all this, the Son, in that day, will be able to take the kingdom and reign.

The wife of Jehovah, as “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5, 6) — with God’s Son (Joel 2:27; Luke 1:31-33) — will occupy *the earthly sphere of the kingdom, in a restored theocracy, realizing earthly promises and blessings.*

And the wife of the Son, as co-heirs with Christ, as “a royal priesthood [*lit.*, ‘a kingly priesthood’], an holy nation” (I Peter. 2:9; cf. Rev. 5:10) — with God’s Son (Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21) — will occupy *the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, in a restored theocracy, realizing heavenly promises and blessings.*

Christ, in the preceding respect, will have a dual reign. He will reign over the whole of the kingdom, from both David’s throne on earth and from His Own throne in the heavens.

(The Septuagint rendering [Greek version of the O.T.] of the quoted part of Ex. 19:6 is identical to the Greek wording in the quoted part of I Peter 2:9. The former relates to *the earthly seed of Abraham* [Israel], and the latter relates to *the heavenly seed of Abraham* [the Church] — two of God’s three firstborn Sons Who will ascend the throne, hold the sceptre, and reign in the kingdom.)

That which was lost by Adam in the Book of Genesis is seen regained by Christ in the Book of Revelation. And between these two times — separated by 6,000 years — man has the accounts in Ruth and Jeremiah to help him better understand not only that which happened in Genesis but also that which is about to happen when the Son takes the seven-sealed scroll from His Father’s right hand, as seen in the Book of Revelation.

(Relative to another facet of the place which Christians occupy in relation to the redemption of the inheritance — showing the fallacy of that which is often taught about Christians accompanying Christ at the time of His return following the Tribulation, *at which time He will complete this redemption by completing the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the scroll* — note pp. xvii-xix in the introduction to this book.)

7

Taking the Scroll, Breaking the Seals

CARRYING OUT THE REDEMPTIVE TERMS FOR THE INHERITANCE

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts [‘living creatures’] saying, Come and see.

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:1, 2).

Revelation chapters one through three present *the complete Church* in heaven following the present dispensation. Events of the judgment seat are depicted; and when that depicted is one day realized, *the overcomers*, those found worthy to rule the nations with Christ, will be made known. And the scene which follows in chapter four is *the only one* which a person could expect (vv. 2ff).

There is a *relinquishment of crowns by angelic rulers* (vv. 10, 11), with a view to *a new order of rulers* — *Christians having previously been shown qualified through decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat (chs. 1-3) — taking these crowns and ruling the earth in the stead of the present order of rulers, in the stead of angels* (Rom. 8:18, 19).

“There exists a government of the universe conducted by great angels and their subordinates. Many of these have fallen from their original allegiance to God and prostitute their offices and powers to corrupt His realms. It is therefore inevitable that a re-arrangement shall come in that heavenly government. This will be effected by Christ and His glorified followers being invested with the whole of that heavenly authority. For it is written that ‘not unto angels hath God subjected the inhabited earth to come’ (Hebrews 2:5).”

— G. H. Lang
World Chaos

Then, immediately after Christians and a segment of the angelic rulers have been dealt with (chs. 1-4), chapter five opens with God seated on His throne, holding a seven-sealed scroll in His right hand. And a powerful angel proclaims with a loud voice,

“Who is worthy to open the book [‘scroll’], and to loose the seals thereof” (v. 2b)?

And no man, in heaven, on earth, or beneath the earth, was found worthy to take the scroll from the hand of the One seated on the throne, break the seals, and look upon the contents (vv. 1-3).

Then John began *to weep deeply* (v. 4), for he could only have known, from the Old Testament and the corresponding Mosaic Economy, the entirety of that which was involved. The entire program of God, as outlined in His Word regarding His Son, Israel, the Church, and the Nations, could not be brought to pass apart from someone stepping forth to function in this capacity.

Then the scene abruptly changes. Christ is seen as One worthy to take the scroll out of His Father’s right hand, break the seals, and look upon the contents.

And, within the sphere of Christ acting in this capacity, He is seen functioning in two realms — as both *a Lion* and *a Lamb*.

“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not [*lit.*, ‘Stop weeping’]: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed [Gk., *nikao*, ‘to conquer,’ ‘to be victorious’ (Christ has proved victorious in such a manner as to be deemed worthy)] to open the book [‘scroll’], and to loose the seven seals thereof” (v. 5).

But Christ does not take the scroll from His Father’s right hand as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*. Rather, He appears as and acts in the capacity of *the Lamb which had been slain*.

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts [‘living creatures’], and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

And he came and took the book [‘scroll’] out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne” (vv. 6, 7).

Revelation 5:5 is the only place in the New Testament where Christ is referred to as a *Lion*. And reference to the tribe of Judah simply continues the thought of *regality* from the previous chapter. Judah was *the kingly tribe*, the tribe which possessed *the regal part of the birthright*, which goes back to that which had resulted millenniums before from the action of Jacob's firstborn, Reuben.

(Through sexual impropriety, Jacob's firstborn, Reuben, forfeited the rights of the firstborn. And these rights [*priestly, regal, and a double portion of the father's goods*] were divided among three of his brothers. *The priestly rights* were given to "Levi," *the regal rights* were given to "Judah," and *the rights to a double portion of the father's goods* were given to "Joseph" [realized through his two sons, "Ephraim" and "Manasseh"].

And this has never changed throughout Israel's history; nor will it ever change at any time in the future.)

Christ, of the lineage of Judah through David, was about to take the throne and rule the earth. Thus, being introduced, He is first seen as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (v. 5; cf. Gen. 49:10). He was about to exercise *the regal rights* inherent in that seen through His lineage. But first *He must redeem the forfeited inheritance*. And to do this He must act in the capacity of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (cf. Rev. 5:6; 13:8).

With respect to *redemption*, Christ is referred to as "a Lamb" twenty-eight times in the Book of Revelation. That seen within the seven-sealed scroll has to do with *redemption* and *the earth*. This scroll contains *God's redemptive terms surrounding the earth*, and Christ is seen breaking the seals of the scroll as a *slain Lamb*, not as the Lion from the tribe of Judah. Exercising that depicted by the latter could only occur *following* the breaking of the seals and carrying out the redemptive terms contained in the scroll.

That Which Is Involved

Chapters six through nineteen relate events having to do with the breaking of the seven seals, along with related events occurring on earth during this time. These chapters relate events having to do with God's end-time dealings with Israel, fulfilling

the seventieth and final week of Daniel's prophecy and continuing into and through the seventy-five days seen at the end of Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27; 12:11-13).

Events occurring during this period (slightly over seven years) are dealt with time after time in Old Testament prophecy. And that should be understandable, for judgments during this period bring events to pass which, in turn, bring that toward which God has been working for 6,000 years to a conclusion.

Judgments during this period not only result in a redemption of the forfeited inheritance but they also bring Israel to the place of repentance. And bringing Israel to the place of repentance during this time *will allow everything else to fall into place. Everything is contingent upon Israel's repentance.*

Thus, is it any wonder that both events and the timing of these events designed to bring this to pass not only form a major subject of Old Testament prophecy but also occupy a major section of the final book of Scripture as well?

(All of the work having to do with the redemption of the inheritance though will not be finished until after Christ returns at the completion of Daniel's Seventieth Week and overthrows Gentile world power [Rev. 19:11-21], preceding the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom [*ref.* Chapters V, VI in this book].)

Daniel, in the last three verses in his prophecy [12:11-13], reveals a seventy-five-day period between the time of Christ's return and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. And it is evident from related Scripture dealing with events at the time of Christ's return that the completion of the redemption of the inheritance will occur toward the end of this seventy-five-day period [for, when Christ returns, He will need time to deal with Israel (*cf.* I Peter 4:17), then with the Gentile nations].)

Then, the bride for whom the Spirit is searching during the present dispensation, who will be revealed through the decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat (Rev. 1-4), will, through the process of the judgments during and immediately beyond the subsequent seven-year Tribulation, automatically become Christ's wife at the completion of the redemption of the inheritance.

In Old Testament typology this is seen through Ruth being

revealed as the bride on Boaz's threshing floor (Ruth 3) and then automatically becoming Boaz's wife through the process of Boaz subsequently redeeming the inheritance (Ruth 4; *ref.* Chapters V, VI in this book).

Not only must Christ redeem the inheritance in the antitype but two things must occur in connection with this redemption:

- 1) Israel must be restored as the wife of Jehovah.
- 2) And, those Christians removed from the body of Christ (Gen. 2:21-23), forming the bride (brought to pass through and based on decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat), must be wed to Christ.

The necessity of both being brought to pass preceding the Messianic Era is seen in God's creation of and dealings with man in relation to the government of the earth in the opening chapters of Genesis. God restored the ruined domain (Gen. 1:2b-25).

Then God created man to rule the restored domain (Gen. 1:26-28). And God created man "male and female," with the female seen as being a part of the male (created within the male and later removed and formed into a helpmate for the male [Gen. 2:18-24]). Consequently, together, the man and the woman formed *one complete being*.

Man was created in the image and likeness of God to rule the earth (Gen. 1:26), he was created male and female (Gen. 1:27), and it was to *the complete man* (comprised of both the man and the woman) that God said:

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion [Heb., *radah*, 'rule'; also v. 26] over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every moving thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

The overall account of man's creation forms an unchangeable type, showing the manner in which man was/is to ascend the throne. The man and the woman in the type were to ascend the throne together, *as one complete being*, and rule the restored earth. And so must it be in the antitype.

(The original type in the opening chapters of Genesis has to do with Christ and His wife rather than with God and Israel. It has to do with the first man, the first Adam, and with the second Man, the last Adam, and with their wives, respectively.

But though the type foreshadows Christ and His wife, *the principles* regarding how God set forth rulership in the kingdom of men at the beginning of His Word would hold true in both spheres under discussion — God ruling in the kingdom of men, or God's Son ruling in the kingdom of men.

Where man is directly involved — whether in the past theocracy or in the future theocracy — God simply cannot and will not rule in the kingdom of men apart from the manner in which He Himself has established matters, apart from a husband-wife relationship.)

Thus, when it comes to God ruling in past time in the Old Testament theocracy, or in a future restored theocracy, or to Christ ruling the earth, this *principle* established in the opening chapters of Genesis cannot be violated.

Rulership in the kingdom of men, by God and man, can be accomplished in God's eyes *through one means alone*. It can be accomplished *only through the means in which it was originally established in the beginning, in Genesis*. It can be accomplished *only through a husband-wife relationship, the man and the woman ascending the throne together*.

This is why Israel is seen as *the wife of Jehovah* in the Old Testament theocracy. And this is why Israel will be seen as the restored wife of Jehovah in the future restoration of the theocracy.

This is also why the Spirit is in the world today searching for a bride for God's Son, in fulfillment of that seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four. The Son can no more reign apart from possessing a wife than God could have reigned in the Old Testament theocracy, or the future theocracy, apart from possessing a wife. To have done so in the past or to do so in the future, by either the Father or the Son, would violate that which God established in *an unchangeable fashion* at the beginning.

In the opening chapter of Genesis there is the restoration of a ruined domain and the creation of man (male and female) to rule the restored domain.

Then in the Book of Revelation there is a redemption of this same domain, with a view to man, as God originally intended, ruling this redeemed domain.

And through bringing all of this to pass, *two marriages will occur — a marriage between God and Israel, and a marriage between God's Son and the bride whom the Spirit will have previously procured.* Both are inseparably connected with the redemption of the inheritance, in the same manner that the creation of man was inseparably connected with the restoration of the ruined creation in Genesis chapter one.

Both marriages *WILL OCCUR. They WILL HAVE TO OCCUR.* This is the way matters have been set forth in the types, and this is the manner in which that foreshadowed in the types *MUST and WILL* be brought to pass in the fulfillment of the complete overall antitype — *God and His wife exercising dominion together, and Christ and His wife exercising dominion together.*

Understanding certain things about the manner in which God originally established rulership over the earth at the time of man's creation will put to rest all of the false ideology prevalent in Christendom today concerning how rulership in the kingdom of God in relation to the earth is often viewed. And, in reality, understanding Biblical principles drawn from this overall teaching is the only thing which will put these matters to rest.

For example, there is both the thought of *a kingdom now* ("Dominion Theology," as it is sometimes called) and the thought that some type *mystery form* of the kingdom exists within Christendom today. Neither, of course, can be the case, for, where man is involved, a husband-wife relationship between God and Israel or between Christ and the bride for whom the Spirit is presently searching *MUST exist for a kingdom of either nature to exist.*

A Husband-wife relationship between God and Israel *CAN'T presently exist, for Israel remains unrepentant.* Consequently, *there can be NO present marriage between God and Israel. A divorce decree, instead, is still binding.*

And a Husband-wife relationship between *Christ and the Church CAN'T presently exist,* for not only is the Spirit's search for the bride incomplete but the time for the bride to be removed from *the body and be revealed is yet future.* Consequently, *there can be NO present*

marriage between Christ and His prospective bride.

There is, however, a present existing kingdom in which “the heavens do rule” and in which “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men” (Dan. 4:17-25). But this is *NOT* a form of the rule which existed within the Old Testament theocracy. *NOR* is it a form of the rule within the theocracy as it will one day exist. The manner in which “the heavens do rule” today is *quite different*.

God ruled in the Old Testament theocracy in conjunction with His wife. Israel was to be placed at the head of the nations, with the nations being ruled by and blessed through Israel (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6).

But Israel formed unholy alliances with the nations, and God eventually divorced Israel (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:1-8; Hosea 2:2).

Once this had occurred, a husband-wife relationship, necessary for God to rule in this manner in the kingdom of men, ceased to exist. Accordingly, the theocracy could no longer exist, and God took the kingdom from Israel (Ezek. 1:15, 16, 26-28; 8:3-9; 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23; *cf.* Ezek. 43:1-5).

But God is sovereign. He rules over all. And removing the theocracy from Israel didn't do away with God's rule in the kingdom of men. Rather, it changed that rule back to the manner in which it had existed prior to the Old Testament theocracy, or the manner in which it exists today. It changed God's governmental structure to a rule solely through the incumbent ruler, Satan.

(God's rule through Satan is something which could never have completely ceased, even during the time of the O.T. theocracy. A rule through Israel — another ruling “son,” separate from Satan and his rule [Ex. 4:22, 23] — allowed God to deal with the Gentile nations in a manner separate from the disqualified ruler whom He had originally placed over the earth, who was still in power and remains in power today. It allowed God to have a ruling entity through whom His message could effectively be carried to the nations and through whom the nations could, in turn, be blessed [Ex. 19:5, 6; Num. 23:9; Isa. 43:10, 21; 60:5, 6].)

God is never seen ruling provinces in His universe in a direct manner. Rather, He is seen ruling through or in conjunction with others (angels and man). In the case of angels placed over

provinces, such as Satan placed over the earth, He rules through these angels; in the case of Israel, His wife in the Old Testament theocracy, He ruled in conjunction with man.

And since a theocracy has not existed in the camp of Israel for over two and one-half millenniums, there was only one possible means for God to carry out His regal activities in relation to the earth during this time. God could only have ruled in the kingdom of men through the one whom He had originally placed in the position of ruler over the earth — through Satan, though a rebel ruler, but still God's anointed ruler (Ezek. 28:14), whom God has yet to remove and replace.

And, of course, any thought of principles surrounding a husband-wife relationship within the government, as seen in the opening chapters of Genesis, could not exist in the present government of the earth. Marriage exists in the human realm alone. Completely different principles regarding the government of the earth in this respect would exist regarding the present government under angels, principles set forth and existing at a time prior to man's creation and even prior to the time of Satan's fall.

Then the thought of the existence or non-existence of any type kingdom of Christ on earth during the present time — *a mystery form, or any other form* — should be simple enough to understand. Christ, as His Father, could not rule in a kingdom apart from exercising power in the same manner that His Father exercises power — through or in conjunction with others, whether angels or men.

And since Christ does not presently possess a wife, the only type present rule of Christ in the kingdom of men, which could possibly be considered, is the same type rule which His Father presently possesses (note that the Son is presently seated on the throne with His Father in the heavens [Ps. 110:1; Rev. 3:21]).

(Principles pertaining to marriage in the human realm and non-marriage in the angelic realm in relation to the government of the earth presents an interesting thought surrounding the co-habitation of the sons of God with the daughters of men in Gen. 6:1-4 [angels in the kingdom of Satan taking wives from the female lineage of Adam and his progeny, something which apparently began very early in man's history (vv. 1,

2)]. *A corruption of the human race* could only have been Satan's goal, with probably more than one facet of corruption in view. And these facets of corruption would have a single purpose — *to prevent man from ascending the throne and fulfilling the reason for his creation in the beginning.*

Not only would there have been an effort to prevent the appearance of the Seed of the woman promised at the time of man's fall [Gen. 3:15] but there would have been an effort to corrupt and destroy that which God had established in the beginning concerning the manner in which man was to conduct appointed regal activities, *through a husband-wife relationship.* And an effort to prevent the latter would have been brought to pass through a corruption of the husband-wife relationship by the recorded co-habitation between fallen incumbent rulers and fallen female members of God's new entity which had been created to rule.

This same thing can subsequently be seen occurring in a homosexual manner among those in the land covenanted to Abraham and his seed during the days of Abraham and Lot [Gen. 18, 19; Jude 6, 7], along with a heterosexual manner once again among those in this same land during the days of Moses [Num. 13:31-33].

Is it any wonder that God eventually stepped in during Noah's day, bringing about a worldwide flood [Gen. 6:11ff]? or during Abraham and Lot's day, utterly destroying the cities of the plain [Gen. 19:24ff]? or during Moses' day by telling His people to go into the land and, "with a mighty destruction," do away with all of the nations therein [Deut. 7:1, 2, 16, 22-24]?

And, with the rapidly changing mores of man concerning homosexuality during the present day and time, is it any wonder that God is about to once again step into the affairs of the human race, bringing about a climactic end to the whole of the matter, ultimately placing man in the position for which he was created in the beginning?

"As it was in the days of Noah...

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot...

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" [Luke 17:26a, 28a, 30].

Note an ironic situation existing in the world today regarding the preceding. The United States and Russia are currently recognized as the world's two superpowers. The former has a history associated with God and Christianity, the latter with atheism.

But it is not the nation associated with atheism that is pushing

Satan's homosexual agenda; rather it is the nation associated with God and Christianity.

The United States is the nation picking up and seemingly leading the way where the cities of the plain left off during Abraham's day, not Russia [in fact, homosexuality is unlawful in Russia (a nation associated with atheism is the one following Biblical guidelines in this realm, not the nation associated with God and Christianity)].

The United States, not Russia, is *the nation today following one of the sure paths to national suicide* [not only from a Biblical standpoint but seen throughout man's secular history as well]. And the United States, not Russia, is *the nation whose actions run completely contrary to the reason God established marriage between a man and a woman in the beginning*.

When and how will all of this end? That's the simplest question in the world to answer:

All of this will end *when and how Scripture states that it will end*. And Scripture is quite plain about one thing. *That day when God will once again step into the affairs of the human race and bring about these changes is almost upon us.*)

Promises to Israel and the Church

Israel possesses a promise which is *regal* in fulfillment, in complete keeping with both man's creation in the beginning and the nation's subsequent calling. This promise can be seen numerous places in the Old Testament (*e.g.*, in type through God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses in the opening chapters of Exodus, through God's deliverance of the Israelites numerous times during the days of the judges in the Book of Judges, or through God's promise to Solomon at the time of the dedication of the Temple in II Chron. 7:12ff).

Note the way this promise is worded in Leviticus chapter twenty-six:

"If they [the Israelites] shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers...

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land" (vv. 40a, 42).

This is the promise to which attention was called in the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel in the gospel accounts at the time of Christ's first coming:

"Repent ye [a plural pronoun, the entire nation]: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand" (Matt. 3:2).

This is also the promise to which attention was again called in the reoffer of the kingdom following Christ's ascension, seen during the Acts period:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you [the entire nation] in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38a; cf. 3:19-26).

This is the promise which Israel presently possesses. And this is the promise which Israel will one day realize, when the Jewish people are brought to the end of themselves through the judgments of the Tribulation, causing them to act on this promise.

Christians likewise possess a promise, which, as well, is *regal* in fulfillment (*e.g.*, seen in numerous O.T. types, numerous N.T. parables, the epistles, and other places in both Testaments).

Note how this promise is worded in Rev. 3:21, which would, as well, also encompass the preceding six overcomer's promises in chapters two and three:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The future for both Israel and the Church is as bright as the promises of God — which, when fulfilled, will be inseparably associated with blessings for the nations on a redeemed earth.

8

The Opened Scroll

SHOWING THAT THE INHERITANCE HAS BEEN FULLY REDEEMED

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

And he had in his hand a little book [‘scroll’] open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand [‘right hand’] to heaven,

And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things that are therein, that there should be time no longer:

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Rev. 10:1-7).

A seven-sealed scroll, *the title deed to the earth*, was introduced in Revelation chapter five. And the results of the breaking of the seals on this scroll — *ensuing judgments which God required for the redemption of the inheritance, the earth* — were seen throughout events depicted in chapters six, eight, and nine, with events in chapter seven forming an aside (dealing with 144,000 Jewish evangelists and the results of their ministry [*ref.* ch. 14]).

Then, *the end result* of these seals being broken and the scroll being opened up is seen in events covering all of chapter ten and the latter part of chapter eleven (vv. 15-19). *The whole of the matter* surrounding this scroll being opened and everything being brought to pass within the confines of that seen by the breaking of the seals on the scroll occurred *between the time that the Son took the sealed scroll from His Father's right hand in chapter five and a mighty angel appeared in chapter ten holding the opened scroll.*

This mighty angel, the seventh and last of the angels to whom seven trumpets were given when the seventh and last seal of the scroll was broken (cf. 8:2; 10:7; 11:15), *brings the entire matter to a close.*

The seven-year Tribulation, along with immediately following events which usher in the Messianic Kingdom, will be over at this point in the book. The earth, through the depicted judgments, will have been redeemed. And events in succeeding chapters (chs. 11a, 12-19), along with events back in chapter seven, simply form detail and commentary concerning events occurring during the time of the judgments seen in chapters six, eight, and nine when the seals on the scroll were being broken.

Thus, the actions of the seventh angel with the opened scroll in chapter ten *brings matters to a close.* And events in conjunction with his sounding the seventh and last trumpet — with the corresponding seventh and last vial in ch. 16 being poured out as well (the same judgment, providing added commentary [vv. 17-21]) — could only form what would have to be understood as *the apex* of this closing book in Scripture (as previously referenced, note the same events described another way in ch. 11b [vv. 15-19]).

And there is a grandeur to the scene at hand which one needs to simply step back from and allow Scripture to depict. That seen in Revelation chapter ten is the manner which God has chosen to announce the completion of 6,000 years of redemptive work. And this is the manner which God has chosen to "declare the decree" seen in the second Psalm.

Note Ps. 2:5-7 in this respect:

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath [speak unto the Gentile nations coming against restored Israel and Israel's King, in Jerusalem in vv. 1-3], and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee [brought His Son forth in the sense seen in the text, placing Him on the throne in Jerusalem]."

(On the Father *begetting, bringing forth His Son*, in Ps. 2:7, refer to the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above*, for a *past similar Divine work relative to Israel* and a *present similar Divine work relative to Christians*.

Then for a future Divine work relative to all three of God's firstborn Sons in this same respect — Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption into a firstborn status] — refer to the author's book, *God's Firstborn Sons*.

All of God's firstborn Sons will be brought forth on the third day, the third 1,000-year period dating from the events of Calvary. The second Psalm tells about one firstborn Son [*with Christ's resurrection on the third day foreshadowing His being raised up on the third 1,000-year period in Ps. 2:6, 7 (Acts 13:30-34)*]. Other parts of Scripture provide information pertaining to God's two other firstborn sons being raised up on this same 1,000-year day, in this same manner.)

All of the Seals Broken

The seven-sealed scroll from chapter five — the title deed to the earth — seen with all the seals broken in chapter ten, contained *the complete redemptive terms for the inheritance, the earth*. There were *no terms* outside of this scroll, and the terms of the scroll had to do with *judgment*.

Within the scope of these redemptive terms, these judgments, there were *three sets of sevens* — *seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials*. The seven trumpets formed the judgments of the seventh seal; and, as previously seen, the seven vials paralleled and formed further commentary on the seven trumpet judgments. Thus, both the seven trumpets and the seven vials formed the judgments of the seventh seal. Once these judgments had occurred — once the seven trumpets had sounded, and/or the seven vials had been poured out — *the complete redemptive terms of the scroll had been fulfilled*.

(As previously stated and as can be easily seen from Scripture when comparing the seven trumpet and seven vial judgments, the judgments occurring when the seven trumpets sounded and the seven vials were poured out formed different descriptions of *the same judgments*. That occurring when the first trumpet was sounded and the first vial was poured out had to do with *the same judgment*. And so it was with the sounding of the other trumpets and the pouring out of the other vials. That occurring when the vials were poured out simply provided *additional information concerning that occurring when the trumpets were sounded*.

Thus, the sounding of the seven trumpets and / or the pouring out of the seven vials deal with the same thing and must be studied in the light of one another. And that is especially true when viewing how the whole of the matter is brought to a terminal point, depicted by both the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the seventh vial. Both bring matters to *the same terminal point* [cf. 10:5-7; 11:15; 16:17].)

Note that the judgments associated with the sounding of the seven trumpets were not seen until the seventh seal had been broken, though they formed further descriptions of the same judgments occurring when previous seals were broken.

The same would be true for judgments not seen until the previous fifth and sixth seals of the scroll had been broken, for these judgments formed further descriptions of *the progression of judgments seen occurring when the first four seals were broken*, depicting four horsemen riding forth.

And the breaking of the seventh seal of the scroll provides *exactly the same type information* that the breaking of the fifth and sixth seals had previously provided. That occurring when this seventh seal is broken, again, provides *additional detail and commentary* on that occurring when particularly the sixth seal was broken, reflecting back on terminal events seen following the four horsemen riding forth when the first four seals were broken.

The complete story, covering the whole of the redemption of the inheritance (all seven years of the Tribulation, along with events following Christ's return which lead into the Messianic Kingdom), *was told in capsulated form when the four horsemen rode forth*. And that occurring when the remaining three seals were broken simply provided *additional detail and commentary* already seen through

the breaking of the first four seals, particularly on the end result of that seen through the breaking of these first four seals.

Then the trumpet and vial judgments *carry this same type relationship to one another*. Though the vial judgments are not seen until later in the book, in chapters fifteen and sixteen, they simply provide *additional detail and commentary* for the trumpet judgments. And *both together* provide additional detail and commentary for that previously seen during the breaking of the first six seals of the scroll.

Beyond that, the trumpet and vial judgments have to do with events brought to pass *at the time of Christ's return, immediately following the Tribulation*. These judgments will occur at a time when the government of the earth will have already been brought into complete disarray and collapse, with society at large faring little better.

The trumpet and vial judgments, in this respect, would reflect back particularly on events seen when the sixth seal was broken, along with corresponding events occurring near the terminus following the breaking of the first four seals.

(Chapters six through nineteen of this last book in Scripture are structured the same way that the first book in Scripture is structured [along with numerous other books in the O.T.].)

The first thirty-four verses of Genesis [1:1-2:3] relate the complete story of Scripture in capsulated form. Then, the remainder of Scripture is simply commentary — filling in all the details, through numerous ways and means — of that dealt with and foreshadowed in these opening thirty-four verses.

A skeletal framework is set forth at the beginning [Gen. 1:1-2:3]. Then, the subsequent commentary [Gen. 2:4ff] forms all the sinews, flesh, and skin to cover the skeletal framework [*cf.* Ezek. 37:1-10]. And this commentary is often repetitious, showing the same thing or different things occurring during the same period of time, but all from different vantage points, providing all the different facets of information on the subject which God has deemed necessary.

Beginning immediately following the introductory thirty-four verses in Genesis [with details surrounding man's creation in 2:7 (*cf.* 1:26-28)] and continuing into chapter nine, the overall scope of the same

thing seen in the preceding thirty-four verses is seen again [creation, ruin, restoration, and rest], but from a different vantage point, with added detail.

Then, beginning with Nimrod's kingdom in chapter ten and continuing into subsequent chapters, the end of that previously seen and dealt with in previous chapters is seen again [covering the same time as seen in Rev. 6-20a].

Then, Gen. 22-25 again covers part of the events previously seen — beginning with events surrounding Calvary and continuing to the Messianic Kingdom 2,000 years later — but from a different vantage point yet, adding more detail.

And matters continue in this manner as one moves through the remainder of Genesis and through other parts of the O.T., with the whole of the O.T. providing a complete word picture of that introduced at the beginning.

Then, in the last book of Scripture, in chs. 6-19, the text is structured *exactly the same way previously seen in the first book of Scripture and elsewhere in the O.T.*

The whole of the matter [the complete time covering the redemption of the inheritance, from the time that the first horseman rode forth in ch. 6 to the battle at the end of ch. 19] is seen in time covered by events occurring as a result of the breaking of the first four seals, when all four horsemen sequentially rode forth [6:1-8].

Then the remainder forms commentary, drawing extensively from the O.T., providing the sinews, flesh, and skin to cover the skeletal framework established when the first four seals were broken. And this commentary, as in Genesis, is often repetitious, showing the same thing or different things occurring during the same period of time, but all from different vantage points, providing all the different facets of information which God has deemed necessary.

Some things about the preceding have been dealt with in past chapters in this book [also in the introduction] and, of necessity, will continue to be dealt with as well. Attention is called to this structure somewhat at length at this point in the book because of the subject matter in Revelation chapter ten — taking the reader to the same point as seen in the opening verses of chapter twenty.)

Thus, understanding how the Book of Revelation is structured in this respect is *crucial* for a correct understanding of this closing

book of Scripture. Understanding this structure will explain how the judgments depicted by the pouring out of the seven vials, though not seen until the seventh trumpet sounds (chs. 10, 11), and not seen being poured out until later chapters in the book (chs. 15, 16), can have to do with the judgments occurring when each of the seven trumpets sound (chs. 8-11).

The vial judgments simply form additional commentary for the trumpet judgments. And both together form additional commentary for that already seen when the previous six seals of the scroll were broken.

Action of the Mighty Angel

The action of the seventh angel is expressed in chapter ten in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which brings *the mystery of God* to a completed or finished state — *a full disclosure* of that seen as *a mystery* up to this point in time.

And this is brought to pass through *a full revelation (a full disclosure) of God's Son* (Rev. 1:1), *fully revealing the Father* (Rev. 10:7; cf. John 14:8, 9), which necessitates a completion of everything seen in the Book of Revelation up to and including events occurring at the time of Christ's return in the latter part of chapter nineteen.

Then, the same thing is seen in chapter sixteen, though from a different perspective, by a seventh angel pouring out the seventh vial of wrath (v. 17).

This act is expressed in the chapter by a great voice coming out of the temple in heaven saying, "It is done [*lit.*, 'It has been finished']". This is the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating *action completed* in past time, which exists during present time in *a finished state*.

Everything will have been completed at this point in time. *The inheritance* will have been redeemed, *the bride* will have become the Lamb's wife, and *the sceptre* will have changed hands. *Satan* will have been bound and cast into the abyss, and *the Messianic Era* can now be ushered in.

At this point in time, for THE FIRST TIME in the history of the earth, that seen in chapter ten can occur.

1) *The Transfer of Power*

The matter concerning *the kingdom of this world* (a kingdom which has been under Satan's dominion and control since time preceding man's creation) *becoming that* "of our Lord, and of his Christ" is clearly stated *in a symbolic manner* in chapter ten (vv. 1-7); then it is clearly stated *in so many words* in the next chapter, when the sounding of the seventh trumpet (with the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial) is repeated (11:15-19).

In chapter ten, at the completion of all the judgments connected with the breaking of the seven seals on the scroll from chapter five, a "mighty angel" comes down from heaven (an angel clothed with "a cloud," "a rainbow" on his head, his face shining "as it were the sun," and his feet appearing as "pillars of fire"). This angel is then seen holding this scroll, *in an opened manner, outstretched toward heaven.*

At this point in the book, *Christ will have broken ALL of the seals; and ALL of the judgments connected with the breaking of these seals will have come to pass.*

THE WHOLE of the matter will be over when this "mighty angel," holding the opened scroll, has come down from heaven and has placed "his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth [*indicating COMPLETE dominance and control of the redeemed inheritance, the redeemed possession*]" (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14).

(*A rainbow* is seen two times in the Book of Revelation [4:3; 10:1]. The rainbow, as first seen in Scripture in Gen. 9:13-16, appeared *following the storm*. And the rainbow is used after a similar manner, in relation to judgment, in the Book of Revelation. It is seen surrounding God's throne in chapter four in connection with a *past judgment of Christians* [chs. 1-3]; and it is seen in chapter ten on the head of the "mighty angel" who sounds the seventh trumpet, in connection with a *past judgment of Israel and the nations*.

In both instances, *judgment will be over*. Through the first judgment, *the bride* will have been made known [chs. 1-3]; and, through the second judgment, *Israel* will have been brought to the place of repentance, *the inheritance* will have been redeemed, *the bride* will have become the Lamb's wife, and a saved and converted *Israel* will have been restored as the wife of Jehovah [chs. 6-19].)

This “mighty angel,” holding the opened scroll with all of the seals broken, standing upon the sea and the land, cried with “a loud voice, as when a lion roareth” (*cf.* Rev. 5:5), resulting in “seven thunders” being heard (a possible reference to the seven vial judgments [chs. 15, 16], which will have also been fulfilled at this time).

Then this angel “lifted up his hand [*lit.*, ‘his right hand’] to heaven” (evidently the hand holding the opened scroll — the title deed to the earth — with all of the seals broken [*cf.* Rev. 5:1, 7], showing the One in heaven that the entire matter surrounding the redemption of the inheritance has been finished [*cf.* vv. 2, 5-7]).

The Son is NOW in possession of the redeemed inheritance, the earth. He NOW possesses a completely clear title deed to the earth [*cf.* Ps. 2:8]. And the angel holding this title deed swore by the One Who liveth throughout all of the ages, Who had created all things, that there should be “time no longer” (v. 6b).

(“Time” [Gk., *chronos*] in this verse is translated “delay” in most English versions [*ref.* NKJV, NASB, NIV]. However, *chronos* means “time,” not “delay” [*e.g.*, *chronos* prefixed to “meter,” forming *chronometer* (a means to measure time, a timepiece)]. Translating *chronos* as “delay” is an interpretation, not a translation. And it is really not a correct interpretation.

The reality of the matter is that *there are no delays in God’s plans and purposes*. Everything occurs at *predetermined times*, which renders any thought of “delay” in Rev. 10:6 an impossibility. This angel’s statement has to do with *time in relation to Man’s 6,000-year Day, plus the seventy-five subsequent days seen in Dan. 12:11-13*. At the time seen in Rev. 10:6, *ALL of this previous time will be over*. Now the Messianic Era can be ushered in.)

This statement about “time” by the angel with the seventh trumpet in Rev. 10:6 is *essentially the same* as the statement by the angel pouring out the seventh vial in Rev. 16:17 when announcing *the completion of the matter at hand*, using the perfect tense — “It is done [*lit.*, ‘It has been completed’].” These two statements by these two angels with the seventh and final trumpet and vial are simply *two ways of saying the same thing*. Everything, in both in-

stances, is past — an announcement concerning *a terminal point in time*, having to do with the completion of the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll (10:6); and an announcement concerning *a terminal point in events*, which, as well, has to do with the completion of the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll (16:17).

2) *Mighty Angels, Chapters 10, 19*

A similar scene at the time of Christ's return, as it pertains to the transfer of governmental power and control, is depicted in Rev. 19:17, 18 — "*an angel standing in the sun,*" uttering a cry concerning the overthrown Gentile powers:

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

This angel, uttering this cry, stands within that used in a metaphorical sense in the Book of Revelation to symbolize *the center of governmental power* (cf. Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 12:1; 16:8). And the symbolism used in Rev. 19:17 is introduced by and reflects back on the previous six verses, depicting Christ returning through an opened heaven as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The right to take the sceptre and rule the earth at this time will have previously been given to the Son by the Father (Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15; cf. Dan. 4:17, 25; 5:18-21; Matt. 20:23). And the angel standing in the sun — standing in that symbolizing *the central governing authority* — is seen *announcing this fact*.

Some expositors and Bible students have understood the "mighty angel" with the seventh trumpet in Revelation chapter ten (seen again in 11:15) to be *Christ Himself* — because of his description (v. 1), the fact that he is the one holding the opened scroll with all of the seals broken (v. 2a), and his resultant action (vv. 2b-6).

Contextually though, this does not appear to be the case.

Note in Rev. 8:1, 2 that Christ (v. 1) is seen occupying a separate position from any of the seven angels to whom God gives the seven trumpets (v. 2). This angel (the seventh angel), if he is to be identified, is probably the “strong [or, ‘mighty’] angel” introducing the seven-sealed scroll in Rev. 5:2, now providing *an open show of Deity on behalf of Another, as he stands upon the sea and the land, holds the scroll with the seven broken seals up toward the heavens, and claims the redeemed inheritance — the kingdom — for Christ.*

Note that angels acting under fixed laws are so closely connected with Deity that their actions become those of the Lord.

For example, in Gen. 18, 19, the Lord, accompanied by two angels, came down to earth and appeared to Abraham “in the plains of Mamre” (Gen. 18:1ff). The Lord had come down *to see for Himself* if that which He had heard about things occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah was correct (though, in His omniscience, the Lord could only have already known; this is simply the manner in which matters of this nature are sometimes presented in Scripture).

But, though the Lord said, “*I will go down, and see...*” (with Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned), the two angels accompanying the Lord are the only ones who went on down into the plain to view that which was occurring in these cities, which they did through entering into Sodom. The Lord, throughout this time, remained out in the high country with Abraham. (18:20-22).

Then there is the matter of *the destruction of the cities of the plain*. The two angels told Lot, “For we will destroy this place...the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.” But Scripture goes on to state, “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (19:13, 24).

How did the Lord go down into Sodom, as He said that He would, if He remained in the high country with Abraham? As well, how did the Lord destroy the cities of the plain (four cities [Deut. 29:23]) — something clearly stated — when the angels, at a prior time, had also clearly stated that *the Lord had sent them to perform this destruction?*

The answers to both questions are the same and are quite simple. *The actions of angels acting under fixed laws become the actions of the Lord.* By the angels going down in this manner, the

Lord went down; by the angels destroying the cities of the plain in this manner, the Lord destroyed these cities (*cf.* Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53).

This is the manner in which the Lord, through angels, presently governs the whole of the universe. This is also the manner in which the Lord, through man, will govern this earth during the Millennium and rule beyond the new earth out in the universe during the ages following the Millennium. The Lord, throughout this time, will continue to govern the whole of the universe, *in an unchanged manner* (Gen. 1:26-28; Job 1:6, 7; 2:1, 2; Rev. 3:21).

Thus, since the actions of angels acting under fixed laws become the actions of the Lord as well, in one respect it is immaterial whether the angel seen in Rev. 10 is viewed as an angel or as the Lord. *The end result would be the same. Either way, these actions would be no more or no less the Lord's actions; i.e., either way, these actions would be those of the Lord.*

9

When He Is Approved

APPROVAL AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT, THEN . . .

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried [‘approved’], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

The Epistle of James — as all epistles in the New Testament — centers its teaching around different facets of *the salvation of the soul* (1:21; 5:19, 20), which is with a view to *an inheritance in Christ’s coming kingdom* (2:5).

This epistle opens by pointing to the fact that the various trials, testings in one’s life (the trying of one’s faith) result in “patience [‘patient endurance’]”; and a Christian is to patiently endure under these trials and testings, allowing the Lord to progressively lead him from immaturity to maturity in the faith.

He is to let “patience have her perfect work [‘patient endurance have her end-time work’]” in order that he might be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing [‘mature and complete, lacking nothing’]” (James 1:2-4).

Christians are not brought from immaturity to maturity in the faith overnight. Maturity in the faith is *a lifelong process*. When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham had numerous things to learn about how the Lord works patient endurance and brings about maturity in one’s life.

Abraham failed many times (*e.g.*, not leaving his kindred behind in Ur, going down to Egypt for help, seeking to help God fulfill His promise concerning a son, etc. [Gen. 12:1-3, 10; 16:1ff]); but God continued to work in Abraham’s life until he had been brought to the place of unquestioned obedience, to the place where there was complete reliance upon the Lord.

It was not until some sixty years beyond the time Abraham had left Ur that he is seen being brought into a state where he was ready to undergo the supreme trial, the supreme test, in his life. God, at this time, instructed Abraham to offer his son “for a burnt offering,” at a particular place (Gen. 22:1ff); and Abraham simply set about to do exactly what God had told him to do. There was no remonstrance, no delay, and no questions were asked; instead, *there was perfect obedience and complete reliance upon the Lord to bring matters to pass* (cf. Ps. 37:5).

Abraham had been brought into this mature state in the true sense of James 1:2-4. He had learned *patient endurance* through his faith being tested. He had *patiently endured* under various trials and testings over a period of about six decades (though failure had occurred at times); and the Lord had, through this process, brought him into that mature state where he was “complete, lacking nothing.”

And Christians today are to be brought into a mature state through this same process (though failure, as it did with Abraham, may occur at times). Abraham’s faith (a belief in that which God had said) was tested, and a Christian’s faith (a belief in that which God has said) is to be tested.

(Note that there is an inseparable connection between a person being led from immaturity to maturity and that person receiving the Word of God into his saved human spirit. There can be no growth from immaturity to maturity apart from a reception of the Word, for *faith* — believing God, the one thing pervading the whole of the matter — “cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” [Rom. 10:17].

In James 1:21, Christians are to “receive with meekness the engrafted [‘implanted’] word.” *They are to study the Word, meditate upon the Word, allow the Word to flow into their saved human spirits.* The indwelling Holy Spirit then takes this Word and leads Christians “into all truth” [John 16:13-15]. Thus, it is this “implanted word” which lies at the heart of all activity surrounding *the testing of one’s faith, which brings about patient endurance.*

The continued reception of the Word can only be *that seen as central* in the entire process. There can be no *testing of one’s faith* apart from “the implanted word,” and there can be no *patient endurance and progressive growth toward maturity in the faith* apart from such testings.)

Approval

In James 1:3, the trials and testings of one's faith bring about patient endurance. Then, in verse four, as in verse twelve, the individual is to continue to patiently endure under continued trials and testings which the Lord brings to pass in his life. A continued refining process after this fashion, progressively working *maturity*, is for a *revealed purpose*.

According to verse twelve, the man who patiently endures temptation in the manner set forth in these verses will be "*blessed*" of the Lord, he will be "*tried* [*'approved'*]" by the Lord, and he will then "*receive the crown of life*" from the Lord.

Thus, the entire matter is with an ultimate view to issues of the judgment seat of Christ and the Messianic Era to follow. "Approval" or "disapproval" in connection with *blessings* and *crowns* will occur at the judgment seat; and the reason for approval, blessings, and crowns will be realized in the era beyond the present, during the Messianic Era.

In this respect, the revealed purpose for the present patient endurance of Christians, leading to maturity, is in order that *they might one day realize the purpose for their calling*. This maturing process, for those allowing it to occur in their lives, will result in their one day being *approved* for positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

(The word translated "tried" in verse twelve is from *dokimos* in the Greek text, meaning "approved [through testing]." This same word, with the prefix "*a*," appears in I Cor. 9:27 [*adokimos*]. The letter "*a*" negates the word, making it mean exactly the opposite. The context of I Cor. 9:27 has to do with running the present race of the faith, with a crown in view [vv. 24-26], which is the identical thought in James 1:12. Paul sought to always keep his body under subjection (in reality, a patient endurance under trials and testings), lest after instructing others concerning this very thing, he himself could be "a castaway [*'be disapproved'* (or, *'be rejected'*).]"

Dokimos in its verb form [*dokimazo*], with the preposition *apo* prefixed to the word [*apodokimazo*], appears in Heb. 12:17, where Esau was *rejected* for inherited blessings associated with the birthright. The

preposition *apo* means “from”; and, prefixed to *dokimazo*, the word, for all practical purposes, means the same as *dokimos* with an “a” prefixed, as in I Cor. 9:27.)

In relation to the preceding, an object is in view — *the birthright*. Esau, although he was the firstborn, had sold his birthright; and, relative to *the inheritance*, he was now “rejected ” (*apodokimazo*).

Esau was rejected immediately after his younger brother, Jacob, had received the blessing belonging to the firstborn. Prior to this time, Esau had *made light of* his birthright, considering it to be *of little value* (“Esau despised his birthright” [Gen. 25:34]. The Hebrew word translated “despised” means *to hold in contempt, to make light of*. The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament uses a word which means *to consider of little value*).

Esau did not come into a realization of the true value of the birthright until *after* Isaac had bestowed the blessing belonging to the firstborn upon Jacob. It was *only then* that Esau realized what he had forfeited and sought to retrieve the rights belonging to the firstborn.

Esau, at this time, “cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.” But it was *too late*. The birthright had been forfeited, the blessing belonging to the firstborn had been bestowed upon another, and no reversal of the forfeiture and blessing could occur. The birthright, with its attendant blessing, was now beyond Esau’s grasp forever.

Esau, after realizing that the birthright was no longer his and was beyond his grasp forever, referred to the forfeited rights of the firstborn after this manner:

“Hast though but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father” (Gen. 27:38; cf. vv. 34-37).

And it is recorded that Esau then “lifted up his voice, and wept.”

This is seen within another frame of reference in Matthew’s gospel where individuals are seen *weeping and gnashing their teeth* (Matt. 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). This is an Eastern expression showing *deep grief*; and the contexts of these passages clearly show that things relating to *the rights of the firstborn*, not eternal life, are in view.

The rejection experienced by Esau is the last of five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews, and this rejection constitutes an Old Testament type of that rejection which Paul referred to in I Cor. 9:27. The reference is to Christians who will have forfeited the rights of primogeniture, appearing in Christ's presence at His judgment seat.

Many Christians are presently following the same path which Esau took (considering the birthright to be of little value, though many, maybe most these days, know little to nothing about the birthright), and such Christians will one day come to the end of the matter in exactly the same way as seen in Esau's life. They, although presently in line to be blessed as the firstborn — Christians are presently being dealt with as "sons," with a view to one day being adopted as *firstborn sons* (Heb. 12:5-8) — will have forfeited this right; and they will be rejected for the blessing.

The rights of the firstborn *MUST be retained or there can be no blessing belonging to the firstborn*. The "spiritual blessings" associated with *the heavenlies* in Eph. 1:3 cannot be appropriated by Christians who forfeit the rights of primogeniture, for these blessings are inseparably connected with *the inheritance belonging to the firstborn* (1:10-18). These blessings are reserved for those who overcome the inhabitants of that heavenly land *during the present age* (Eph. 6:10ff), who will be shown qualified to enter that land as *sovereigns during the coming age*.

Christ is presently in the process of "bringing many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10). He, through the things which He suffered, has become the "Captain ['Originator,' 'Founder']" of a *salvation* associated with *sonship* — the "so great salvation" of Heb. 2:3.

In I Peter 1:9-11, suffering with respect to Christ's sufferings is connected with both *the salvation of the soul* and *the glory to be revealed* ("sufferings of Christ" [v. 11] should literally be translated, "sufferings with respect to [or 'on behalf of'] Christ"). The reference is not to Christ's sufferings but to Christians entering into these sufferings.

In I Peter 4:12, 13, such sufferings are connected with the trials and testings in James chapter one. *The trying of one's faith* (working patient endurance) and *the sufferings with respect to*

Christ's sufferings (suffering through trials and testings) cannot be separated one from the other. That which is in view has to do with *patient endurance under trials and testings*, and the end of the matter in both James and I Peter is the salvation of one's soul. It is being *approved* (as in James 1:12) and being *placed in the position of a son* (as in Heb. 2:10), *realizing the rights of primogeniture* during the coming age.

Sovereignty

To exercise sovereignty during the coming age, *one MUST possess a crown* (evident from the way crowns are seen used in Scripture); and to possess a crown *one MUST first be approved* for the crown. Approval will occur at the judgment seat, and approval at this time will be based on *works which endure the fire* (I Cor. 3:11-15).

The "trying of one's faith," working *patient endurance*, is inseparably associated with "works" in James.

Comparing Gen. 22:1ff with James 2:21 (along with the text leading into the passage in James) reveals that a servant's works emanate out of his patient endurance under trials and testings; and viewing James 2:14-26 as a whole, *works are seen to emanate out of faith*. It is faithfulness under trials and testings, resulting in works. Such works are those which God would have the one being tried and tested to carry out; and these are the type works which will endure the fire at the judgment seat.

The trial of "every man's work" *in fire* at the judgment seat will be with *a view to approval or disapproval* — *approval if found worthy, disapproval if found unworthy*. This approval or disapproval will occur through testing, and the method of testing will be "by [*in*] fire":

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by [*in*] fire; and the fire shall try [test, with a view to approval] every man's work of what sort it is" (I Cor. 3:13).

Approval at the judgment seat will be for a prior revealed purpose. God's purpose in working patient endurance in a Christian's

life through trials and testings (progressively effecting maturity) is the corresponding issuance of works in his life, *the heart* of that which this entire process leads into in the Epistle of James.

Approval follows Christians allowing the Lord to work patient endurance in their lives; and *approval* will, in turn, be followed by *sovereignty* during the coming age (Rev. 3:21).

1) To Receive a Kingdom, and to Return

During His earthly ministry, Christ delivered two companion parables to His disciples to graphically illustrate various aspects of the matter at hand — the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27). The “man” or “nobleman” in the two parables called “his own servants,” delivered unto them “his goods,” commanded them to “occupy till I come,” and then departed “into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”

The “man” or “nobleman” is *Christ*, the “servants” are *Christians*, “his goods” have to do with *His business*, and the “far country” is *heaven*. Christ has departed into heaven to receive a kingdom from His Father, with a view to returning for His servants (to reckon with them) following the reception of this kingdom (*cf.* Dan. 7:9-14; Rev. 11:15; 19:11ff).

During the time of the Lord’s absence, His servants are to “occupy” themselves with that entrusted to their care. *The “ten servants”* and *“ten pounds”* in Luke’s gospel, showing *ordinal completion* in both instances, reveal that *all of His servants* and *all of His business* are in view. Christ called *all of His servants* and left them in charge of *all of His business* during the time of His absence.

While the parable of the pounds in Luke’s gospel reveals the overall scope of both the Lord’s servants and the Lord’s business (“ten servants,” “ten pounds”), the parable of the talents in Matthew’s gospel reveals the different portions of this business delivered to different servants within the overall scope of His dealings with His servants (“unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability”).

Simple teachings derived from comparing the two parables point to the fact that *every servant* of the Lord has been entrusted

with some facet of the Lord's business during the time of His absence. No servant has been overlooked; nor has any portion of *the Lord's business* been withheld from His servants.

The one thing above all else required of servants is *faithfulness* (I Cor. 4:2; cf. Luke 12:42-46). Servants of the Lord *must exercise faithfulness in carrying out that portion of the Lord's business with which they have been entrusted*. "Success" is an entirely different matter. No servant has ever been called to be successful, only *faithful*. Success though will always follow faithfulness, whether man so recognizes that which the Lord deems as success or not.

Placing the entire matter over into the framework of the Epistles of James and I Peter, it seems apparent that God brings about the necessary trials and testings in a Christian's life which will move that Christian into that area of work (that portion of the Lord's business) which has been outlined for his life (delivered unto him by the Lord).

The individual is to exercise faithfulness as he patiently endures trials and testings; and as he progressively matures in the faith after this fashion, the Lord brings about an outworking in his life of that facet of the Lord's business entrusted to him (cf. Phil. 1:6). Thus, such works, in reality, are those done under the direction and leadership of the Lord as the Christian exercises faithfulness to his calling.

All of this occurs for *a purpose*. In the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, the day eventually came when the "man" or "nobleman" returned to reckon with His servants — pointing to the return of Christ *for* His servants and the subsequent reckoning "at the judgment seat" *with* His servants.

The *only concern at hand* in this reckoning in both Matthew's and Luke's accounts was *that which the servants had done with the Lord's possessions which had been entrusted to their care during the time of their Lord's absence, and the only matter in view beyond this reckoning was that of occupying positions of sovereignty in the kingdom*.

2) Thou Good and Faithful Servant

According to both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, hearing a "Well done..." from the Lord at the time He

reckons with His servants will be contingent on the servants having brought forth an increase through the use of the talents and/or pounds. The increase not only had to come from within the scope of that which the Lord had left in charge of *all His servants (the ten pounds)* but it also had to come from within the scope of that which the Lord had entrusted *individually to each servant (the various talents)*.

In the parable of the pounds, the servants were judged strictly on the basis of their use of the pounds during the time of their Lord's absence. *Nothing else was in view.*

The increase was wrought *only through the use of that which the Lord had entrusted to their care:*

“Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.”

“And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds” (Luke 19:16, 18).

And the revealed reward for faithfulness therein was *completely commensurate with the increase:*

“And he said unto him [the first servant], Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”

“And he said likewise to him [the second servant], Be thou also over five cities” (vv. 17, 19).

In the parable of the talents, a slightly different facet of the picture is presented. Judgment in this parable is based strictly on *the increase of that delivered to individual servants within the scope of their calling*, and an increase of the same proportion percentage-wise (though not necessarily in quantity) brought about identical commendations and rewards:

“And so he that had received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more...”

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them” (Matt. 25:20, 22).

The increase in each instance was one hundred percent, and the response of the Lord to both servants was identical:

“His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (vv. 21, 23).

The thought is not necessarily *how hard* or *how long* one works, but *how faithful one is in carrying out the task which the Lord has delivered into his hands during the time allotted* (cf. Matt. 20:1-16). Through comparing the parable of the talents with the parable of the pounds, faithfulness among Christians to the task at hand is not always the same.

Thus, it would seem apparent that there could be increases of less than or more than one hundred percent, allowing a two-talent Christian to realize an increase above that of a five-talent Christian, or vice versa. *The number of talents* is not really the issue. *Faithfulness to the task at hand* is that which God looks upon and requires.

And *a person always reaps that which he sows*, whether faithfulness or unfaithfulness is manifested (Gal. 6:7-9).

Blessings, rewards, and crowns are for those exercising *faithfulness* in the proper use of the talents/pounds entrusted to them. A commendation of “Well done...” from the Lord awaits Christians exhibiting faithfulness after this fashion.

But, a task “well done” is just that — *one well done*.

“Jesus will never say ‘Well done’ to anyone *unless it has been well done*.”

— G. Campbell Morgan

3) *Thou Wicked and Slothful Servant*

In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, *unfaithfulness* on the part of the Lord’s servants and *the end result of unfaithfulness* are shown in the latter part of each parable. Such unfaithfulness resulted in rebuke and loss in each instance; and also in each instance, the unfaithful servant was not associated in any manner whatsoever with positions of power and authority in the kingdom.

These things can be clearly seen through the Lord's actions in both parables. That which the unfaithful servants possessed (the talents and pounds) was taken from them; and in the parable of the talents, the unfaithful servant was cast into "outer darkness."

In the parable of the talents, one talent had been delivered to the servant who proved unfaithful. He was just as much a servant of the Lord and just as much in a position to bring forth an increase as the servants to whom five and two talents had been delivered; and, had this unfaithful servant brought forth an additional talent, which would have been an increase of one hundred percent, it is apparent that he would have received *the identical commendation* which the others received.

However, he hid his talent; it remained unused. He did not exercise faithfulness in that realm of service which the Lord had entrusted to him; and at the time when the Lord called all His servants before Him to ascertain how much each had gained through trading and trafficking in the Lord's business (through each servant exercising faithfulness to that entrusted to his care), the unfaithful servant experienced *rebuke* and *loss*.

The case of the unfaithful servant in the parable of the pounds is very similar. He, as the other servants, could have received *authority* over one or more cities had he brought forth an increase; but he kept the pound "laid up in a napkin" (v. 20). He didn't use the pound. He didn't involve himself in the Lord's business during the time of his Lord's absence. He proved unfaithful concerning that which the Lord had left in his care, during His time of absence.

And, following the Lord's return, at the time when the Lord called His servants before Him to ascertain how much each had gained through trading and trafficking (through each servant exercising faithfulness to that entrusted to his care), the unfaithful servant — as the unfaithful servant in the parable of the talents — experienced *rebuke* and *loss*.

(The unfaithful servant cast into *outer darkness* in the parable of the talents bothers many individuals, wondering how a saved person could ever be cast into *outer darkness*.)

And, the seeming problem is usually solved by simply associating

outer darkness with Hell and the unsaved. And this has been going on for so long that it is often *NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE* to get individuals to think rationally on the subject.

Had the unfaithful servant been dealt with in a less harsh manner, few would probably question his salvation. But, dealt with as seen in this parable, almost everyone, it seems, wants to sit in judgment on the man in this respect.

Note the subject at hand — *NOT eternal verities, but POSITIONS with Christ in the kingdom.* Aside from the preceding, if eternal verities are brought into the picture, *WORKS will have been brought into a realm where works cannot exist* [same as usually done in Matt. 25:31-46].

In the preceding respect, *Outer darkness*, in its contextual usage in this passage, *CAN ONLY REFER, not to Hell and the unsaved, but to the place occupied by unfaithful servants during Christ's millennial reign.*

In Matt. 22, the expression is used relative to an individual appearing at an Eastern wedding festival without the required wedding garment, and the man was bound hand and foot and cast outside, evidently into the darkened courtyard. That is, he was cast *from the lighted banqueting hall into the darkness outside.* He was then *in outer darkness.*

And exactly the same thing, through the use of the expression *outer darkness*, is seen in Matt. 25. Christ's rule is associated with *light*; separated from and not having a part in this rule is associated with *darkness.*

The Greek text [*outer darkness*] in Matt. 25:30 [also Matt. 8:12; 22:13] has the noun preceding the adjective, with both being articular — *the darkness, the outer.* There is an emphasis on "outer" in this type construction which places the darkness in view as not just any darkness but a darkness on the outside of and contiguous to a region of light, *e.g.,* the previously referenced darkened courtyard outside a lighted banqueting hall.)

The Kingdom

Two great mountain peaks dominate the whole of Scripture — *Calvary, and the Kingdom.*

Events depicted by the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds both pick up at a point *beyond the events of Calvary.* It was at this time that the "man" or "nobleman" — Christ — called "his own servants [*all of His servants*]," delivered unto them "his goods [*all of His goods*]," commanded them to "occupy until I

come,” and then departed “into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”

Then the matter at hand, as is evident in both parables, has *one goal* in view — *the kingdom*. And the focal point in both centers around *the present activity of the Lord’s servants, in view of the coming kingdom of Christ*.

(Note that “the kingdom” is not *the main thing in view toward which everything moves* in these parables; rather, it is the *ONLY thing in view toward which everything moves* in these parables.

And the present activity of the Lord’s servants, in view of the coming kingdom of Christ, is not *the main activity, with a view to a particular, revealed goal*; rather, it is the *ONLY activity, with a view to a particular, revealed goal*.

Attempting to read eternal verities [eternal salvation or eternal damnation] into these parables is to *COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTAND, MISINTERPRET, and MISREPRESENT that which the Lord has set forth*. And, beyond that, it *COMPLETELY HIDES the truth of the matter taught in these parables*. It *DOES AWAY with that taught in these parables*.

And, beyond the preceding, such a teaching can only present the salvation message to be carried to unsaved man in a *CORRUPTED respect*, as previously stated, *bringing WORKS into a realm where works cannot exist*.

It is plain that all of the servants in these two parables are those who had already availed themselves of the free gift of eternal salvation, wrought through Christ’s sacrificial death at Calvary. Such is evident from several observations:

First, THESE were the Lord’s “own servants.”

Second, THEY were the ones left in possession of the Lord’s “goods” during His time of absence.

Third, at the time of the Lord’s return, ALL of the servants were called together at the same time and place to give an account.

IF the unfaithful servants represent the unsaved, as some contend, these two parables teach a general judgment of saved and unsaved — *something completely foreign to Scripture*. Also, the fact that *ALL of the Lord’s servants were called to an accounting at the same time and place* leaves no possible room for that which is widely taught in many circles today — a selective resurrection and rapture of Christians at the end of the present dispensation.

Fourth, the issue at hand in the reckoning was “faithfulness,” “fruit-bearing,” with a view to occupying or being denied positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom [and NO unsaved person can ever enter into such a judgment].)

The present activity of the Lord’s servants is made possible *only* because of the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s Cross at His first coming; but, as is evident in both parables, this work of Christ — providing a propitiatory, vicarious sacrifice, effecting man’s redemption — was only an essential part of a much broader purpose.

In His Own words, Christ revealed that His first coming involved two central issues: *His sufferings*, to be followed by *His glory* (cf. John 3:14-16; 18:37; Luke 24:25, 26).

Christ was born “King of the Jews”; and the turmoil caused by His birth (emanating from Satan through Herod) involved *His Kingship*, not things having to do with His also being “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (cf. Matt. 2:1ff; John 1:29).

Simeon at the temple in Jerusalem, shortly after the birth of Jesus, saw “the Lord’s Christ,” the One Who would effect “the consolation of Israel.” Simeon’s words, “...mine eyes have seen thy salvation...A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel,” refer to national blessings wrought through Israel’s Messiah — redeemed Israel occupying the nation’s proper place with respect to all of the surrounding Gentile nations (Luke 2:25-32; cf. vv. 36-38). Such cannot exist apart from a restoration of the theocracy to Israel and God’s Son exercising His position as “King of the Jews” within this theocracy.

Before Christ began His public ministry, He met Satan face to face in the wilderness. The first man, the first Adam, through Satan’s confrontation with Eve, had been defeated; and it was necessary that the second Man, the last Adam, experience a similar confrontation Himself to show that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam forfeited in the fall.

The first man, the first Adam, had been created to rule the earth in the stead of Satan, who had previously disqualified himself. However, through sin, the first Adam was also disqualified, allowing Satan to continue as ruler over the earth.

Then, the confrontation between Satan and the second Man, the last Adam, was with *the same objective in view* — *rulership over the earth, preceded by Calvary* (cf. Gen. 1:26-28; Luke 4:5, 6; 24:21-27).

Christ's appearance in the presence of Satan, showing that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam had forfeited in the fall, anticipated not only Calvary but also events beyond Calvary. It was at Calvary that Christ paid the price for man's redemption, making it possible for man to ultimately be brought back into the position for which he had been created.

The entire earthly ministry of Christ centered around *His coming kingdom*, and His present ministry in the sanctuary centers around *the kingdom* as well. Then, when Christ comes forth from the sanctuary, all activity will continue to be with a view to *the kingdom, which will ultimately be realized*.

Christ's message to Israel during His earthly ministry had to do with *the kingdom*. His ministry centered around *an offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel*. There was a call for national repentance, *for the kingdom of the heavens was at hand* (Matt. 3:1-12; 4:17-25).

However, Israel spurned the offer, *the kingdom* (that facet of the kingdom proclaimed, *the kingdom of the heavens*, not the kingdom covenanted to David) was taken from Israel, and a new nation — *the one new man* "in Christ," the Church — was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected. Thus, the Church, as Israel, was called into existence *for purposes surrounding this kingdom* (Matt. 21:43; Eph. 2:11-15; I Peter 2:9, 10).

But Christ, following His first coming, didn't immediately ascend the throne (His Own throne and/or David's throne, not His Father's throne where He is presently seated, awaiting that coming day). An entire dispensation has been set aside, during which the Spirit of God has been sent into the world to procure a bride for God's Son (to reign as consort queen with the Son in His kingdom).

And while the Spirit is in the world searching for the bride throughout the present dispensation, Christ is ministering on the Christians' behalf in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle (on the basis of His shed blood, shed at Calvary), *with the kingdom*

in view (Heb. 4:11-16; 9:11, 12; 10:19ff).

The birth from above, imparting spiritual life, is made possible through Christ's finished work at Calvary. And the same One Who died at Calvary is presently ministering, as High Priest, in the heavenly sanctuary. He is presently ministering after this fashion *in order to provide a present cleansing (from defilement through contact with the world) for those having availed themselves of His past work at Calvary — those destined to be “kings and priests,” the new order of “sons” about to be brought forth to rule in the coming kingdom* (cf. John 13:8; Heb. 2:10; I John 1:6-2:2; Rev. 5:10).

Thus, everything in Scripture moves toward *that coming day when the kingdom will be realized*. This teaching begins in the first chapter of Genesis and pervades all Scripture.

Man's creation had to do with *the kingdom*.

Man's fall had to do with *the kingdom*.

Man's redemption had/has to do with *the kingdom*.

Christ's past work had to do with *the kingdom*.

Christ's present work is occurring with *the same goal in view*.

And matters are the same with the Spirit's past and present work.

It is all about a kingdom to be realized on the seventh day, the seventh millennium, dating from Adam's creation. This is the way Scripture opens in Genesis, this is the way Scripture continues from that point forward, and this is the way God will bring matters to pass after everything has been said and done.

Redeemed man is presently being called to *the throne in a heavenly realm*. There is a *salvation* out ahead, the salvation of the soul, which is *the greatest thing God has ever designed for the one whom He created and has redeemed*. This is a salvation which even the angels “desire to look into” (I Peter 1:12), for it includes *joint-heirship with God's Son over all things*.

The trials and testings of life — effecting patient endurance, maturity in the faith — are with a view to approval at the judgment seat and subsequent positions of power and authority in the kingdom; and the instructed Christian knows that he is to “count

it all joy" (James 1:2) when subjected to all the multifaceted trials and testings which the Lord, for a purpose, brings to pass in his life.

"If we suffer ['patiently endure'], we shall also reign with him: if we deny him [not deny Christ per se but refuse to patiently endure], he also will deny us [refuse us a position with Him in the kingdom]" (II Tim. 2:12).

(The word translated "deny" in II Tim. 2:12 is *arneomai* in the Greek text, which could, as well, be understood and translated in the sense of "refuse," which would be more in keeping with the overall thought in this verse. That set forth in the verse has nothing to do with eternal salvation. Rather, the subject, both textually and contextually, has to do with *patiently enduring under trials and testings, with a view to reigning with Christ.*

The thought in the latter part of the verse is not refusing or denying Christ, for the word "him" is not in the Greek text. It is refusing or denying that previously seen in the text.

Following the thought, "If we patiently endure, we shall reign with him," *the first part of the verse parallels the second part of the verse.*

The continued text, as previously seen, reads, "if we refuse," not "if we refuse him." Refusing, contextually, *CAN ONLY have to do with refusing to patiently endure.* And as well, by the same token, Christ refusing the one who does not patiently endure, *contextually, CAN ONLY have to do with refusing that person for a regal position with Him in His kingdom.*)

Concluding Thoughts:

There is a day coming when every Christian will *render an account to his Lord*, and the present day is *the time of preparation for that coming day*. The present day is the time when the Lord's servants are in possession of the various talents; and the present day is the time when a work is being performed in the lives of Christians which is connected with maturity in the faith, the proper use of the talents entrusted to them, etc.

THIS PRESENT DAY though will last ONLY as long as God's Son remains in the "far country."

ONE DAY Christ will receive the kingdom from His Father and then RETURN to reckon with His servants.

This will be *an individual reckoning* — “...we must ALL appear...that EVERY ONE may receive...”

And this reckoning will be based strictly on *EACH SERVANT’S use of the talent/talents entrusted to HIS care during the time of HIS Lord’s absence.*

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he sought to warn “every man,” and teach “every man in all wisdom,” in order that he might present “every man perfect [‘mature,’ ‘complete’] in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28). The warning which Paul sounded had to do with the coming time of evaluation at the judgment seat. His message along this line was really threefold:

- 1) *A present preparation.*
- 2) *A preparation with a view to a coming evaluation.*
- 3) *And a preparation and evaluation with a view to the kingdom to follow.*

The reference to “the hope of glory” in Col. 1:27, leading into Paul’s ministry in verse twenty-eight, has to do with that hope which Christians possess of one day occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom. This is referred to elsewhere in Scripture different ways, *e.g.*, as “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:13), “the hope set before us...as an anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:18, 19), or “the hope that is in you” (I Peter 3:15).

(*Ref.* Appendix I, “The Hope,” in this book.)

Paul, above everything else, did not want any Christian within the scope of his ministry to experience rejection/disapproval when he appeared in Christ’s presence at His judgment seat (Col. 1:28, 29).

Issues of the judgment seat, *in every instance*, will result in a *just recompense*. *Every Christian will receive exactly what he deserves* — reward, or chastisement — in complete accord with revealed faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out or failing to carry out that portion of the Lord’s business which had been entrusted to him.

And this will be with a view to occupying or being denied positions of power and authority in the kingdom which will follow.

Appendix I

THE HOPE

THE GOD-PROVIDED ENCOURAGEMENT, MOTIVATION

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ [*lit.*, ‘the appearing of the glory of the great God, Who is our Saviour Jesus Christ’];

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).

(“Hope” as it is used in both the N.T. and in Christian circles is seldom the same. And this is particularly true concerning “that blessed hope” in Titus 2:13.

“That blessed hope” in Titus 2:13 is almost universally used, and consequently abused, in Christian circles to reference *the rapture*. And this is done in the face of what the verse itself states. “That blessed hope,” as clearly seen in both the text and context, has to do, *NOT with the rapture, but with “the appearing of the glory of Christ,” i.e., with Christ’s appearance in all His glory at the end of the Tribulation.*

Beyond the preceding, *the rapture is NEVER presented in Scripture as “a hope.”* The manner in which “hope” is used in this verse, contextually, has to do with the expectation of something which, for Christians, may or may not be realized — *Christians having a part with Christ in His glory when it is revealed in that coming day [cf. Titus 1:2; 3:7].*

The tragedy of misusing Titus 2:13 after the manner seen throughout Christendom today is the same tragedy seen through the misuse of any passage of Scripture after a similar fashion. The subject which one attempts to erroneously deal with [*the rapture*, in this case] is corrupted, and that which the passage actually does deal with [*Christ’s appearance in glory*, in this case] is destroyed.)

According to I Peter 3:15, Christians are to be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you *a reason of the hope that is in you* with meekness and fear.” This is called, in introductory verses to the book, “a lively [‘living’] hope”; and it is made possible through “the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1:3). Christ lives, and those “in Christ” are being called *to live, beyond resurrection, in glory with Him.*

Hope in I Peter is associated with “an inheritance” (1:4), a future “salvation” (1:5 [“the salvation of your souls”; v. 9]), and “honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1:7; cf. 4:12, 13).

When Christ appears, Christians will appear with Him in glory; and it is different facets of this entire matter — ruling as co-heirs with Christ, realizing the salvation of their souls — concerning which Christians are exhorted *to always be ready to provide a response to anyone who asks “for a reason of the hope” which lies within.*

In Heb. 6:11, 12, the “hope” to be held by Christians is laid out in a very simple fashion: that “through faith and patience [present]” they would be able to “inherit the promises [future].”

Exercising “faith” is simply *believing that which God has to say about a matter*, resulting in the person who exercises faith acting accordingly. Hebrews chapter eleven is the great chapter on faith, toward which everything in the preceding part of the book builds: “*By faith Abel...By faith Enoch...By faith Noah...By faith Abraham...*”

(Contextually, the words “through faith” or “by faith,” throughout Heb. 11, *can be understood ONLY ONE WAY.*

Note the verses leading into ch. 11 [10:35-39], dealing with those who “believe [exercise ‘faith’] to the saving of the soul” [v. 39]. Then ch. 11 simply continues this thought, showing different facets of the way ch. 10 ends, *different facets of exercising faith “to the saving of the soul.”*

In this respect, each time “through faith” or “by faith” is used throughout the eleventh chapter, “the saving of the soul,” leading into this chapter, *should be understood as the object of faith — i.e., “through faith [to the saving of the soul]...” or “by faith [to the saving of the soul]...”*

Then Hebrews chapter twelve, immediately following, forms the capstone to the whole matter. The fifth and last of the five major warnings comes into view — a direct reference to the rights of the

firstborn (all the warnings have to do with these rights, though viewed from different facets of the overall subject) — and Christians are exhorted to run the race set before them after such a fashion that they will one day be accorded the privilege of realizing these rights.

Exercising “patience [*lit.*, ‘patient endurance’]” has to do with the manner in which one runs the race (*cf.* 12:1). This is *a race of the faith* (1 Tim. 6:12; Jude 3), to be run continuously for the entire duration of the Christian life. This is a race over the long haul — not one for sprinters, but *one for marathon runners* (though the runners may be called upon, at times, to sprint in the race). And Christians are *to properly pace themselves so that they will be able to victoriously complete the race.*

The “inheritance” lying out ahead is the object of a Christians’ *hope*; and one day realizing that which God has promised is, within the text, to be wrought *through patient endurance in the race of the faith.* “Faith” and “patient endurance” are inseparably linked after this fashion with the subject at hand — *inheriting the promises.*

Hebrews 10:23-25 presents a companion thought. In verse twenty-three, Christians are told, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering [*lit.*, ‘Let us hold fast *the confession of our hope* without wavering’].” And the whole idea, contextually, behind Christians assembling together today (v. 25) is to “consider one another” and “provoke [one another] unto love and to good works,” with this *hope* in view.

Christians are to assemble together *to discuss* that which lies out ahead, *pray* for one another, and *exhort* one another; and they are to do this “so much the more,” as they “see the day approaching [that coming day when their *hope* will be realized]” (vv. 24, 25).

This is “that blessed hope” in Titus 2:13, which is to be *a purifying hope.* And Christians are exhorted to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,” with a view to one day realizing this hope (v. 12).

(“That blessed hope,” as previously seen, is *NOT Christ’s return per se* [particularly *NOT His return for Christians at the end of this present dispensation, as is often taught*]. Rather, “that blessed hope” has to do with “the glorious appearing [*lit.*, ‘the appearing of the glory’] of the

great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" [v. 13], a glory which will not be revealed until Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation. And the "hope" aspect has to do with *the expectation [which may or may not be realized] of our having a part with Christ in His glory when it is revealed.*

The subject matter of Titus, the context of Titus 2:13, and the construction of the Greek text of this verse would *ALL necessitate the previous understanding of this verse.*

*The subject matter in Titus has to do centrally with life in the coming age, the Messianic Era, not with eternal life [cf. 1:2; 3:7 (contextually, the word translated "eternal" in both verses — Gk. *aiionios* — should be translated, "age-lasting," i.e., referring to "age-lasting life").]*

The context of Titus 2:13 has to do with *present proper Christian living, with a view to life with Christ in His kingdom in the coming age [1:13; 2:12-14].*

And in the Greek text of Titus 2:13, "the appearing of the glory" is a *further explanation and description of "that blessed hope"*; also, in the continuing part of the verse, the structure of the Greek text is the same as in the previous part: "Our Saviour Jesus Christ" is a further explanation and description of "the great God."

With these things in mind, the verse could be better translated,

"Awaiting that blessed hope, which is the appearing of the glory of the great God, Who is our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And, as previously stated, this "hope" surrounds the thought of Christians having a part with Christ in His glory at this time — a central teaching of the Book of Titus.

Titus 2:13, much like I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; II Thess. 2:1, 3; Rev. 3:10, is another one of the verses Christians have misused, attempting to apply the verse and the expression from the verse, "that blessed hope," to the rapture. The tragedy of this can be seen in what this does to the true subject matter of the verse [also in the previously referenced verses in I, II Thessalonians and Revelation — *ref.* Appendixes II, III in this book].)

With Confidence and Rejoicing

Christians are to hold fast the *hope* set before them after a revealed two-fold fashion — *with confidence and rejoicing* (Heb. 3:6). The word "confidence" is a translation of the Greek word,

parresia, meaning “to be bold, courageous, open, or plain” about a matter; and the word “rejoicing” is the translation of the Greek word, *kauchema*, meaning “to take pride in something,” resulting in the person having “something to boast about.”

Parresia is used a number of times in the New Testament in the sense of being “open” or “plain” about matters, with nothing being hidden.

Jesus spoke *openly* and *plainly* to His disciples and the people of Israel (Mark 8:32; John 16:29; 18:20), though, because of the nation’s rejection of Him, the day came when He “walked no more *openly* among the Jews” (John 11:54). And it was because of this same rejection that Jesus had previously begun to teach through the use of parables (Matt. 13:10-15).

Parresia is also used in the New Testament a number of times in the sense of being “bold” or “courageous” about matters. Peter and John, standing before Annas the high priest, and others, exhibited “boldness” as Peter spoke; and those hearing Peter “ marvelled,” recognizing that both men exhibited these qualities *because* “they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:5-13; *cf.* v. 31).

Then Paul, at the end of his epistle to the Ephesians, requested prayer on his behalf: “that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth *boldly*, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (6:19).

(Note that the thought of “openness” or “plainness” would also have to be included within the idea conveyed by “boldness” in the preceding passages [*cf.* II Cor. 3:12; 7:4; see also Phil. 1:20; I Tim. 3:13; Heb. 4:16].)

Then the word *kauchema* (translated “rejoicing”), or the verb form of this word (*kauchaomai*), is also used a number of times in the New Testament. The word is translated three different ways in Scripture (KJV) — “boast,” “glory [used in the sense of ‘boast’ or ‘pride’],” and “rejoice” (*cf.* Rom. 2:23; 4:2; 5:2; II Cor. 1:14; 5:12; 9:3).

The thought of “rejoicing” (as in Heb. 3:6; *cf.* Phil. 1:26; 2:16), rather than being derived from the meaning of *kauchema*, appears to be derived more from the result of what this word means. That is, *kauchema* means “to take pride in something,” resulting in the

person having “something to boast about”; and “rejoicing” would emanate out of the person being placed in this position.

Firm Unto the End

When a Christian is told to be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,” he is to be open about the matter, he is to exhibit plainness of speech, he is to be bold and courageous as he expresses himself, and he is to take pride in the matter, for he has something to boast about.

He has been extended an invitation to ascend the throne with “the King of kings, and Lord of lords” to rule as co-heir with Him in His kingdom. He possesses the *hope* of having a part in what Scripture calls, “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3), which is the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man.

And this is what Christians are to be open and plain about. They are to tell it *exactly* as it is, regardless of what others may say or think. And they are to be bold and courageous as they tell it as it is, knowing that they have something *of incalculable value*, something *they can boast about* (cf. Matt. 10:32, 33; II Tim. 2:10-13).

Christians have been saved for *a revealed purpose, which has to do with future regality, as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.*

Christians are to set their course straight and hold it there, not deviating; and they are to hold their course, after this fashion, “firm unto the end” (Heb. 3:6), allowing them to one day realize “so great salvation,” the salvation of their soul.

Appendix II

THE RAPTURE IN REVELATION 3:10?

DON'T Force an Interpretation

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation [testing], which shall come upon all the world [*lit.* ‘the inhabited world’], to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10).

The words “hour of temptation” in Rev. 3:10 are taken by most Bible students to be a reference to the coming *Tribulation* (*Daniel’s Seventieth Week*), with the promise given in the message to the Church in Philadelphia that Christians will not enter into but be kept out of this future time.

The word “from” is a translation of the Greek word “ek,” meaning “out of,” with the correct translation being, “I also will keep thee *out of* the hour of temptation...”

Thus, those Bible students seeing “the hour of temptation” as a reference to *the coming seven-year Tribulation* correspondingly see the promise that Christians will be kept “out of” this time as a reference to *the rapture*. That is, they see this verse as a promise to Christians that *they will be kept “out of” this time, be removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins.*

In turn, this has also led many Bible students to follow a selective rapture ideology, for all Christians are not included in this promise. Note that only those who have *kept the word of His patience* have been promised that they will be kept “out of the hour of temptation...”

(Some individuals have sought to remove *the condition* for being kept “out of the hour of temptation” by retranslating from the Greek and restructuring the text, making the condition apply to that which precedes rather than that which follows.

However, *this changes NOTHING* for those attempting to do away with the condition [from what they see as the rapture] in this manner. Even if the restructured translation is followed, the promise in the latter part of verse ten is inseparably tied to that which precedes, with the condition remaining.

But, that is neither here nor there, for, as will be clearly shown, *the rapture is NOT being dealt with in this verse anyway.*

As well, note the rear cover data for this book. *The rapture is NEVER, at any place in Scripture, associated with the Tribulation in the manner seen through a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Rev. 3:10 — i.e., associated with a promise that Christians will, via the rapture, escape the Tribulation.*

Nor is the rapture ever associated with escaping anything else in the world, as some seek to read into verses, usually referencing Luke 21:36, which, as Rev. 3:10, has NOTHING to do with the rapture either. Rather, this verse has to do with the same thing as seen in II Thess. 2:1 [ref. Appendix III in this book].)

Thus, if Rev. 3:10 centers around a promise that Christians will be removed before the coming Tribulation, at least two things which run counter to Scripture present themselves.

Note the rear cover data for one, and the other — *selective rapture* — will be briefly discussed.

An insurmountable problem exists for any seeing Rev. 3:10 referencing the rapture, for, as previously seen, the verse could only teach *a selective rapture. And such a teaching would be in direct conflict with that which Scripture reveals elsewhere.*

Scripture is quite clear in both the Old Testament types and the New Testament antitype that the rapture will be *ALL-INCLUSIVE* (ref. the introduction to this book). *ALL CHRISTIANS* will be removed at this time, not just those *who have kept the word of His patience.*

Past, Present Dispensations

The Tribulation comprises the last seven years of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. And, accordingly, these seven years have to do with *time which will complete God's dealings with Israel during the preceding dispensation.*

This preceding dispensation was interrupted seven years short of completion. Israel's sin had reached an apex (at Calvary); and

God stepped in, stopped the chronometer marking off time for the dispensation, and instituted a new dispensation.

Israel was set aside, and fifty-three days following the events surrounding Calvary, God sent His Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son.

God, at this time, through events beginning on the day of Pentecost, called into existence *one new man* (which was neither Jew nor Gentile); and the Spirit began His search for the bride among those comprising this *new man* (Gen. 24a), a search which would last for one dispensation, for 2,000 years.

Then, once the Spirit has completed His search (Gen. 24b), this *new man* (comprised of *all Christians*) will be removed from the earth and dealt with at Christ's judgment seat in the heavens (I Cor. 3:11-15).

And once this has been accomplished, God will turn back to Israel and complete His dealings with this nation during Man's Day, completing the last seven years of the previous dispensation.

This will complete Man's 6,000-year Day. Christ will then return, restore a repentant and converted Israel, destroy Gentile world power, and the 1,000-year Messianic Era will be ushered in.

Structure of the Seven Epistles in Rev. 2, 3

The seven epistles to the seven Churches in Asia are all structured *exactly alike*, with that stated to all seven having to do with *exactly the same thing, with exactly the same subject matter seen throughout*.

All begin the same way ("I know thy works"), *all continue* with the works of Christians in the different Churches and the Lord's attitude toward these works, and *all end* with an overcomer's promise ("to him that overcometh").

The rapture is simply NOT a subject matter dealt with in the uniform structure of these seven epistles. To see the rapture dealt with in one epistle and not in any of the other six is COMPLETELY OUT OF LINE with the manner in which these epistles are structured.

As well, *NOTE THE CONTEXT on both sides of the statement which many see as a reference to the rapture. This statement MUST be understood contextually, which would also preclude the verse from*

having anything to do with either the rapture or the Tribulation.

Both the rapture and the Tribulation are dealt with in the Book of Revelation, showing a pre-Tribulation rapture of all Christians. But neither is dealt with in this verse, nor elsewhere in Rev. 2, 3.

The rapture is dealt with in Rev. 1:10; 4:1, 2a, and the Tribulation is dealt with in Rev. 6-19a. But Rev. 3:10, understood within context, *CANNOT POSSIBLY deal with either.*

Revelation 3:10, within context, remaining within the way all seven epistles are structured, *CAN ONLY* be understood as having to do with *works emanating out of faithfulness* (cf. James 2:14-26), *with a view to overcoming* (cf. vv. 8, 10a, 11, 12). And the Christians in Philadelphia were promised, because of their faithfulness, that they would be kept out of a particular time of testing/trials — *about to come upon* “all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

Promised Deliverance

This promised *deliverance* in Rev. 3:10 could only be the same as that seen in what is commonly called “the Lord’s prayer” in Matt. 6:9-13: “And lead us not into temptation, but *deliver* us from evil [*lit.*, ‘from the evil one’ — from Satan]...” (v. 13a). This would be the same temptation which Christ spoke of in Mark 14:38 and which Paul wrote about in I Cor. 7:5. And it is the same temptation from which the Lord promised *deliverance* in II Peter 2:9.

Testings or trials are seen in Scripture within two spheres. They are seen as something which God uses in connection with the maturing process, with a view to *the person ultimately being approved at the judgment seat* (James 1:2-4, 12); and they are seen as something which *Satan uses in his efforts to bring about defeat in a Christian’s life* (Mark 14:38; James 1:13-15).

The promise concerning *deliverance* in Rev. 3:10 would have to be understood within this overall frame of reference, in keeping with Christ’s statement to His disciples in Matt. 6:13.

This “temptation [‘trial,’ ‘testing’]” by Satan *was about to* (literal rendering from the Greek text) *come upon* “all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

The fact that this testing would be *worldwide* is another thing which has led many individuals to believe that the coming Tribulation was in view. But, not so. *Christians* are being dealt with, not the world at large; and the expression, “all the world,” in this respect, must be understood in the same sense as it is used elsewhere in Scripture where *Christians alone* are also in view.

Note Col. 1:5, 6, 23, Paul states that the gospel (his gospel, the good news surrounding the mystery which had been revealed to him) had been proclaimed throughout “all the world [*lit.* ‘all creation’],” “to every creature which is under heaven.” However, the message in this gospel, in Paul’s gospel — “if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (v. 23) — was for *Christians alone*.

The content of the message restricts this good news to *Christians, allowing for only one understanding of the passage*. “To every creature which is under heaven” can only be a reference to *Christians (all Christians)* scattered throughout the inhabited world, not to unsaved individuals in the world as well.

And the extent of the promise surrounding deliverance from a coming time of testing/trials in Rev. 3:10 is the same. It is a promise made to *faithful Christians* relative to a time of testing/trials which Satan would bring upon *Christians (all Christians)* scattered throughout the inhabited world, *seeking to bring about their defeat*.

They, because of their faithfulness, would overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And, through this means, they would be delivered out of the onslaughts of Satan, as seen in this verse.

And the context of Rev. 3:10 is *in complete keeping* with this thought, *NOT with thoughts surrounding the rapture*.

Efforts to use this verse as a text relating to the rapture can only have *one end result, which is negative*. Such efforts can only serve to *do away with that which actually is dealt with in this verse — a facet of teaching pertaining to the Word of the Kingdom*.

A Pre-Tribulation Rapture of All Christians

There is an abundance of Scripture in both the Old Testament and

the New Testament which reveals *the complete Church being removed prior to the Tribulation*. And, with this in mind, one need not attempt to make Rev. 3:10 deal with something that it doesn't deal with in an effort to teach that which is clearly taught so many places elsewhere in Scripture, even elsewhere in the Book of Revelation itself.

If an individual wants to see the rapture preceding the Tribulation and including all Christians, *he needs to turn to sections of Scripture that deal with the matter, not to a section that doesn't*.

A person, for example, could (actually, *SHOULD*) turn to the types. And *HE SHOULD DO THIS FIRST*.

The original type of Christians being removed before the Tribulation is seen in Gen. 5-8 ("Enoch," typifying *Christians, removed before the Flood*; "Noah and his family," typifying *Israel, going through the Flood*). Then, everything beyond that in Scripture — O.T. and/or N.T — *MUST ALWAYS be understood in exact accord with the original type (e.g., Gen. 18, 19)*.

A type often overlooked in this respect is seen in *the Book of Ruth (ref. Ch. VI in this book)*. Though the rapture per se is not dealt with in this book, the Tribulation and place where Christians will be at this time are dealt with.

The judgments of the Tribulation, seen in the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll (Rev. 5), comprise *God's terms for the redemption of the inheritance*. And Ruth is seen *on Boaz's threshing floor (typifying Christ's judgment seat [Ruth 3]) PRIOR to the redemption of the inheritance (typifying God's redemptive terms being carried out during the Tribulation [Ruth 4])*.

Or, a person can turn To Rev. 1-4.

In the first chapter, the complete Church, represented by the seven Churches in chapters 2, 3 is seen removed from the earth and in Christ's presence (removed from man's Day into the Lord's Day), with Christ appearing as *Judge (ref. Ruth 3, 4)*.

Then, in Rev. 4:1, 2, parts of the same scene are repeated, with Christians being removed *following the present dispensation (chs. 2, 3) but preceding the redemption of the inheritance, which occurs through the judgments of the Tribulation (chs. 5ff)*.

And all is in *COMPLETE ACCORD with the Old Testament types, where God had previously laid THE UNCHANGEABLE FOUNDATION*.

Thus, if a person is going to deal with "the rapture" in relation to "the Tribulation," Rev. 3:10 is *certainly NOT a verse to reference, for it DOESN'T deal with either one*.

Appendix III

NOT APPOINTED TO WRATH, DESTRUCTION

As Seen in I, II Thessalonians

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ [‘the Day of the Lord’] is at hand.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away [‘the apostasy’] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that when I was with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let [‘he who now hindereth will hinder’], until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:1-9).

(Contrary to popular interpretation, Christians are NEVER promised that they will escape the coming Tribulation via the rapture; and, though the rapture will occur preceding the Tribulation [all Christians included], this sequence of events is NEVER seen in Scripture, after any fashion, with Christians escaping the Tribulation.

The Tribulation has to do with *Israel and the nations, not with Christians*. And Scripture *ALWAYS deals with the matter accordingly*.

Actually though, that which many Christians will experience at the judgment seat following the rapture may very well make them wish that they were back on earth going through the Tribulation.

The preceding will be dealt with from I, II Thessalonians in this third appendix.)

That seen in II Thess. 2:6, 7, preventing the appearance of “the son of perdition” (the Beast, the Antichrist), has been an enigma to numerous Bible students over the years, though it shouldn’t be. Exactly as seen in other passages of Scripture, presenting similar problems for many (e.g., I Tim. 2:12-15; Heb. 6:4-6), *understanding and interpreting Scripture contextually and in the light of related Scripture can only shed a flood of light on the subject*.

God simply has not stated things in His Word which cannot be understood through the method which He has provided — *comparing Scripture with Scripture*. And the converse of that is equally true.

But, comparing Scripture with Scripture, one invariably finds himself involved in the numerous ways God has structured His Word (Heb. 1:1, 2), which would have to include things such as *types* and often *metaphors* and *signs*. And *a person simply cannot interpret Scripture in the light of itself apart from recognizing and utilizing this structure, understanding and interpreting the Word accordingly*.

1) I Thessalonians

First, let’s note the whole of that which has preceded in I Thessalonians, leading into that dealt with in II Thessalonians. Then we’ll center more on the text and immediate context in II Thessalonians chapter two (a main problem area for many), working from there out into other related Scripture.

I Thessalonians could be summarized as *a dissertation to those in “the church of the Thessalonians” relative to the contents of Paul’s gospel, with the word “gospel” (Gk., euaggelion), as it is used throughout the epistle (appearing seven times), referring to this particular facet of the overall gospel message (i.e., to Paul’s gospel [1:5; 2:2, 3, 8, 9; 3:2, 8])*.

Paul's gospel, having to do with "the mystery" revealed to him at the outset of his ministry (Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:1-6), was a message *to the saved, not the unsaved*. It had to do with the continued good news one was to hear *after* he had heard and responded to the gospel of the grace of God (e.g., the gospel of grace seen in Eph. 2:8, 9, with the continuing aspect of the good news, corresponding to Paul's gospel, seen in v. 10).

(For additional information on Paul's gospel, refer to the author's article titled, "Paul's Gospel, the Mystery.")

Note also that the word "gospel" in the epistles is used far more often relative to *the gospel of the glory of Christ* [that aspect of the overall gospel message which Paul referred to as "my gospel," "our gospel" (cf. II Cor. 4:3, 4, NKJV, NASB, NIV)] than it is used relative to the gospel of the grace of God.)

This aspect of the good news is introduced in I Thess. 1:5 as "our gospel," setting the stage for the use of the word *gospel* throughout both epistles. And, as Paul referenced this aspect of the good news different ways in Romans chapter one ("gospel of God," "gospel of his Son," "gospel of Christ" [vv. 1, 9, 15, 16; cf. Rom. 2:16; 16:25]), he does the same thing in I Thessalonians ("gospel of God," "gospel of Christ," "good tidings ['gospel'] of your faith" [2:2, 8, 9, 3:2, 6]).

Note II Thess. 2:14 pertaining to the content of Paul's gospel:

"Whereunto he called you by *our gospel*, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then note the crux of the message, emanating from a proclamation of this good news which Paul was writing about to those in this Church, as seen in I Thess. 2:11, 12:

"As ye know *how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you*, as a father doth his children.

That ye walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (cf. I Peter 5:6-10).

This then merges into a section on the rapture and that which

lies beyond the rapture relative to the Son's coming kingdom, seen in the latter part of chapter four and the first part of chapter five (4:13-5:10). Then, the remainder of the book has to do with Paul's closing remarks.

2) *II Thessalonians*

The second epistle to the Thessalonians simply continues from where the first left off, beginning with *two types of Christians at Christ's coming*, at the end of the Tribulation. I Thessalonians left off with matters surrounding the rapture and subsequent accounting of Christians, preceding the Tribulation (4:13-5:10), wherein these two types of Christians had been seen — *the faithful, who had heeded Paul's exhortations; the unfaithful, who had failed to heed these exhortations*.

For one (the faithful; *ref.* next two paragraphs), removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, "salvation" awaited; for the other (the unfaithful; *ref.* next two paragraphs), removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, "wrath" awaited (5:1-9).

Then II Thessalonians chapter one begins with events occurring at a time at least seven years later, following the Tribulation, following Christ's return. And again, *two types of Christians are seen*.

The faithful are seen realizing an inheritance, realizing the "salvation" of I Thess. 5:9, in "his kingdom and glory" (II Thess. 1:5, 10-2:1).

And *the unfaithful* are seen being denied an inheritance in His kingdom, realizing the "wrath" of I Thess. 1:10; 5:9 (II Thess. 1:6-9).

(To understand the preceding any other way, as so many do, [e.g., seeing I Thess. 5:1-10 and II Thess. 1:5-12 dealing with *the Tribulation* and *saved-unsaved issues during and following the Tribulation*, or see I Thess. 1:10; 5:9 and II Thess. 2:1, 3 dealing with *the rapture*], is to throw about any type sound Scriptural interpretation one can think of to the winds — plain reading of the text, contextual, comparing Scripture with Scripture, etc.

I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; II Thess. 2:1; Rev. 3:10, with few exceptions, are seen as promises to Christians that they will not go through any part of

the coming Tribulation. But, to teach this from any of these verses, that verse would have to be removed from its contextual setting [having to do with some facet of Paul's gospel] and made to say something that the verse doesn't say at all [e.g., "wrath to come" or "hour of temptation" made to mean *the Tribulation*].

The Church *HAS NOTHING to do with the Tribulation*, and Scripture *NEVER connects the Church with the Tribulation, not even to the extent of providing promises that Christians will not enter into this time*. The Church being removed prior to the Tribulation is *made plain from the numerous Scriptures dealing with the subject, making a specific promise to the Church of removal before the Tribulation both out of place and unnecessary* [refer to the rear cover data for this book].

The tragedy of this type teaching can be seen in two realms:

First, by relating these Scriptures to a subject that they have nothing to do with removes them from, does away with, the subject that they do have to do with — *warnings to Christians regarding faithfulness, relating the consequences for unfaithfulness*.

Then, by using these Scriptures in this manner, the timing of *the beginning of the Day of the Lord on earth is wrongly construed*, erroneously associating the beginning of this time with the Tribulation.)

With the preceding in mind, note how II Thess. 2:2ff continues from the way that the book is introduced, drawing from the whole of Paul's prior message to the Thessalonians in his first epistle.

In the first chapter of II Thessalonians, Paul projects matters, as they relate to Christians, out into the Messianic Era (with the groundwork having been laid in his first epistle to the Thessalonians).

Then moving into the second chapter, someone had evidently spread false information among the Thessalonians relative to the matter at hand (via "word" or "letter," as from Paul), making the Christians in Thessalonica believe that they were presently in the Lord's Day, leaving them quite confused.

(The Day of the Lord, the Lord's Day [II Thess. 2:2, "the day of Christ" should be translated, "the Day of the Lord"], has always been in existence, but not on earth. *The Lord's Day begins on earth only at the*

end of Man's Day, at the end of the Tribulation following Christ's return. This is the manner in which the matter is set forth anyplace this is dealt with in Scripture [e.g., Joel 2:1ff; 3:1ff; Zeph. 1:7-18].

This is why, in I Thess. 5:2 and Rev. 1:10, that Christians removed from the earth in the rapture, removed from Man's Day, *will find themselves in the Lord's Day.*

And the widespread, erroneous teaching that the Lord's Day overlaps the last seven years of Man's Day is one of the main causes for the numerous false teachings in I, II Thessalonians, among other places.)

Now, with the preceding in mind, note that II Thess. 2:2ff deals with the Lord's Day *on earth*, not in the heavens. The Thessalonians had evidently been mistaught that they were now in the Lord's Day, in the Millennium. *And nothing about existing conditions matched that which was supposed to exist on earth, where they still resided, during that future day.* Understandably, they could only have been confused.

Paul begins straightening matters out by calling attention to two things which must occur before the Lord's Day could exist on earth — things, with related events, which had not yet occurred.

An apostasy must occur first ("a falling away" [v. 3] KJV, is from *apostasia* in the Greek text, meaning "apostasy"), and the man of sin (*the one who will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*) *must also be revealed first* (v. 4).

Neither of these had occurred.

"The mystery of iniquity" (v. 7), which could only relate to *Christians* (dealt with in the continuing part of this chapter), was already working. *But this must reach a final stage, which, according to related Scriptures, would be complete apostasy* (cf. Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8; Rev. 3:14-20).

And, as previously stated, *the man of sin must be revealed, along with an outworking of the things stated about him* (vv. 3-12).

Only then could the Lord's Day exist on earth.

Then Paul stated that there was *one thing*, in conjunction with the apostasy, which must occur before the man of sin could be revealed, allowing Man's Day to subsequently end and the Lord's Day to begin on earth.

And that *one thing* is spoken of as something presently in existence *which held back* the appearance of the man of sin (v. 6), something *which had to be removed* before the man of sin could be revealed (v. 7).

But, at what point during the Tribulation will the man of sin be revealed — seen by his actions at the beginning (Rev. 6:1, 2), or seen by his actions starting in the middle (Rev. 6:3, 4)?

Things spoken of in II Thess. 2:3ff about the revelation of the man of sin have to do with events occurring in the middle of the Tribulation and extending throughout the last half (Matt. 24:15ff). But, within the revealed mannerism which he will exhibit in that day (vv. 4a, 9) there appears to be an allusion to his actions throughout the Tribulation.

But all information on a subject is not given one place in Scripture, which is why Scripture must be compared with Scripture in order to begin seeing a more complete picture.

(These and other related things are dealt with in the continuing part of this chapter in II Thess. 2, which centers on showing that which is preventing any present revelation of this man.)

3) *Central, Overall Message to the Thessalonians*

As previously seen, Paul's first epistle to Christians forming the Church in Thessalonica had to do with *the central message which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world*. Paul referred to this message as "my gospel," "our gospel," connecting it with "the mystery" which had been revealed to him at the outset of his ministry. One was part and parcel with the other (I Thess. 1:5; cf. Rom. 2:16; 16:25; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:23-28).

In the first three and one-half chapters of I Thessalonians (1:1-4:12), Paul dealt extensively with *things pertaining to this central message which he had been called to proclaim*, which is "Christ proclaimed among you, the hope of glory" (correct textual reading of Col. 1:27b [note an inseparable connection with "the mystery" in vv. 26, 27a]).

Then, beginning toward the end of chapter four and continu-

ing into chapter five (4:13-5:10), Paul dealt with *the rapture and succeeding events* (clearly seen in other related Scriptures to occur *before* the Tribulation) — showing two types of Christians removed from the earth at the end of the dispensation (faithful and unfaithful [those who had heeded his exhortations and warnings, and those who hadn't heeded these exhortations and warnings, seen in 5:1-9]), with events surrounding the judgment seat in view. And the remainder of the book simply forms Paul's closing remarks for his first epistle.

Then, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians Paul began at a time following the Tribulation, continuing from his first epistle.

And the Tribulation is not seen in these events concerning Christians both preceding and following the Tribulation, for Christians have nothing to do with the Tribulation. Rather, the Tribulation is “the time of Jacob's trouble,” with Israel and the nations in view, not the Church.

The thrust of Paul's opening remarks in his second epistle, covering all twelve verses of the first chapter, has to do with the place which Christians will occupy in the future kingdom of Christ, following Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation.

Some, the faithful, will occupy positions of glory and honor in Christ's kingdom, seated on the throne with Christ as He exercises power over the nations, realizing the “salvation” spoken of in I Thess. 5:9 (II Thess. 1:5, 10-2:1; *cf.* Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21).

Others, the unfaithful, will occupy places of shame and disgrace and have no part in Christ's kingdom. They will not be privileged to ascend the throne with Him as He exercises power over the nations, realizing instead the “wrath” spoken of in I Thess. 1:10; 5:9 (II Thess. 1:6-9; *cf.* Rev. 3:15-17).

Then chapter two begins with a continuing statement from the closing verses of chapter one, remaining within the same subject matter — faithful Christians “gathering together unto him” at the time of His return at the end of the Tribulation.

This was Paul's way of introducing a dissertation to correct erroneous teaching which had found its way into the Church in Thessalonica, purporting to have come from him (vv. 2ff).

(It is commonly taught that the “gathering together unto him” in II Thess. 2:1 has to do with the rapture. And a lesser number of Christians try to see the rapture taught in the third verse of this chapter through a rather strained usage of the Greek word *apostasia*, using the thought of “departure” for the meaning of the word and then trying to apply it to the Church being removed at the end of the dispensation.

Though “departure” is the idea behind the meaning of the word *apostasia* [literal meaning, “to stand away from”], attempting to see the rapture in either of these opening verses of the second chapter [vv. 1, 3] is clearly both textually and contextually wrong. And this can easily be seen by simply reading both in the light of their contexts.

Again, Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. A failure to do this, attempting to see the rapture in either of these two verses, has done away with any correct understanding of these verses. And, as a result, interpretation is negatively affected elsewhere in the chapter.

In the preceding respect, along with not understanding the overall picture beginning with chapter one in I Thessalonians, it is little wonder that Bible students have trouble understanding and identifying that which presently exists in II Thess. 2:6, 7, preventing the appearance of the man of sin.)

4) *That Preventing the Appearance of Antichrist*

Aside from the “falling away” (“the apostasy”), which, contextually, could only be a *concluding work* of “the mystery of iniquity” (vv. 3, 7), the passage centers on *something unnamed that is preventing the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition*. And that being referenced (which, contextually, could only be associated with the apostasy) *must be removed, taken out of the way, before this man can be revealed*.

An interesting feature of the matter is that Paul didn’t need to identify that being referenced, *for those in Thessalonica could only have already known what he was writing about (v. 6), needing no explanation*.

But the same thing cannot be said of Bible students today. Most of them have trouble with this, and many of them simply leave it alone, not knowing what to do with it.

(Most Bible students today, seeking to explain what Paul was referencing, which the Thessalonians could only have understood, attempt to see *the Holy Spirit* as the restrainer.

Aside from not knowing what else to do with the passage, they do this, to a large extent, on the basis of the Greek text's usage of both neuter and masculine words to reference the restrainer [neuter in v. 6, masculine in v. 7]. And "Spirit" is a neuter word in the Greek text, though the Spirit, at times, is spoken of in a masculine respect [e.g., John 16:7-11].)

But, is this the way that those in Thessalonica would have understood the matter? If so, Why?

Instead of surmising about the matter though there is *a much better way* to answer these questions, which will, as well, leave us with the same mind-set as those in Thessalonica almost 2,000 years ago.

In this respect, answers are, in reality, quite easy to come by. Those in Thessalonica understood what Paul was teaching; but few Bible teachers today do so, which is where the problem lies.

Those in Thessalonica understood the content of Paul's gospel, seeing the message throughout as a message to the saved relative to the coming kingdom of Christ.

Bible students today, almost without exception, see Paul's gospel as simply another way to reference the gospel of grace, seeing the message throughout I, II Thessalonians as dealing largely with saved-unsaved issues, intermixed with a message to Christians, though not a message in keeping with the content of Paul's gospel at all.

Paul's gospel had to do with a message to those who had already heard and responded to the message of the gospel of the grace of God. It had to do with a message concerning Christian faithfulness, with a view to the coming kingdom of Christ. It had to do with the purpose for the present dispensation — *the Spirit sent into the world to call out a bride for God's Son, with a view to the bride ascending the throne with Christ during the coming age.*

In the preceding respect, Paul's gospel, as seen dealt with throughout I Thessalonians, had to do with the antitype of Genesis chapter twenty-four (*with I Thessalonians forming a commentary on*

this chapter), set between the death of Abraham's wife (ch. 23) and Abraham again taking a wife (ch. 25).

Paul's gospel had to do with God sending His Spirit to the earth to find and procure a bride for His Son, Jesus (as Abraham, in the type, sent his eldest servant into the far country to find and procure a bride for his son, Isaac).

And the whole of the matter in the antitype occurs exactly as in the type. The Spirit's search for and procurement of a bride for God's Son occurs following Israel being set aside (looked upon as dead [John 11:1ff]), but before God restores and remarries the adulterous wife that He previously divorced.

In the type, following Abraham's servant procuring the bride, the servant removed the bride from the far country (accompanied by maidens, riding on evidently the same ten camels in the servant's possession when he had come into the far country to search for and procure the bride [ten showing *completeness*; *all went forth to meet Isaac, as all Christians will go forth to meet Christ*]).

And in the antitype, following the Spirit's procurement of the bride, the Spirit will remove the bride from the earth (*remove all Christians, with the bride revealed at the judgment seat*).

In the type, Isaac came forth to meet his bride; and, in the antitype, Jesus will come forth to meet His bride.

The preceding is seen in I Thess. 4:13ff and can only be an inseparable part of Paul's gospel. And when God's purpose for the present dispensation has been completed and the Spirit removes the bride, *there will then be NOTHING to prevent the man of sin from being revealed*.

Until this occurs, *he CAN'T be revealed*; after this occurs, *NOTHING will stand in the way of his being revealed*. And since the whole of the matter is seen in Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, there was no need for any type explanation to those in Thessalonica concerning what Paul meant by something holding back the revelation of this man in II Thess. 2:6, 7. *He had already told them in his first epistle*.

Thus, that which is holding back the revelation of the man of sin is more than just the removal of the Spirit. *It has to do with the Spirit completing His dispensational work and removing the bride*

(which, as well, clearly shows a pretribulational removal of Christians).

God works with set times, set ways, particular individuals, nations (Israel, and the nations through Israel) through which His plans and purposes are worked out and brought to pass.

Things referenced in II Thess. 2:1ff have to do with two different set times in this respect — a removal relative to one, and a revealing relative to the other.

And until these set times arrive, NEITHER can occur; but when these set times arrive, BOTH must occur.

*(For information on God's set times, refer to the author's books, *End of the Days* and *We Are Almost There*.)*

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This book is about the rapture and that which awaits Christians beyond the rapture, leading into the Messianic Era. A companion book — *“O Sleeper! Arise, Call!”* — deals with Israel and the nations during essentially the same time-period, also leading into the Messianic Era.

In this respect, both books together cover the future as it relates to the three divisions of mankind — Jew, Gentile, Christian (I Cor. 10:32).

This book deals with Christians, beginning with their removal preceding the Tribulation; the referenced book deals with Israel and the nations, beginning with their entrance into the Tribulation. And *ONLY the latter, NEVER the former, has ANY connection with the Tribulation.*

Thus, dealing with *“a pretribulation rapture of Christians,”* solely from a Scriptural standpoint, is a *misuse of terms. Scripture NEVER connects or associates the Church with the Tribulation after a fashion which this would portend.*

Time during the present dispensation occurs while God’s Seventy-Week time-piece is in stop-mode (Dan. 9:24-27), at the end of the Sixty-Ninth Week but preceding the Seventieth-Week. *The Church has NOTHING to do with time during this Seventy-Week period, either preceding the beginning or following the end of the present dispensation. And Scripture simply DOES NOT deal with the Church in connection with time outside the dispensation, even with reference to this time.*

For example, contrary to much popular teaching on the subject — with those having a part in this teaching using verses such as I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; II Thess. 2:1, 3; Rev. 3:10 (*ref. the three appendixes in this book*) — *Scripture NEVER, not in these verses or in any other verses, promises Christians that they will, via the rapture, be delivered from having any part in the Tribulation (a supposed promise which, from a Scriptural standpoint, would be COMPLETELY OUT OF PLACE).*

Even though the dispensation ends before the Tribulation begins, the rapture is simply *NOT dealt with in relation to the Tribulation.* The correct Scriptural way to look at the matter is that *Christians will be removed at the end of the present dispensation, NOT be removed before the Tribulation.*

And to see Scripture handling the matter in this manner, *just simply allow Scripture to speak and be its Own interpreter.*
