

thou not and avengest blood on them dwelling on the earth?" The word translated master here is *despotēs*. The word *despotēs* is used in Jude 4: and II Peter 2:11 referring to Christ. In our language the word despot carries a bad connotation. Why did the Spirit choose this term? A despot is one who controls everything (note this term in Acts 4:24 - in times of persecution). There is not much hope left, unless God is all powerful, and that His will and purpose will ultimately prevail.

Verse 11

(Note how often the passive voice - "was given" is used in this section of scripture. This means that God allows certain things to occur but He is still in command of the reigns of the universe. The martyrs received a white robe. A *stolē* (robe) was a long festive dress. It was for special occasions only. "And it was said to them in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they should rest (stop drying and also rest in spiritual peace) yet a little season until should be fulfilled also the fellow slaves of them and the brothers of them the ones being about (mellontes - about to occur) to be killed as also they." God told the saints to rest, because others would also be martyred for their faith in Christ. Things will grow worse on the earth, not better and better in every way.

SECTION 20

Text: 6:12-17

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

Initial Questions 6:12-17

1. What is the O.T. source of the imagery of the sixth seal - vs. 12? (See Joel chp. 2:1ff)
2. The devastation was so terrible that the habitants of the earth did what - vs. 15?
3. Is there a hiding place from God?
4. Is it paradoxical to speak of the "wrath of the Lamb" - vs. 16?
5. Who will be able to stand in the day of God's wrath - vs. 17?

Verse 12

The sixth seal is the revelation of God's day of wrath (6:12-17). The imagery in this section of scripture is taken almost verbally from the biblical sources. The earthquake comes from Matthew 24; the sun black and the moon turned to blood (Joel 2:31 - note Joel chap 2:28f was quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost), the star fallen from heaven like figs from a fig tree (Isaiah 34:4), the sky rolled up like a scroll (Isaiah 34:4), the rulers of the earth hiding (Isaiah 2:10), calling for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them (Hosea 10:8), are all familiar images to signify the end of the present world order.

The relationship of the structure of *The Revelation* to the great eschatological discourse of our Lord (Matthew 24:4; 25:1ff; Mark 13:5-37; Luke 21:8-36 - see also Luke 17:20-37) is acknowledged by every competent scholar.

Note: We now have a paradigm of conservative, scholarly research in the work of Herman Ridderbos, a brilliant Dutch Calvinist. *The Coming of the Kingdom*, Presbyterian Reformed Pub. Co., 1962, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - this is a must for all concerned with the eschatology of The Synoptic Gospels and specifically with the passages mentioned above on our Lord's discourse on "the last things." Dr. Ridderbos is acutely aware of all top level critical scholarship as he enters the arena with C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology" (no ultimate wrath, judgment, nor hell), Oscar Cullmann, a mediating Lutheran scholar of the first rank, R. Bultmann, the father of contemporary theology which utilizes the categories of Existential anthropology to reinterpret the scriptures, and K. Barth, the architect of the greatest systematic presentation of a theology since Calvin. Thank God for a man that is committed to the Word, and is also alert to every scholarly work in the field!

Then these things begin to occur - "they say to the mountains and to the rocks: Fall ye (*pesete* - 2 aor. imper. - the rocks were commanded to fall - do it now) on us and hide (*krupsate* - 1st aor. imper. they also commanded that the rocks

hide them - tense of urgency) us from the face (the presence of - a Semitic manner of speaking) of the one sitting on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." The judgments of God are so severe that the rich and poor, the strong and the weak, strive to "hide," but there is no hiding place. Why?

Verse 17

"because the great day of their wrath came (*elthen* - 2 aor. ind. - it came in a moment - there was no time to prepare for it - now!) and who is able (can) stand - (*stathenai* - 1st. aor. inf. passive voice) who will be permitted to stand?) For the great day (*hē hemera hē megalē*) see Joel 2:11; Zephaniah 1:14; Jude 6). This powerful vision was presented to us with the paradoxical elements of "the wrath of a lamb." Lambs are not full of wrath, but "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world" is full of wrath for those who deny His vicarious atonement for sin.

Swete answers the concluding question "who is able to stand?" with the words of Christ found in Luke 21:36. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (1901 - R.V.)

This scene speaks eloquently against the hideous heresy of universalism, which is rearing its ugly head again - in high and low places. (See the brief discussion in appendix after this chapter.)

Note: Sermon Suggestion - *No Place to Hide!*

Introduction: David Bradley reported his experiences in the bomber which dropped the first nuclear weapon on Japan. He wrote a book entitled - *No Place to Hide*. This is even more true of "the one sitting on the throne and wrath of the Lamb." No one will be able to stand!

I. Men seek *Security* today as never before, but will not find human forms of security adequate for that hour.

II. Men are *alienated* today as never before. They try to hide in the escape mechanisms of this world, but even the sea and the graves cannot hide us from "the wrath of the Lamb."

III. Men are seeking *prestige* by attaining the *status symbols* of our day. We try to hide from our real selves. Before we can respond to the Gospel we must know who we are before God, in order to become what we ought to as followers of Christ. Rollo May says, in his *The Meaning of Anxiety*, that man's ultimate concern today is to know the answer to the question - "Who am I and what is the meaning of my existence?"

Conclusion: What is *Your* answer to the question "Who Can Stand?" While those outside of Christ cry for the mountains and rocks

to fall on them and hide them, those of us in Christ have a rock that is cleft for our hiding place.

Rock of Ages

Rock of Ages, cleft for me; Let me hide myself in thee;

Not the labor of my hands can fulfill the law's demands;

Nothing in my hand I bring: Simply to thy cross I cling:

Note: We are under obligation to Leon Morris for his excellent survey study of *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment*. Tyndale Press, London, 1960. Now in hard back and handled by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Many people deny the objective wrath of God, ultimate judgment, an ultimate Hell, but there are many different reasons given for rejecting these doctrines. The unitarian-Universalist coalition deny the validity of Hell, because the nature of God (they say) necessitates that everyone be ultimately saved. The Jehovahs Witnesses deny the reality of *Hell*, but for a different reason; they say that Hell is not a biblical doctrine. The vast majority of contemporary theologians deny the existence of Hell, because of their new views of revelation.

Dr. Morris' book is divided into four chapters:

1. Judgment in the O.T. Shaphat.
2. Judgment in the O.T.; other words than Shaphat.
3. Judgment in the N.T.; A Present Reality.
4. Judgment in the N.T.; A future Certainty.

Dr. Morris deals sagaciously with the best critical literature which strives, but vainly, to show that the Bible does not speak of an eschatological wrath, and ultimate judgment. Morris brilliantly, but simply, shows the fallacious reasoning of those who would empty the biblical declarations of their ultimate truth.

Review Questions for the Entire Chapter 6

1. What is a possible identification of "the rider on the white horse - vs. 1?
2. What does the symbol of "the red horse" mean - vs. 4?
3. Discuss some of the spiritual factors involved in War - vs. 4.

4. In our World does it look like evil or righteousness shall prevail - see vs. 4?
5. What is the purpose of the third seal - vs. 5?
6. Discuss the inter-relationship of war and scarcity as it is a present reality in our world.
7. How meaningful is our Christian Faith in times of crisis - vs. 8?
8. What were the reasons given for the saints being slain - vs. 9?
9. Discuss the problem of evil with respect to God's justice, righteousness, and power - vs. 10.
10. Why were the saints told to rest - vs. 11?
11. Discuss the inter-relationship of Matthew 24:1ff, and this section of The Revelation - vs. 12/
12. Who does "their wrath" refer to in vs. 17?

Special Study

The Gospel, The Gulf of Guilt, and Resurgent Universalism!

Scripture: Luke 13:22-30

22. And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem. 23. And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved?

Text: Romans 3:26

I say of his righteousness at this present season that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

On April 11, 1961, another trial began in the city of Jerusalem, Palestine, which, like another trial in that city 1,929 years ago, was concerned with Justice, Righteousness, Guilt, and Forgiveness. The Jewish Court today, as during the trial of Jesus, sought only justice. What is Justice?

Adolf Eichmann, chief of the Gestapo of Jewish Affairs, was responsible for the liquidation of six million Jews! There is no punishment fit for the crime; a crime primarily committed on a little farm in Eastern Poland - Auschwitz! He was set out for all to see, as was Jesus. The world waited for the day when

Eichmann would take the stand - what would he say? What could he say? When the bench gave him permission to take the stand, his first words were - *Ich bin unschuldig!* (I am not guilty). Eichmann's reply raised the fundamental problem of the gulf guilt, and how this gulf is to be bridged - if at all. Nothing less than the Christian Gospel is at stake!

The Church of Jesus Christ is on trial again! It has been summoned by mankind to justify its existence. How can the cause of Christ face up to the phenomenon of a dynamic, resurgent universalism? In fact universalism is advancing at such alarming rate that the Evangelical fortnightly, *Christianity Today* is sponsoring a call and challenge to Bible believing preachers all over the world to reply to the cancerous heresy by a higher level proclamation of the Word. Yes, indeed the Church is on trial as never before in her history; so also is the Christian view of the need of fallen men, and his inability to meet his own need. This Twentieth Century trial, as did a first century Jerusalem trial, exemplifies three crucial matters, from a biblical perspective. Something is radically wrong with man; (1) The Offense is Sin; (2) The Offender is Man; and (3) The Offended is God! How can reconciliation be brought about? How can the injured grant peace of forgiveness to the injurer? What makes forgiveness possible?

There is an insidious disease which has reached epidemic proportions and is paralyzing the spiritual and evangelistic life of the Church; its name is universalism. This strange forboding term and its implications for biblically oriented Christians must be diagnosed, and prognosis given - immediately - if a revitalized and commission-bearing church is to speak prophetically, and live redemptively before our generation - on behalf of God in Christ.

We can plan our spiritual counter-attack better after we have a more intelligent understanding of the high strategy of hell. The demoniac strategists of the realm of darkness are heralding to contemporary man - that all men are already saved. A most consoling message! The sole purpose for the community of the committed to fulfill is to announce that fact--far and wide. Universalism is that doctrine that declares a complete restoration of *all men* to a *redeemed* relationship with the living God (the theological term is *apokatastosis panton*). There are so many adherents of this doctrine today that as intelligent, concerned Christians we must be brought to the

realization that this position cuts the spiritual nerve center of the Christian faith, and the possibility of Evangelizing the world in fulfillment of Christ's final commission "Go into all the World."

Possibly, we can have a clearer vision of this position which is held by both theological giants, and many pew padders alike; the doctrine of universalism asserts that the gulf is bridged solely because the nature of God is love and holy love cannot indict sinful man with eternal condemnation. This position implies that God's wrath and judgment are solely corrective and restorative. This deceptive error is that punishment is curative or deterrent, and not as deserved!

Contemporary Universalism asserts three things; (1) The omnipotence of God necessitates the universal salvation of man; (2) The sovereign Lordship of God in Christ is meaningful only if this Lordship necessarily entails the redemption of all men; (3) The irresistibility of the Word of God necessarily means the redemption of all non-Christians, Satan, and his angels of darkness.

As early as Origen the doctrine of restorationism was being spread abroad. He hoped that all men would be redeemed; he also thought that Satan and fallen angels would be stored. Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, and Theodore of Mopsusta also held that the purpose of punishment is to reform and not condemn. Augustine's repudiation of this doctrine sowed the process of its dissemination. During the 18th and 19th centuries revival brought this wretched heresy into sharper focus than before. This theological aberration gave birth to the philosophical mutation - transcendentalism. The pantheistic tendencies of the period spawned a new breed of preachers. These went far and wide repudiating future punishment or hell. Their words were soothing - as even the unpenitent, belligerent sceptic was informed that the holy God would not be thwarted even by their overt animosity to all things holy.

Those who maintain universalism today, do so but at the expense of the Bible as the Word of God. The new prophets of universalism have been called by a god who is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the father of Jesus Christ; and have been commissioned to proclaim a message not authorized by the holy Scripture. Every major contemporary theologian has been schooled in the doctrine of universalism, and has learned well his lessons.

Reinhold Niebuhr would have us believe that man is only in an existential predicament. Sin can be painlessly extracted from this predicament and then the patient can go back on the shores of eternal bliss. God is love; His nature precludes that the separation be eternal. Complete restoration is inevitable!

Another creative Athenian, Dr. Paul Tillich, provides fallen man with sanctified certainty that his redemption has been gained. This voice in the wilderness has compelled many to go out to hear him and have stayed to be anesthetized into spiritual insensibility by his new healing balm - universalism. His disciples have returned to the pew with a new zealous defiance toward any call to a closer walk with the master of men. Dr. Tillich's redeemer is a *tertium quid*, neither man nor God! I humbly suggest that Dr. Tillich's pointer symbol (Jesus is the symbol of Christ pointing men to God) will be powerless to grant forgiveness to the sinner and provide security to the day of the wrath of God. If the universal redemption of all men is to be accomplished, I doubt that this prophetic voice is spokesman for a saviour adequate for the task.

Another architect of contemporary theological thought is Dr. Karl Barth. He is a specialist in anesthetizing his theologically inclined auditors. His doctrine of grace which reveals its irresistible power in the triumph of election in Christ. All men are elected to eternal life in Christ, whether they are aware of it or not!

The great and the small among the fraternity of theologians maintain, with a concerted voice, that God's love necessarily results in the redemption of all men. This assertion must be challenged, if the church is to be rallied from her deadly sleep. The great physician must be beseeched immediately to empower His body again, if the impotence caused by this spiritual sleeping sickness is to be overcome. The spokesmen for the complete restoration of men are growing more numerous. There are many, both high and low, on the ecclesiastical ladder who maintain this fallacious doctrine. Dr. Nels F. S. Ferre declares in favor of universalism in these words as he defines *agape* (one of the N.T. words translated Love) "as indiscriminate kindness to all" (p. 57 - *Christ and The Christian* - Harper, 1958). He categorically asserts that salvation is universal in actual extent. (Ibid. pp. 246-247). He calls the doctrine of the second coming of Christ "the darkest of all umbrellas," because it makes sense of hell and eternal punishment and thus

repudiates his doctrine of God as *agape*. (See p. 33, *The Sun and The Umbrella*). Can the gulf of guilt be bridged in this manner? It will not do merely to assert that God has so bridged the gulf of guilt. Is it actually bridged in this manner? We turn now to consider the position of those who maintain the universal restorations of all men on the basis of the new unbiblical views of the nature of revelation, and the nature of God as *agape* (in the special sense of their new definition), and in our final point we will consider some of the biblical doctrines which are not in harmony with the complete restoration doctrine.

I. Contemporary Universalism in Grounded in a Non-biblical View of the Nature of Revelation

How does God reveal himself? Most contemporary theologians deny that revelation is propositional. By propositional revelation we mean that the words and sentences in the Bible are very revelation. Those who maintain the doctrine of universalism, at least in its modern dress, deny that the Bible is the Word of God. They set forth an anti-biblical view of revelation as they speak ambiguously about events as being the revelation, but since there are no infallible records (according to them), the information from the first century Christians (The New Testament) is of no greater value than the theological systems of Doctors Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, Niebuhr, or Ferré; in fact, they are of less - to many. If this thesis is true, then let us trace the steps historically which led to this new view of revelation and makes universalism so feasible within the framework of its theological presuppositions.

What are the major attitudes toward the nature of revelation found in contemporary thought, and in what ways do these effect the problem of universalism? In order to deal with these questions, let us retrace some of the more crucial steps in the development of the contemporary mind.

The New Testament clearly reveals an apostolic insistence on revealed truth. The Apostolic Fathers of the second and third centuries were preoccupied with proving the validity of the Christian religion against Jewish and pagan rejections of Jesus as Christ. The paramount issue revolves about the relation of reason to revelation. The traditional position (from Apostolic Fathers to the modern period) has been that reason and revelation constitute two distinct sources of knowledge or truth.

Contemporary insistences on a single source of knowledge react violently to this claim.

The Jewish Philosopher-Theologian, Martin Buber has provided many Christian theologians with a new view of religious knowledge. His view is clearly set forth in his small, popularly written work - *I-Thou*. He maintains that we come to know people in a different manner than we know things. This means that we never necessarily know God through scripture, or evidence of any kind. Commitment becomes totally an irrational leap. This position completely rejects the uniqueness of the Christian revelation. Salvation then becomes available to anyone open or responsive to the Thou (supposedly God). Salvation is no longer dependent on the work of Christ on the Cross and empty tomb. Revelation is no longer content or revealed information, but rather an encounter of man with God, not mediated through the language of scripture, or anything else.

The contemporary anti-biblical attitude toward revelation leads us to consider a correlary doctrine - the nature of God as *agape* (as defined in the new theology), and if this is His nature, then *no one* can thwart His redemptive love, therefore,

must be saved; therefore, man's acceptance or response to God has nothing to do with man's salvation. Yet, the personification of this redemptive love declared "Marvel not at this; for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29; R.V., 1901). Negative Biblical criticism and the so-called assured scientific results play a role in the rejection of the Bible as the Word of God, but we will by-pass this particular problem and move to specific declarations of major theologians - concerning their repudiation of the Bible as the very Word of God.

Archbishop William Temple was a giant among the theological Philistines. He declares against the unique status of the Bible in these words—"What is offered to man's apprehension in any specific revelation is no truth concerning but the living God Himself." (See *Nature, Man, and God*, p. 322). This is a categorical rejection of the propositions of the Bible as very revelation. Emil Brunner said "the fate of the Bible is the fate of Christianity," but he is very hard on this object - which determines the fate of Christianity. The Bible of Brunner, Barth, Bultmann, and their disciples is a document capable of yielding

the doctrine of universalism; but we must not confuse their Bible with the one on which the church has kindled her evangelistic compassion for centuries. Much of the contemporary Church's zeal for the lost has been dissipated, because it has been served from the source of "the power of God unto salvation." This conclusion leads us to consider a second problem which arises out of the first - the nature of God as Love.

Advocates of "open membership" maintain, implicitly and explicitly, a view of revelation which stands in marked tension with the biblical data. When one maintains that we must not allow even baptism to be a stumbling block to a person seeking to become a member of the Church of Christ, he is maintaining an implicate view of the will of God. How do the advocates of "Open Membership" know that it is more Christian to accept the pious unimmersed as fellow Christians than to deny to them the aforementioned status. Though we cannot here consider the intricacies of the contemporary debate concerning the nature of revelation, theological language, etc., we can assert that those who maintain the view mentioned above, do so by implying a new gnostic source of religious knowledge. Those of us who deny the validity of open membership have a right to demand that they clearly articulate a defensible view of the nature of revelation and religious discourse. This has not been observed, at least by this present author. It follows logically that if universalism is a true doctrine, then a discussion of immersion versus no immersion is ultimately non-sensical.

II. Contemporary Universalism Also Entails a Non-Biblical View of the Nature of God which is Inseparable from the New Views of Revelation (Not Content but the Encounter of Persons)

What is God like? How can we know the nature of God? The contemporary universalists maintain that He is love, but what does this mean? If revelation is not content or information (re: Scriptures), how do they know that God is love in the sense that His love necessarily entails the salvation of every man? No biblically oriented Christian would deny that the love of God is *necessary* for our salvation, but would deny that it is the *sufficient* condition of our salvation. How do they know that all men will be saved? Where do the universalists obtain this information? We must take up the promethian task of challenging

all universalists with the query - how do you verify your assertion that the nature of God precludes that anyone can be lost, if you are cut loose from a rational view of revelation? If revelation is rational, i.e., propositions contained in the scripture, then we can assert that we know the nature of God is love, because the revelation provides this information, and at the same time gives us abundant evidence of the nature of the love of God. But is the biblical doctrine of love to be equated with the contemporary view of love as entailing the universal redemption of man? The Scripture speaks of both the love of God and the condemnation of the alien sinner. We would never find out from a critical study of the scripture texts that all men are saved, and that our sole responsibility is merely entailed in our telling them so. Quite the opposite is the case! One said to Jesus—"Lord, are they few that are saved?" Though we believe the Bible is unique revelation, we are not here concerned with the mere proof-texting of biblical animosity toward universalism. We will choose a book which contains an extensive doctrine of the love of God, I John; and we now turn to learn what he has to say about the nature of the love of God. We will examine John's theology of love to see if this section of scripture adheres to the contemporary theological definition of *agape*—that is, that God's love is of such a nature that no man - not even the unrepentant sinner, will be eternally condemned. If we find that the Biblical doctrine love is not in harmony with the redefinition of *agape* by the theologians, then we can only say that their new view of the love of God stems from their new view of revelation, and therefore, stands in the sharpest tension with both the biblical doctrine of revelation, and the love of God revealed therein. John develops the first epistle around three basic tests of life - *fellowship*, *love*, and *belief*. Though the entire epistle repudiates universalism, our immediate attention will be directed to the place of love in the life of redemption. John tells the universal church that - "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him." (I John 2:9 - 1901 R.V.). John declares that only the ones who continue to love (present tense verb) continues to abide (Present tense verb) in the light. This entire work was written to give criterion for distinguishing between the *redeemed* and the *unredeemed*! He again raises his voice against the universalist message as he states, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death."

(3:14, 1901 R.V.). The love of God obligates man to love; therefore, there is at least this condition, which must be fulfilled before the love of God is redemptive. In the great section on the test of love (John 4:7-12) we are confronted with the demands of holy love. God is defined as *agape* or love! This sounds like what the contemporary theologians are saying, but here God's redemptive love is conditioned. This becomes crystal clear in vs. 12—"if we love one another, God abideth in us. . .". The condition which must be met, before God promises to continually dwell in the believer is clearly pointed out in John's use of the conditional "if we love one another." "We love, because he first loved" (vs. 19). This great paragraph on the love of God shows three things—(1) That the love of God is not indiscriminately redemptive; (2) and that therefore the biblical doctrine of the love of God is not the doctrine of the love of God which the universalists teach; (3) the universalist's *agape* theology must be the result of a new view of revelation, because it does not stem from the biblical theology of the love of God. This great sketch of scripture clearly demarcates the relation of the love of God to the problem of Sin, truly a problem fit for God! The two questions which we asked at the beginning of this section—What is God Like? and How Can we Know the Nature of God?—receive mutually exclusive answers in the Bible and in the works of contemporary universalist theologians.

We now turn to a third consideration - some biblical doctrines which cannot be harmonized with the doctrine of the universal salvation.

III. There Are Many Biblical Doctrines Which Flatly Contradict the Doctrine of Universalism:

What do universalists reply to the biblical doctrines of the wrath and judgment of God? Marcian taught in the second century, that the Old Testament reveals solely a God of wrath and the New Testament solely a God of love. This assertion tells us more of the level of Marcian's biblical knowledge - than it does about the biblical teaching concerning the wrath of God. The *locus classicus* of the biblical doctrine of the wrath of God is Romans 1:19-32. Here all of mankind is brought under the wrath of God. We must here assert what is very clear in the text that we are here reading of the "objective" wrath and not a "subjective or emotive" wrath.

The desert herald, John the Baptizer, thundered out these words to unrepented Pharisees and Sadducees—"Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come" the same time no one can take seriously the biblical records, and reduce the wrath and judgment of God to a present reality, emptying these doctrines of any future or eschatological impart. All judgment is not condemnatory in nature, but the biblical authors take special care to distinguish this fact from condemnatory judgment which will befall all who are not found in Christ. Paul provides us with the message of divine mercy - "Therefore, there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1).

The contemporary *agape* theologians have set aside the biblical doctrines of justice, righteousness, wrath, judgment as though they were not there or as though they are in irreconcilable tension with the biblical doctrine of the love of God. Why and how do they choose only a part of the biblical doctrine of the nature of God to the exclusion of other parts? The New Testament as does the Old, speaks of the justice, righteousness and love of God as though they are inseparable. Exegetically, universalism is untenable! How then can we account for the wide spread adherence to this doctrine by most top ranking theological eschalon? Contemporary theologians, controlled by alien philosophical and/or theological presuppositions, hold that these doctrines are contradictory.

Nicholas Berdyaev, the Russian Orthodox Existentialist, states that, "The justification of hell on the ground of justice. . . is particularly revolting and lacking in spiritual depth" (see p. 267 - *The Destiny of Man*.) Berdyaev is actually claiming that the biblical teaching that "God is love" is precluding justice. The very work which gives this definition of God - I John - militates against Berdyaev's interpretation of the significance of the doctrinal assertion that "God is love." John maintains that the nature of God as love obligates man - if he is to be among the redeemed. John is no universalist, but Dr. Berdyaev is! You will have to choose which one you follow!

This new non-biblical view of the nature of God is clearly revealed in the universalism of C. H. Dodd. The nature and purpose of the atoning work of Christ receives radical alteration at the hands of some master theological surgeons. The new understanding of the nature of Christ's atonement is a genetic aberration. Dr. Dodd was largely responsible for the change in

translation from *propitiation* to *expiation* in the Revised Standard Version, and New English Bible, etc. What is the theological difference between these two terms? *Expiation* involves an atonement for a thing; *propitiation* involves atonement to a person! The contemporary theological foundation for favoring *expiation* is most apparent in the so-called *agape* theology: that God is love, and cannot and does not demand atonement to himself in order that reconciliation of the sinner can be effected. This idea is not only foreign to the New Testament, but rather it stands in diametric opposition to the biblical doctrine of atonement. The use of *expiation* in Romans 3:25, etc., clearly reveals the contemporary attitude toward the nature of God; that God's nature precludes His demand for propitiatory sacrifice. We must never cease from declaring that though God's nature demanded propitiatory sacrifice; and that He was that sacrifice in the person of the Lamb of God! The biblical doctrine of the objective wrath of God, which leads to the condemnation of the person outside of Christ on the day of Judgment, has no place in a concept of atonement based on *expiation*. The apostolic declaration that new power became available to men in Christ is central for the biblical doctrine of *Kerygma*. What was the origin and extent of *newness* on the earth? What was the relation of *Kerygma*, and the source and power of *newness*? In the fulness of time God made available in Christ a *new power* to become sons of God. God made a *new covenant* with men and this covenant was inseparably related to the death of the testator - the Christ of the Cross and empty tomb. (Heb. 8 and 9). This *new covenant* brought into possible existence a *new life*. This new quality of life transcends mere existence. Paul pictures the new life of one who has died to sin in Romans 6:1-7. We are entombed with Christ by the instrument of baptism - in order that we rise to "walk in newness of life" (vs. 4). This beautiful section of scripture plainly reveals that this "newness of life" is conditioned; therefore, it is not indiscriminately available to all men as universalism asserts.

Newness of Life is made available to man through the preaching of the Cross. The paradox of *The Skandalon* (I Cor. 1:18-25) is that it is the power of God - only to those who are saved; it is a stumbling block to the Jews, who thought that there was some other way to be redeemed; it is foolishness to the Gentiles (nations or Greeks), because it was intellectually absurd that man's only possibility for salvation was made available

through a crucified savior on an ignominious cross. This new life was a separated life. Here the tension with universalism is sharply focused. This is no sacred-secular distinction; because of a re-interpretation of the kingdom and lordship of God based on a complete restoration of man to God. The newness of life is the quality of life available only to the *new man*. The Ephesian Epistle gives us a divine perspective from which to see the new man in Christ. The construction of the Church (chp. 2) was to destroy *unwanted walls* which divide the creation of God. "That he might create in himself of the two one new man. . . and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross" - (Eph. 2:15-16 R.V. 1901). In a burst of glory Paul discloses that the new man is not to walk as the Gentiles, and he admonishes us to "put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." (Eph. 4:24). His radical distinction between "the old man" and "the new man" clearly stands in opposition to the indistinguishable line between old and new man in universalism.

The *new man* makes up of the people of God. In universalism the whole earth is ushered into the kingdom indiscriminately, but the Scriptures speak of an "elect race, a royal nation, a people for God's own possession" - (I Peter 2:9). The three adjectives *elect*, *royal*, and *holy* cry out against a complete restorationism. Beginning in the ancient records of Israel we take note of the development of a special people of God. The development culminated in the construction of the Church of Jesus Christ - spiritual Israel (Romans, chp. 9-11). Christ himself demarcated two distinct groups of men - "the sheep and the goats." From the beginning to the end the Bible repudiates the doctrine that *all* men are children of God. The old liberal theologians spoke often about the "universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man," and so do their successors, the contemporary preachers of universalism. In apostolic preaching the saving power of Christ was extended to all here-ers as conditioned. But all who heard did not hear! The Paradox of seeing when they cannot see was illucidated by Isaiah (chp. 6) by Christ, (Mk. 4:10f), and by Paul (Acts 28:26-28). All three declared that their hearers were conditioned by their "cultural ears"! But we must never forget that only those who hear and believe the same shall be saved.

That the Lordship of God, revealed in Christ, was conditionally set forth is clear from the first occasion of apostolic

preaching. When Peter and the eleven finished holding high the magnificent master - men cried - "Men and brethren, what *must* we do?" (Acts 2:14ff - the word translated *must* is from the Greek *dei* which expresses all kinds of necessity). The reply came - not that the love of God was unconditioned, but rather that the seeking sinner must do something to lay hold on eternal life. Peter said "Repent"! (This is in the imperative, or command mode.) Christ. . .except ye repent! He continued and declared "and be baptized everyone of you." (This part of his reply is also in the imperative mode—"be baptized.") This was not a suggestion or a mere request, but a command! The results of obedience would be—"the remission of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit." After every example of Apostolic preaching - men were challenged to *decide* for Christ. His saving power is available only to those who decided to stand without the gate and suffer with Christ. To decide for Christ means to cut through or away the possible alternative of denying His redemption.

There is no possible way to eliminate *orgē* from the Bible, even by the most radical critical surgery, - "only he who continues to the end - the same shall be saved." The contemporary *agape theologians* manipulate the biblical data to fit into their theological molds which were formed by existentialists and phenomenological views of man, and the human situation, not the biblical doctrine of love, son, man, forgiveness, etc.

The *raison d'être* of the church is to evangelize all men everywhere, and bring them to saving knowledge of Christ. In the March 1st, 1963 edition of *Christianity Today*, Dr. Ferré graciously but vainly attempted to reply to Dr. Kuhn's analysis of Dr. Ferré's view of universalism. Dr. Ferré quoted the Scriptures in his effort to show that universalism is clearly a biblical doctrine. Since this is not a self-evident claim, it would require extended critical discussion. (For a recent study of alleged Pauline universalism see Paul Munch, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*. This is an excellent refutation of supposed Pauline Universalism).

Dr. Ferré's universalism is clearly delineated in his statement - "to attribute eternal hell to God is literal blasphemy, the attributing of the worst to the best. From such blasphemy may God deliver everyone." p. 24, *Christianity Today*, March 1, 1963. It must be apparent that what constitutes blasphemy and the nature of God, according to Jr. Ferré, has not been

vouch-safed in the Scripture, but if at all, through some other relevatory medium unknown to most of us. Contemporary universalism is merely voicing again the words of a Dostoevskian archangel who has reappeared in our midst, and bids all men give him ear. "I refuse my mission if the torture of an innocent child by the brute is to be the ransom of the world." Often, neither the thoughts of men nor archangels voice the word and will of God! The time of the tyranny of words is again upon us! The revelation of God declares against the indiscriminate redemption of man; and the voice of the theological oracles echo and re-echo that redemption of all men is a fact - go and declare it. The oracles of our age of naturalistic humanism are declaring that man is the absolute. Man is infatuated with himself and is seriously ill with self love, like Goethe's Werther.

Bertrand Russell said that the only thing that would save western civilization is Christian love; but he too wants Christian love without God's Christ. The gulf of guilt has been bridged, but only for those in Christ! The *Hound of Heaven* is seeking the lost, and it is His love that persists—while human hybris (pride) intensifies. Francis Thompson gives us thrilling insight into the nature of the love of God: a God who loves sinners, and judges the unrepentant, has announced in His Word that the unredeemed will be lost. Let us retrace the steps of *The Hound of Heaven* as we challenge every hearer to receive Christ as Lord of life and death, time and eternity. These steps are strewn with the tears of Christ who came to be our saviour, and who will, if necessary, come again to be our judge. "Not everyone who sayeth unto me Lord, Lord will enter into the Kingdom of God but he that doeth (present tense - keeps on doing) the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy by thy name and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21-23, R.V., 1901).

CONCEPT OF RESTORATION OF ALL
THINGS IN THE KERYGMA

A Study in Biblical Theology - Outline Taken from
Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia,
Curtis Pollok Harper Jr., May, 1958. - T.H.M. Thesis

Consummation of God's Purpose for
Man and the Rest of Creation

I. Proclamation of Restoration

Old Testament Prophecy of Restoration

1. Isaiah 65:17-25
2. Isaiah 35:1-10
3. Ezekiel 47:1-12
4. Amos 9:8-10
5. Hosea 2:18-23
6. Isaiah 11:1-5
7. Genesis 1 - 3

II. New Testament Teaching

1. Romans 8:18-23
2. I Cor. 15:36-49
3. II Peter 3:3-13
4. Revelation 20:11-21:1 - 22:5
5. Acts 3:18
6. Ephesians 1:10

Apokatastasis Pantōn - Reconcile Completely, refer to
John 1:1-4 - come to own (things neuter plural - back again)

III. 1. Reconciliation of Persons

2. Reconciliation of Cosmos

3. Reconciliation implies previous estrangement!

Prefix - do again. *Anakephalaiōsasthai* - to sum up all
things in Christ.

Eph. 1:10

Col. 1:20

IV. Pattern of Restoration

1. First Prophets
2. Apostles - Preaching
3. Pauline Epistles - Ephesians and Colossians
4. Revelation of John

SECTION 21

Text 7:1-8

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the sea of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:

- 5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand;
- 6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand;
- 7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand;
- 8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Initial Questions 7:1-8

1. From where was the angel ascending who had "the seal" of God - vs. 2?
2. For how long were the angels of destruction to be detained - vs. 3?
3. How many were sealed - vs. 4?
4. Were there any Gentiles sealed - vs. 4?
5. Was there a tribe of Joseph - vs. 8?

Sealing of the 144,000 from the Tribes of Israel
Chp. 7:1-8

Verse 1

Note the change in the picture between chapters 6 and 7. What might follow chapter 6 more naturally would be a vision of the ultimate triumph of the Church. John gives us this vision after the seven trumpets have sounded. Before we hear the note of victory, John goes through the whole process again in the series of the seven trumpets.

Who will be able to stand? Here we get the answer. John saw "four angels holding (*kratountas* - holding back or keeping under complete control) the four winds of the earth, in order that (*hina* clause or purpose clause) wind (no definite art.) should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Here we see the symbol of God's sovereign power over the universe.

Verse 2

Another angel "coming up from the rising of the sun, having a seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given (to them) to harm the earth and the sea." God sent another authorized messenger from the east (from the rising of the sun) to command that the other angels hurt not the earth.

Verse 3

They were commanded not to harm the earth - "until we may seal (*sphragisōmen* - 1st aor. act. subj. - by a single act) the seals of our God on their foreheads."

These angels are from the imagery of Zechariah 6:1-8. John had used this passage before, and gave it a different application. The destruction of the earth would not be allowed to happen until the number of the saved is determined.

Verse 4

John declared that he "heard the number of the ones having been sealed (*esphragismenōn* - passive, perfect, participle - the act of sealing is complete and was done by God). 144,000 having been sealed out of (*ek*) every tribe of the sons of Israel."

The Jehovah's Witnesses are not among the 144,000 as they so arrogantly claim, because these had already been sealed in the New Testament period. The sealing was not a future act as

the form of the verb signifies (pass. perf. part.). The symbolism asserts that there were twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. If taken literally, this means physical Jews. We must keep in mind the New Testament redefinition of the term Israel and its significance. (See especially Romans chps. 9-11, Galatians, and G. A. Danell, *Studies in the Name Israel in the Old Testament*, Uppsala, Sweden, 1946; study also the theme of the Remnant in both Testaments.)

Verses 5-8

Whether the figure of 144,000 is literal or figurative, we can still understand the basic import. If we take the number literally, it is specifically applied to Jews - or the twelve tribes of Israel. The list of the tribes given here is not found in the Old Testament form. Levi (vs. 7) is included here, but was not actually a technical tribe. Dan is omitted, Manasseh is put in his place, but as a son of Joseph he is included in the Joseph tribe mentioned in verse 8.

SECTION 22

Text 7:9-12

9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, 12 saying,

Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Initial Questions 7:9-12

1. Are there only Jews present in this next scene after the sealing of the Israelites - vs. 9?
2. What does the waving of palms signify - vs. 9? (See Triumphant entry of Christ - Matt 21:1ff.)
3. Does vs. 11 clearly state that only God is worthy to be worshipped? (Not angels, nor Mary, nor any one else.)

Triumph of the Innumerable Multitudes
Chp 7:9-17

Verse 9

I take this picture to be of the Church triumphant in heaven. They have prevailed over persecution, and death because of "the blood of the Lamb." The Elders gave this explanation of the vision in verses 13-17, in imagery, taken from many Old Testament sources (Isaiah 49:10; Isaiah 25:8; Ezekiel 34:23). Immediately after this comes the opening of the seventh seal (8:1). People from "every nation (*ethnous* - used in contrast to Israel) and tribes, and peoples, and tongues standing before the throne, and before the Lamb having been clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." These palm branches were strictly Jewish imagery from the Feast of Tabernacles. They were signs of victory. Note the use of palm branches in Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The situation was in divine hands, therefore, not hopeless!

Verse 10

"And they cry with a loud voice saying: Salvation to our God sitting on the throne and to the Lamb." The multitude praised the Father and the Lamb for saving them. Christ is here called saviour; this is another clear affirmation of the deity of the Lamb.

Verse 11

The high eschalon of heaven assembles around the throne and "worshipped God."

Verse 12

These high praises flow out of the heart of those closest to the "one sitting on the throne." The imagery would be well known to John's readers, as the symbolism of oriental kings.

SECTION 23

Text 7:13-17

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence

came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Initial Questions 7:13-17

1. Who are those in white robes - vs. 13? (See chp. 6:11)
2. What was the great tribulation - vs. 14?
3. How were the robes made white, and what does this say concerning the atoning Blood of Christ and its relationship to the forgiveness of sins - vs. 1?
4. How long does the service to the Lord last according to vs. 15?
5. Who is the shepherd in this scene - vs. 17?

Verse 13

One of the elders identified the multitude. "These having been clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence come they?"

Verse 14

"And I have said to him: My Sir (*kurie*) usually means Lord, but here it refers to one of the elders and not God), you knowest. And he told me: these are (the ones coming *erchomenoi* - present middle participle, continue to come) out of (*ek*) the great affliction"—Charles says - "The martyrs are still arriving from the scene of the great tribulation." "And washed (*eplunan* - 1st aor. active ind. they were washed in a single act not a process) their robes and whitened them (see Isaiah 1:18) in the blood of the Lamb." Who is the unnumberable multitude? They are the redeemed!

Verse 15

"Because of this fact of being washed (*dia touto* - therefore) they are in front of the Throne of God, and serve (*latreuousin* -

present ind. continually, publicly serve. This is the word from which liturgy comes - public worship) him day and night in his Temple, and the one sitting on the throne will spread (his) tent (*skenosei* - word for tent or tabernacle) over them." The tabernacle was the special dwelling place of God. Now people from every nation are members of the body of the redeemed. God's people are no longer limited to physical Israel. Where ever the Gospel is preached and men respond to Christ there is God's dwelling place. God's faithfulness is crystal clear. He will take care of His own. We may betray God, but God will never betray us!

Verse 16

God's own will never hunger nor thirst. God's sovereignty will reign both in the universe and the hearts of the blood bought saints.

Verse 17

All reason for human sorrow is gone. The Lamb is Victory and great Shepherd. Every single tear will be wiped away by the Living God. Such tender care! The picture is not that redeemed sinners are so happy that they wipe away their own tears, but God loves them so much that He wipes mortal eyes clear of every single tear.

Next comes the seventh seal, and then follows the seven trumpets, which retrace the same basic ground of the seven seals but this is not mere repetition. A greater sense of urgency, a better vantage point of the completeness of the divine purpose and a sharper focus on the fact of God's complete control over the universe is revealed.

Review Questions for Seventh Chapter

1. What is the basic change which takes place between chp. 6 and 7?
2. From what direction is the other angel coming in vs. 2?
3. Read Zechariah 6:1-8 and discuss its use in vs. 3.
4. Is the list of the 12 tribes of Israel correctly given in vs. 5-8?
5. What does vs. 9 imply about our missionary efforts?
6. What does the imagery of vs. 14 tell us?
7. Why are the redeemed before the throne in vs. 15? What are they doing there?

SECTION 24

Text 8:1-6

And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Initial Questions 8:1-6

1. What does the trumpet signify - vs. 2?
2. What were trumpets used for in the New Testament world?
3. Does vs. 3 and 4 contain biblical justification for the Roman Catholic doctrine of the power of the prayers of the dead saints?
4. What does the casting of fire upon the earth signify - vs. 5?
5. Who prepared to sound the trumpets - vs 6?

Opening of the Seventh Seal: The Half Hour's Silence
in Heaven; The First Four Trumpet Blasts
Chapter 8:1-13

Verse 1

As with the seven seals (5:8-10), before the trumpets sound there is an initial vision of the function of the prayers of the saints. Here we see the power of the prayers of the righteous to avail God's intervention in the events of history (8:2-5), described in almost the same way as before.

The first four trumpet blasts are (vs. 6-12) closely related as were the first four seals. (The figure of the trumpet is used by Paul - see I Thess. 4:16). John's imagery comes primarily from Exodus 10:; the records of the Egyptian plagues.

John declares that "when (*hotan* - indefinite particle - giving us a picture of indefiniteness) he opened the seventh seal there came silence - (*egento sigē* - 2nd aor. middle voice) in heaven about (*hōs* - indefinite - about) a half hour." Heaven was silent; there was no speaking or singing.

Verse 2

John next saw the seven angels "who stand (*hestēkasin* - perf. indicative) in front of (before) God." They receive the seven trumpets. A new period of woes begins.

Verse 3

"On (*epi* or above) the altar (*thusiastēriou*). The problem here is whether this altar is the "brazen altar" (as 16:9) or the altar of incense (as 9:13). The angel takes the place of the priest at the altar in John's imagery. The priest took fire from the brazen altar to light the censer. (See Swete, *op cit.*, p. 108) for good discussion of this point; also the extensive discussion of Charles). The angel was given the incenses "in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose) he will give (it) with the prayers of all the saints". . . . The imagery relates that the holy incense was to be added so the prayers to that they could both (incense and prayers) ascend before (or in front of) the throne of God. Note how the martyrs were *praying* in spite of their trials and martyrdom for the Faith. What can we learn from their prayer life?

Verse 4

"The smoke of the incenses - went up (*anebē*) with the prayers of the saints."

Verse 5

The angel cast (*ebalen* - 2 aor. active - ind. - in a single momentary act the fire was cast!) The judgment of fire covers "the entire earth (*eis tēn gēn*, Ezekiel 10:2); and there occurred (*egenonto* - 2 aor. ind. middle voice) thunders, and sounds, and lightnings, and an earthquake." This same phenomenon occurred when the first four seals were opened (6:12ff).

Verse 6

The angels have put the trumpets to the mouths (prepared themselves) "in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they might trumpet (*salpisōsin* - 1st aor. subj.)

SECTION 25

Text 8:7

7 And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Initial Questions 8:7

1. What followed after the sounding of the first trumpet?
2. Why the symbolism of limitation, i.e., one-third of the earth, trees, and green grass - vs. 7?

Verse 7

This imagery is unquestionably taken from the Egyptian plagues recorded in Exodus 9:24 (see also Joel 2:28f).

The first four trumpets are discussed in seven verses; the last three are called three woes, and are described in TWENTY-seven verses. The first four are very similar and are not extensively discussed; the last three are described in greater detail. The first four affect the properties belonging to nature; the last three affect mankind.

"One-third of the earth, and one-third of trees, and all green grass was burnt." This destruction which has been cast on the earth destroys extensively as a warning to sinful man. Among the trees were those which provided food for the land, i.e., olive, fig, etc.

The imagery of this section symbolizes the custom of the day regarding the court of king. The king is God, and mankind is called to learn of His judgment, which is limited but severe.

SECTION 26

Text 8:8-9

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

Initial Questions 8:8-9

1. What followed the sounding of the second trumpet - vs. 8?
2. What particular part of creation was effected?
3. How extensive was the destruction - vs. 9?
4. What place does the sea play in the life of man?

Verse 8

The first trumpet sounded for the affect on the earth; now the second trumpets sounds and the marine area is affected.

John does not assert that a burning mountain fell into the sea, but rather he says that "as (*hōs* - a simile - as or like a mountain) a great mountain burning with fire". . . . This could have been the imagery of a great meteorite. This fire brand affected the habitant of the fish. Fish were counted as a vital source of food in the first century. The imagery of the sea was no doubt the Mediterranean Sea. One third of the sea became blood. This symbolism could have come from the first Egyptian plague (Exodus 7:20-21)

Verse 9

The extent of the destruction is here revealed. "One third of all living (*psukas* - see appendix immediately following this chapter) were destroyed (*diephtharēsan* - 2nd aor. passive - were destroyed in a single act).

SECTION 27

Text 8:10-11

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the

waters became wormwood: and many men died of the waters, because they made bitter.

Initial Questions 8:10-11

1. Life is impossible without water. How much of this life-sustaining fluid was defiled - vs. 10?
2. What does wormwood mean - vs. 11?
3. What did the wormwood do to the waters?
4. How long could life be prolonged without the water which we take so much for granted?

Verse 10

The drinking water of man was affected by the events that followed the third trumpet. Man cannot long survive without water. John declares that the burning object (as a lamp) fell on "one third of the rivers and onto the fountains of the waters." The fresh water supply was attacked like in the Egyptian plague.

Verse 11

This imagery comes from Jeremiah 9:15. "The name of the star (in vs. 10 the word used was lamp) is called wormwood" (see Deuteronomy 29:18; Amos 5:7). Note that John does not say that the water is mixed with, but turned into wormwood. This event is lethal for the continuance of human life. The symbol of wormwood signifies the "bitter sorrow" (Lamentations 3:19).

SECTION 28

Text 8:12

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

Initial questions 8:12

1. Destruction was now reaching into what parts of creation - vs. 12?
2. How vital is the light and heat of the sun for the sustaining of human life?

3. How had the destructive forces effected the order of the solar system? Who sustains the order that we take for granted?

Verse 12

The imagery comes from the ninth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:21). After the fourth angel sounded the universe's source of light, heat, and energy, which sustains plant and human life, was affected.

John declared that one-third of the sun, moon, and stars "was struck"—"in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) the third of them might be darkened." This was to effect the length of night and day.

The first four angels have now trumpeted. Each devastation which followed their blast, affected nature. We must not lose sight of the fact that nature was attacked at the most vital points which related to the on going of human life.

SECTION 29

Text 8:13

13 And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.

Initial Questions 8:13

1. What does woe mean - vs. 13?
2. In view of our present involvement in a hymanistic, naturalistic, and rationalistic effort to provide a perfect society upon the earth quite distinct from God's power and purpose, what can we make of the declaration that there is more and worse to come?

Verse 13

There is an innovation between the fourth and fifth trumpet. John has a vision of "one flying eagle." What message does the eagle bring? Why the symbol of an eagle? It is an O.T. image for vengeance or wrath in general (see Deuteronomy 28:49; Hosea 8:1; Habakkuk 1:8). The eagle was also a bird of prey. What is the message of this bird of prey? The one eagle was flying "in mid-heaven (*mesouranēmati* - this means the meridian or the place the sun occupies at noon.) SAYING WITH A

LOUD voice, Woe, Woe, Woe to the ones dwelling (*katoikountas* - present participle the one now dwelling or dwelling at present) on the earth." This vision demands both seeing and hearing (contrast some of John's visions - were seen - some heard). The next phrase tells us why the eagle was crying Woe, Woe, Woe. "By reason of (literally *ek tōn loipōn* - from or out of the remaining) the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three angels being about (*mellontōn* - about to) to trumpet. The triple woes stand for the three remaining trumpets. Things have been bad, but they will get worse. John's message of the progressing forces of destruction is in harmony with Paul's teaching (II Tim. 3:12). There will be more destruction and it affects will be worse than the last.

Review Questions for Entire Chapter 8

Much of the material in this chapter is self-explanatory within its context.

1. What effect did the great persecution have on the spiritual and general prayer life of the saints - vs. 3?
2. What is the major source of the imagery in vs. 7?
3. What was destroyed and how extensive were the destructions - vs. 8, etc.?
4. How vital was shipping for the Palestine of John's day - vs. 9?
5. What does the symbol of Wormwood signify - vs. 11? Discuss the appropriateness of the symbol.
6. How important, chemically speaking, is the light of the sun for the existence and continuity of life (animal, plant, and man - vs. 12)?
7. Why was the image of the eagle used in vs. 13?
8. What was the message of the eagle - vs. 13?
9. Compare and discuss the teaching of Christ (Matt. 24), Paul (especially I and II Thess.) and John in this passage regarding their doctrine of "the last things."

Special Study on the word Psukē

(From Verse Nine the Form is *Psukas*)

This term translated soul has a long history. It is a very important term in the vocabulary of the Christian view of the nature of man. It is completely distorted and misunderstood by

many, especially the rapidly growing cult of the *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

Psukē, throughout the history of its use in extant Greek writers is dominately a vital term, i.e., a word carrying with it the idea of life, and until Aristotle, who applies the term to plants, life involving some measure of consciousness, or possibility of consciousness.

The term means life, loss of which is death, sometimes of lower animals, but usually of men. This meaning is common from Homer to Xenophon.

Psukē means by metonymy, the joy of life. Euripides uses it in this sense in *The Medea* (Loeb Classic Library, Harvard University Press, *Euripides*). The term also means "a shade," the soul of man existing after death, or departing from the body in death. Homer uses it with this significance. (See Homer, *Illiad*, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press.) This use clearly implies that the *psukē* exists in the body; since otherwise it could not depart from the body, and exist separately.

The term *psukē* also has the significance of a natural metonymy. The conscious element in man standing for the man himself - Sophocles uses it in this sense (Sophocles, extant play *Oedipus at Colonus*, Loeb Classical Library, *op cit.*)

A new meaning of this term appears in Aristotle. *Psukē*, here denotes the principle of life in lower animals, plants, and the universe. (Aristotle, volume I, Loeb Classical Lib. *op cit.*) Plato's conception of the *psukē* is influenced by his doctrine of *eidos* (ideas or forms). Plato ascribes *psukē* to the sun and stars, and the universe as well as to man (see Plato, *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, etc., Loeb Classical Library, *op cit.*)

Aristotle devotes three books of his *De Anima* to a discussion of *psukē*. It has no existence apart from the body. His rejection of Platonic dualism is inseparably related to his use of this term.

Heraclitus said that the origin of all things "is soul (*psukē*), and with this agrees Diogenes Laertius. According to them, all things are full of souls and demons, and that no one can possibly find out the limits of the *psukē*."

Polybius uses the term *psukē* as synonymous with life, loss of which is death. (See his *Histories* Loeb Classical Library)

It would be no serious problem to show the term in its historical development, but our purpose here is to give a brief sketch and provide bibliography for further study.

It is most important to point out that the N.T. authors use *psukē*, and that they follow Hebrew usage. The O.T. or Hebrew concept is not the concept that appeared in Judaism after the coming of Hellenism. We can not here even briefly consider the Hebrew psychological vocabulary, but we will provide information for study in our annotated bibliography.

See C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*; H. W. Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*; the Classic Franz Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1867. Unsurpassed by anything today, with one exception, Pedersen's *Israel*.

For the N.T. usage of *psukē* and its various forms see Moulton and Geden, *Concordance to The Greek Testament*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, reprinted 1953, pp. 1022-1023.

For preSocratic usage see Hermann Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition by W. Kranz, three volumes, 1951-52 printing, originally Berlin, 1912.

Psukē often means the self and this follows the common Hebrew (*nephesh*) manner of expressing the individual ego or self. In contexts where the word means self it would be wrong to translate *pseukē* (or *nephesh*) as soul. James 1:21 is one of many places where a soul is the possession of a self. (Literally - "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and superfluity of evil in meekness receive ye the implanted word being able to save your (*humōn* - of you-showing possession) souls (*psukas*).") (See also I Peter 2:11 and 25; James 5:20.)

In the O.T. vocabulary *nephesh* is used 756 times and *ruach* 378. (See S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae*. Full information in following bibliography.)

We cannot here consider the thesis that Paul's psychological vocabulary was that of Hellenism. For now, we only make this pontification - Paul's psychological vocabulary was not that of Hellenism! Paul's and John's usage is in absolute harmony with the O.T. data. For those so inclined to study this problem see the following bibliography for the *tools* of research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lexicons: Greek

Arndt, W. F. and Gingrich, F. W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Greek Literature from Inscriptions and Papyri*. University of Chicago Press and the Syndics of The Cambridge University Press, second impression (Chicago, 1957).

Jones, H. S. and McKenzie, R., *et al.*, editors. *Liddell and Scott Greek English Lexicon*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, London: 1953, new edition reprinted.

Preuschen, E. *Griechisch - deutsches Taschenwörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1948. Must use this with care.

Sophocles, E. A. *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Greek Periods* (From B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100) Cambridge 1887, reprinted New York, 1957.

Hebrew Lexicons

Brown, F., Driver, S. R., and Briggs, C. S. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of The Old Testament* with an Appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic Based on Lexicon of Wm. Gesenius as translated by E. Robinson. Oxford University Press, London: 1907, reprinted 1959.

Davidson, B. *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. Samuel Bagster and Sons, London, n.d.

Köhler, L. and Baumgartner, W., *Hebrew Lexicon to The Old Testament - English - German - Hebrew and Aramaic*. Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Mandelkern, S. *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraica Atque Chaldaicae*. 2 volumes, Gregory Lounz, New York - This is the standard Hebrew Concordance. Nothing else like it in existence in any language.

Secondary Materials

Peake, A. S. editor. H. W. Robinson Essay, (*The Psychology of The Hebrew in The People and The Book*. Clarendon Press, 1925.

Pedersen, J. *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, 4 volumes (Vol. I - volumes 1 & 2; Vol. II - volumes 3 & 4). Blackwells, 1947. He is *the* internationally recognized scholar on the Psychology of The Hebrews. His discussions are indispensable.

Onians, Richard B. *The Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1954 all editions; also Rhodes, *Psyche*. These very scholarly works are anti-Christian in intent and both commit the "genetic fallacy." They think that when one shows the origin of a concept that one has also shown the mutational aspects of that particular concept. Both authors think they have shown that the Christian view of soul, body, mind, etc., can be explained via Greek and Roman concepts.

SECTION 30

Text 9:1-12

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. 2 And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man. 6 And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. 10 And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. 11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he hath the name Apollyon.

12 The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woes hereafter.

Initial Question 9:1-12

1. How intensive is the torture to be which is coming upon men who do not have the seal of God?
2. How severe does pain become before one seriously wishes that he were dead?
3. How are the locusts described in versus 7-10?
4. Is the power of the locusts limited?
5. Who is the angel of the abyss?
6. What does the names of the angel of the abyss mean? (In Hebrew is is Abaddon, and in Greek it is Appollyon.)

The Fifth Trumpet Blast, or First Woe
Chapter 9:1-12

Verse 1

The fifth trumpet sounded. John saw "a star having fallen (*peptokōta* - perf. part - the star is already down, it is not in the process of falling) onto the earth, and was given to it the key of the shaft (*phreatos* - a long shaft leading to an abyss; (John 4:6 - Christ at the well uses the term *pēgē* or foundation, and at John 4:11 the term *phrear* is used), of the abyss." Often these well-shafts were not locked in first century Palestine, but John's readers would have understood the imagery when he spoke of a covered and locked shaft leading to the well or deep hole proper. There is no Greek word here that could be translated as "the bottomless pit" as we find in the K.J. (See Charles, *Eschatology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, p. 198, for discussion of the imagery of the abyss in the Book of Enoch.)

We must be clear that God is still sovereign over the universe, and that the key to release further destruction "was given" (*edothē* - 1st Aor. Passive, ind. - the passive voice means that someone (God) gave the key to the star, probably Satan) to Satan. God is *permitting* the coming events to occur!

Verse 2

"And he opened the shaft of the abyss; and smoke went up out of the shaft as smoke of a great furnace". . . . This smoke was so dense that he darkened the whole atmosphere (Genesis 19:28; Ex. 19:19).

Verse 3

"Out of the smoke came forth locusts to the earth". . . . The imagery comes from the eighth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:14f) Joel 2:1ff). The fifth trumpet brings a scourge that does extensive harm, but the sixth trumpet brings actual destruction. The locust (9:1-12) and the horsemen (9:13-21) signify a worsening situation which is coming upon the earth.

God permitted them to have "authority as the scorpions of the earth." The torment of these scorpions came from their sting. Their sting was not lethal as is apparent from vs. 5 and 6. (Probably power here in both places. The Greek word

means both authority and power, but the authority is grounded in the power.)

Verse 4

"And it was said to them in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they shall not harm the grass of the earth, nor every (any) greenstuff, nor every tree, except (*ei mē* - but only) the men who have not the seal (*sphragida* - mark of distinction) of God on the foreheads." The personification of the scorpions is clear. They were told not to kill, but to torment men.

Verse 5

God gave them permission to torment men. John said "in order that they shall be tormented (*basanisthēsontai* - future indicative passive voice) give months;". . .the suffering was to be limited. The nature of the suffering is now defined. "The torment is as the torment of a scorpion, whenever it stings a man."

Verse 6

The suffering will be so intense, that "men will seek death and by no means will they find it, and they will long to die" (*epithumēsousin* - fut. act. - this is a form of *epithumēō*, the word for lust or intense desire.) Men shall desire death more than any thing else, but there is no release from their suffering because even "death flees" (*pheusei* - present, ind. continuously flees from them) - as though men are chasing it, but cannot catch it.

Physical death cannot bring them relief from their suffering, because it is spiritual suffering caused by their not having God's mark on the foreheads.

Note: See the present author's *Death Be Not Proud!* in the Christian Standard, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 6, 13, and 20, 1963. Contemporary man is preoccupied with two things: (1) The problem of death; (2) Rejecting the biblical view of man and death. In the above popular statement an attempt was made to direct the attention of every N.T. Christian to consider the insight into *Death* the areas of *Anthropology*, *Archaeology*, *Literature*, *Philosophy*, *Psycho-Sociological*, *False Doctrines*, and the *Biblical view of man and the phenomenon of death* can provide. The brief section on *The Biblical Doctrine of Man and Death* are included as an appendix in this present volume.

Verse 7

John describes the locusts as "like horses having been prepared for war, and on their heads as (*hōs* - as or like - John does not say that they actually had crowns) crowns like gold, and their faces as (*hōs* - same as above) faces of men." We have here imagery of war horses. (See Joel 2:4ff). The imagery of crowns probably signifies war helmets, because John's language makes it very plain that they did not wear actual crowns.

Verse 8

The appearance of the locusts is further described. "They had hairs as (*hōs* - as or like) hairs of women". . . . This imagery probably represents the antennae of the locusts. "And their teeth were as of lions" (See Joel 1:6).

Verse 9

The locusts were so large that they resembled horses wearing battle armor. There were so many of them that John's imagery comes from "the sound of many horsed chariots." This was a large chariot carrying many men or a very fast charger chariot pulled by many horses. The rustling wings of the locusts sound like the shuffle of the feet of the infantry charging in battle.

Verse 10

The "tails like scorpions" were to sting men and the sting "is to harm men five months." In Palestine certain species of locusts are born in the spring and die in late summer or early fall. This is a period of about five months. The imagery would have been immediately recognized by John's readers.

Verse 11

At this point the realism of the imagery breaks down. Real locusts have no leader, but these have "a king, who is the angel of the abyss." (Not bottomless pit as the King James translates.) His name in Hebrew (*Hebraisti* - used only in Johannine literature - John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; Rev. 19:16) *Abaddon* (means Destruction, see Job 26:6, Psalm 88:1) and in the Greek his name is *Apollyon* - destroyer. (The Septuagint regularly translates the above Hebrew term by *Apoleia* - one form of destruction.) It is impossible to settle the question of whether John's personification is Death or Satan. But the general picture is clear.

Verse 12

This hideous imagery tells only of the first woe. There are two more to follow, and they will be progressively worse!

Note: The Principalities and Powers. Ours is an age when men deny the existence of Satan and his angels of darkness. Baudelaire describes Satan extremely well in these weighty words. "The Devil's cleverest vile is to convince us that he does not exist." Paul says "he turns into an angel of light."

The evil which has come upon the earth is inexplicable apart from the power of darkness! Thanks be to God light shall prevail! (See Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Van Kampen Press, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, 1952).

Note: John Bunyan's *Apollyon*. Bunyan's great work, *Pilgrim's Progress* reveals what baptized imagination can do in portraying great biblical themes. When Christian leaves the Palace Beautiful he descends into the Valley of Humiliation. There Bunyan's Christian does battle with *Apollyon*. Bunyan's imagery departs somewhat from the biblical data, but he brilliantly points Christian's encounter. (Read *Pilgrim's Progress*, and for an excellent interpretative work see Henri Talon, *John Bunyan, The Man and His Work*, Rockliff, London, 1951.

SECTION 31

Text 9:13-21

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. 16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is

in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt. 20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Initial Questions 9:13-21

1. Where is the river Euphrates located?
2. The river Euphrates is the Eastern boundary of what Empire?
3. Where did John get the exact number of the armies of horse-men which he gives in vs. 16?
4. How did the rest of mankind respond to the devastation of the plagues - vs. 20?
5. What spiritual condition of mankind does this section of scripture reveal?
6. What are some of the relationships between the tragedies which come upon mankind and his willingness to repent?

The Sixth Trumpet Blast or the Second Woe Chapter 9:13-21

Verse 13

"And the sixth angel trumpeted" and John heard "one voice" speak to the sixth angel. What did he say"

Verse 14

The angel was authorized to "loose (*lusein* - 1st aor. active, imperative - commanded - to release at once) the four angels having been bound at the great river Euphrates." (See Genesis 15:18 for extent of the land of promise). Beyond the Euphrates, to the east, lay the great Empires of The Assyrians and Babylonians (The great river is also mentioned in 16:12). The flooding waters of the Euphrates is symbolic of the judgment of God (see Isaiah 8:5-8; Jeremiah 17:13).

Verse 15

God's control over the universe is again declared by John. The having been prepared (*hetoimasmenoi* - perfect, passive

voice - participle - the preparation of the angels was both complete and performed by someone else other than the angels themselves) angels "for the specific time" in order that (*hina* clause - purpose clause) they should kill one third of mankind" (*men - in the plural*). It must be pointed out that the definite article (the) appears only before hour and not before the words day, month, and year. The significance being that the angels were prepared for God's will and purpose or whenever God choose to reveal His "time." The fifth trumpet revealed terrible torture; the sixth trumpet calls forth death. The situation worsens.

Verse 16

"And the number of the army (literally, bodies of soldiers of the cavalry (*hippikou* - the collective singular noun horsemen) was (not in text) two thousands of thousands; I heard the number of them." John is not claiming that he saw this mighty, monstrous army, but rather that he "heard" the information. The destructive demons were cavalry rather than infantry.

Verse 17

Now John asserts that the following information and imagery was provided in a vision. The hideous imagery which John uses is really self-explanatory. The defensive armour of the riders consists of fire (*purinos* means fire, not fire colored.) The riders are first described then their mounts are pictured as having "heads like (*hōs* - as) heads of lions." They too were equipped with "fire and smoke and sulphur." (See the description of the destruction of the cities of the plains - Genesis 19: 24,28.) Who were the warriors? What is John's source for this imagery? Beckwith (see his work already mentioned, p. 565) is probably correct in stating that the imagery refers to the Parthians. Swete concurs with this identification (see this commentary p. 123). This is a very possible source of John's imagery, but as much of the symbolism found in The Revelation, it cannot be identified with certainty. John thus describes the great invasion from the East. The most serious threat to the law and order in the Roman Empire was the Parthian Empire across the great river Euphrates.

Verse 18

"By (*apo* - from, in the sense of source) these three plagues were a third of men killed." The plagues each have the definite article pointing out the distinct and separate sources of death. "Out of (*ek* - sense of origin) the fire, and the smoke, and the sulphur proceeding) *ekporeuomenou* - present participle constantly proceeding out of their mouths.

Verse 19

Following the imagery of the scorpion, which John used previously, he now states that the "power of the horses is in their mouth and tails". . . . Out of their mouths come fire, etc., and out of their tails comes poison which is deadly for man.

Verse 20

God had permitted these plagues to come upon sinful man in order that he might repent and ultimately be saved. Apparently idolatry had captivated the remaining two thirds of mankind. John says that these "not even repented (after all the torture and death) of the works of their hands, in order that they will not worship demons and idols of gold, and silver, and bronze, and stone, and wooden, which can neither see, hear, nor walk (see Daniel 5:23).

Verse 21

The powers of evil dominated the majority of mankind. All of the tragedy which had been inflicted upon man had not yet brought him to his knees in repentance. If hard times and severe persecution does not cause men to turn to the Lamb of God - What will? God's sole purpose in allowing plagues and death to haunt man was to bring him to a knowledge of his lost condition and need for the saving power of the "Blood of the Lamb. . . ; but all was in vain; because "they repented not of their murders, nor their sorceries, nor their fornication, nor out of their thefts." All of these evils are clearly and publically condemned in The Revelation as resulting in Hell for the unrepentant. (See also Galatians 5:16ff.)

Review Questions for Chapter 9

1. Discuss the evil which is described in chp. 9 in view of God's righteousness, justice, mercy, love, and man's need of redemption.

2. Read Exodus 10:14f, and Joel 2:1ff, and then discuss the imagery used in vs. 3.
3. How does man respond to the torment mentioned in vs. 6?
4. What is the "kings" name and what does it mean in vs. 11?
5. What does the use of both the Hebrew and Greek names translated) tell us about the transition from Hebrew to the common language of Greek - vs. 11?
6. What does vs. 15 tell us about the purpose of God and His control over the universe?
7. Discuss the spiritual significance of suffering and its relationship to repentance - vs. 20?
8. Why does God's appeal harden some hearts and brings others to saving knowledge of Christ?

Note: *Stopped Ears!*

Text: Acts 7:57 - "And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and rushed with one mind on him."

When do we stop our ears?

- A. Series of sermons on hundreds of biblical themes.
 1. Baptism.
 2. Planned Giving.
 3. Christian witnessing: Evangelism/Missions
 4. Lord's Supper.
 5. Victorious Christian Living.

Conclusion: When they could not take the Lord's Word anymore, "they stopped their ears." What about *you*?

SECTION 32

Text 10:1-11

And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders

uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

Initial Questions 10:1-11

1. As John was preparing to write, what was he commanded to do?
2. When is the mystery of God to be finished?
3. What does the term *mystery* mean in the New Testament?
4. Were the prophets of vs. 7 Old or New Testament prophets?
5. What does the command to prophecy mean in vs. 11? Does it mean to preach or to fore tell the future, or both?

Preparation for the Seventh Trumpet Blast:
The Vision of the Angel with the Open Booklet
Chapter 10:1-11

Verse 1

The second and third woes (final woe) are yet to come! It will be so terrible that another angel appears to announce it! This angel is the representative of both Christ and God the father. Keep in mind the previous woe, and its torment and death. These did not bring sinful man to repentance! Here we note the first of the intermediate visions before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. How shall the coming devastation affect man and his spiritual relationship to the Lamb of God?

The symbolism leans heavily on that of Daniel 12:7, though it has been modified by John.

We must recall that the opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (see chp. 7). Here the sounding of the seventh trumpet (chp. 11:15) is preceded by a new series of visions (chp. 10:1 to 11:14). John states that "another angel... having been clothed with a cloud." The symbol of the cloud is the vehicle for God's heavenly beings descending and ascending (see Zephaniah 1:15; Daniel 7; Psalms 103, 104; Rev. 1:7, 11:2, 14:14f, and in this verse) "the rainbow on his head" - (see chp. 4:3) probably represents God's faithfulness to His people. God told man in Genesis that the rainbow would be a "sign" that He would never again destroy man by water. The powerful angel's face was as bright as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire. Though this description resembles the description of Christ in chp. 1:15, we cannot say that the strong angel is Christ; because Christ is never called an angel in the Bible.

Verse 2

The strong angel carried "in his hand a little scroll having been opened." The roll mentioned in chp. 5 was on (*epi*) the right hand of the strong angel because it was too large to be concealed in (*en*) the hand. In contrast, here we note the little scroll (*biblaridion* - diminutive form). Swete is probably correct in his assertion that this diminutive shows that the angel's revelation is only a fragment of the total revelation. "And he placed his right foot on the sea and the left on the land."

Verse 3

The giant angel "cried with a loud voice" and "the seven thunders spoke their voices." The Angel's message concerned the entire universe. (See Psalm 29:20.) In John 12:29 the voice out of heaven is identified by the multitude as thunder. There can be no dogmatic identification of the "seven thunders," but it is often the symbol for the voice of heaven which is not understood by human hearers.

Verse 4

When the voices of the seven thunders had uttered their messages, John heard "a voice out of heaven saying—You seal (*sphragison* - 1st. aor. imperative - seal it by a single act - immediately) the things which the seven thunders spoke and not write (*grapsēs* - 1st aor. subjunctive - literally means with the negation *mē* - you may not write). Part of John's revelation was not made available to us. He was forbidden to write it down.

Verse 5

The giant angel raises his hand to heaven (see Genesis 14:22; Daniel 12:7), and swears by God that there shall be delay no longer.

Verse 6

The angel sware by (*ōmosen en* - "sware in" is a Hebrew idiom.) the one living unto the ages of the ages, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the things in the earth, and the things in the sea, that delay (*chronos* - literally means *time* but also delay) shall be no longer." John is not stating that time shall be no longer, but that there shall be no further delay in the sounding of the seventh trumpet - (it is sounded 11:15). (See 6:10 - the cry "how long"?) Check Alexander Campbell's translation - *The Golden Oracles* at Rev. 1:11, 10:6, 12:2; 12:13; see also C. K. Thomas, *Alexander Campbell and His New Version*, The Bethany Press, 1950, pp. 30, 31, 39, and 40.

Verse 7

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, whenever he is about to trumpet even was finished (*etelestē* - 1st aor. passive) the mystery of God as he preached to his slaves the prophets." The mystery becomes partly revealed now. The

Bible always employs verbs of revelation with the term *mustērion*. (See the note on this term immediately following this chapter - note also Amos 3:7; Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4).

Verse 8

John was commanded to "take (*labe* - 2nd aor. imperative - take, immediately) the scroll" from the giant angel introduced in verse one.

Verse 9

The angel commanded that John "take and devour it, and it will embitter your stomach, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." This symbolism comes directly from Ezekial 3:1-3; Jeremiah 15:16f. God's word is both bitter and sweet. The sweetness of the word is because of God's mercy, the bitterness is because of His judgment. God's word always reveals the plumb line of judgment, and oil horn of mercy."

Verse 10

John obeyed the angel's command, and as was the case with God's O.T. prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, so in John's experience the word was both bitter and sweet.

Verse 11

The Seer of God, on Patmos, was told that he "must (*dei* - expresses absolute necessity. He had no choice but to prophesy) prophesy (*propheteusai* - means both to *speak forth* and to utter *precision predicative prophecy*) again (*palin* - signifies the fact of repetition - do it again - as before) before many peoples (*laois* - this is one of four words used in the N.T. and translated - people. It signifies a people of political unity) and nations (*ethnesin* - signifies people in general) and tongues (*glossais* - languages - people who speak different languages) and kings."

Review Questions - Chapter 10

1. Did the previous two woes cause sinful man to repent - vs. 1?
2. Read Daniel 12:7 and discuss the passage in light of John's use of the symbolism - vs. 1?
3. How is chapter 10 like chapter 7?

4. What does the rainbow symbolize in the O.T.? Does the symbolism fit here too?
5. What does the diminutive form - 'little scroll,' signify in vs. 2?
6. To what does the phrase "delay no longer" refer - vs. 6?
7. Read appendix on *mystery* and discuss its use in vs. 7.
8. In what ways is God's word both bitter and sweet - vs. 9?

Note: *Mystery (Mustērion)*

For the contemporary emphasis on *mystery* in Christian thought see Michael B. Foster, *Mystery and Philosophy*, SCM Press LTD, 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1.

The brilliant Roman Catholic Philosopher, Gabriel Marcel utilizes the distinction between problem, which is solvable, and mystery, which is not solvable by human reason. See Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, Fordham University Press, New York, and Troisfontaines', *De L'Existence a L'Être*, Tome I et II, Secretariat des Publications, 59, Rue Brufelles, Namur, 1953. The issue of mystery in relation to human reason receives full attention in this brilliant interpretative work on Gabriel Marcel's philosophy.

Note also the place of *mystery* in the Eastern and Western Catholic Theology.

What does the New Testament say about *mustērion*?

The word *mystery* (Latin *mysterium*) is found only one time in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10). Other than this single usage in the Gospel records the word appears only in Paul and in The Revelation. It is used in two senses - (1) the total Christian revelation; (2) and of specific Christian doctrines. It is used in sense number one in I Cor. 2:1; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26, 2:2, 4:3; Eph. 1:9, 6:19; I Tim. 3:9, 16; Rev. 10:7. It is used in sense number two in II Thess. 2:7; I Cor. 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51; Rom. 11:25; Eph. 5:32; Matt. 13:11; Rev. 1:20, 17:5, 7. See the brief note in B. T. Westcott, *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 180.

John speaks of the entire Christian revelation (Rev. 10:7) when he declares "and was finished the mystery (*mustērion*) of God, as he preached to his slaves the prophets." John uses the term in the sense of a particular Christian doctrine in (1:20) as

he says "The mystery (*mustērion*) of the seven stars." Then the significance of the mystery is revealed in the last section of verse 20. The great "mystery Babylon" (17:5); and verse seven identifies the mystery - "I will tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast." Biblical mysteries are always clarified by special revelation of their significance.

A series of sermons on the great biblical mysteries could clarify this particular biblical teaching.

Sermon Suggestions

The Mystery of The Kingdom (Matthew 13:10ff)
 The Mystery which hath been Kept in Silence (Romans 16:25)
 The Revealed Mystery of His Will (Ephesians 1:9)
 The Mystery of The Gospel (Ephesians 6:19)
 The Mystery of Godliness (I Timothy 3:16)

A Sermon Sketch

The Mystery of Iniquity

II Thess. 2:7 - "For the mystery of Lawlessness doth already work: only there is one restraining just now until out of the midst (*ek mesou*) it comes." (A literal translation.)

Introduction:

The problem of evil is the greatest single stumbling block which keeps many from accepting the Christian view of God in Christ and salvation through His blood.

- I. Paul asserts implicitly that evil would be worse were it not for the "restraining one."
- II. All human efforts to cope with this mystery are shattered by the undeniable expression of evil in our world. Is our condition then hopeless?
- III. Our hope of ultimate victory over the "mystery of lawlessness is grounded in the bearer of the "mystery of Godliness."

Conclusion:

What can the cause of Christ do to stem the tide of this evil mystery? Lawlessness shall be finally destroyed, when our Lord and savior comes again, and the court of heaven marshalls all men before the throne to give account to the Living God. (Note the great judgment scene in *The Revelation*.)

SECTION 33

Text 11:1-14

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar; and them that worship therein. And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. 6 These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenthpart of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

Initial Questions 11:1-14

1. Compare the imagery of vss. 1 and 2 with Zachariah chap. 2:1ff. Discuss.
2. Who are the two witnesses mentioned in vs. 3?
3. Is there any difference in the time during which the holy city shall be trod under foot (42 months), and the prophesying period of the two witnesses (1260 days)?
4. What is the significance of the sack cloth in vs. 3?
5. What was the spiritual condition of Jerusalem as related in vs. 8?
6. What violation of Jewish burial custom do we find in vs. 9?
7. Does this second woe reveal that the havoc which is coming upon the earth is more intense than the first woe?

Further Preparations: Measuring the Temple;
the Testimony of Two Witnesses
Chapter 11:1-14

Verse 1

Abruptly the scene changes. John is commanded to measure the heavenly temple. The real Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and John is writing a quarter of a century after the destruction. This makes the perspective of *The Revelation* more preceptive as its scenes move back and forth between heaven and earth. John's imagery is taken from Ezekiel 40:3. The measurement of time used in this section of scripture is borrowed from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. During this period of time God's two witnesses will be prophesying (11:3). The descriptive imagery of the two witnesses comes from Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14, and 11:5-6. When their period of prophesying is finished they shall fall prey to The Beast. This Beast is described in the second part of *The Revelation* (chp. 12ff). Why was John commanded to measure the Temple? In view of Zechariah 2:1ff it is possible that the measuring was to set it apart from all that is unholy. He was to measure the sanctuary, that is where the holy of holies, etc., was located.

Verse 2

The outside court, or the court of the Gentiles was not to be measured. John further sees that "they will trample the holy

city 42 months. (See appendix at the end of the commentary on *Jerusalem: In History and Symbol!*) For the first time in *The Revelation* a specific time is mentioned. The source of this time symbolism is Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. This same period of time appears in three forms in John's apocalypse - 42 months in this verse, 1260 days in verse 3 and chapter 12:6, and a times, times and half a time in 12:14. Those who are pre-occupied with dating the events of *The Revelation* and the coming again of Christ, apparently know more about God's time table than John did.

Verse 3

God's two faithful witnesses were empowered so that "they will prophesy 1260 days having been clothed (*in* - not *in* text) sack clothes." The period of their prophesying is the same as the 42 months when "the holy city" will be trampled in verse 2. The symbolism of sackclothes signifies repentance (see Jonah 3:5, Isaiah 22:12, Jeremiah 4:8) who are the two witnesses mentioned in this verse? It is impossible to identify them with certainty.

Verse 4

Some have identified them as Enoch and Elijah; others have identified them as Zerubbabel and Joshua, because of the two olive trees mentioned in Zechariah 4:2-14. The most common interpretation is that they are Elijah and Moses. The present author believes that the most sensible position to take is to admit that we do not know! The teaching of the verse is clear enough regardless of who the witnesses are. In the midst of the persecution there still remains those who faithfully proclaim the Word of God. (For further examination of the two witnesses see Milligan's, *The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 59-69).

Verse 5

God's protection is extended to His faithful witnesses to the extent that "if anyone wishes to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies; and if anyone should wish to harm them, he must (*dei* - absolute necessity) be killed in the same manner." This verse is written in a first class conditional sentence which assumes the condition (of someone actually doing them harm) to be true to the actual state of affairs. John thus declares that being faithful to God's word (as

he was banned to Patmos) during the most intense stages of persecution will bring death to God's witnesses.

The fire in the witnesses mouth could be the symbol of the Word of God as in Jeremiah 5:14—"I am making my words to become in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them."

Verse 6

It is this verse that some use to identify the two witnesses of verse 3 as Elijah and Moses. John states that "these have power (the Greek word means both power and authority) to shut heaven in order that (*hina* clause or purpose clause) it may not rain during the days of their prophecy, and they have power (same Greek word as above) over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every (kind of) plague as often as they may wish." Elijah had the power to "shut up heaven" so that it did not rain (see I Kings 17:1); and Moses had the "power over the waters to turn them into blood" (see Exodus 7:20). Though we cannot identify the two witnesses with absolute certainty, the identification above is the most feasible of all known to this author. At least we can say that Elijah and Moses were prototypes for the two witnesses.

Verse 7

When the period of their witnesses was finished "the beast coming up out of the abyss will make war with them and will over come (*nikēsei* - future indicative - will as a matter of fact be the victor and the witnesses - the defeated) and will kill them." God's faithful witnesses will not only be defeated, but will be murdered for the crime of being committed to the Living God.

Verse 8

John's readers would immediately understand the imagery of this verse. Burials were the same day of the death in New Testament times (see A. C. Bouquet, *Everyday Life in New Testament Times*, Scribners, New York, 1953, pp. 149). In contrast to Jewish burial custom (and Christian) their corpse *lie* (no verb in the Greek text) on the open street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where indeed their Lord was crucified." The imagery of Sodom reveals iniquity, and Egypt spiritual and possibly physical slavery. Vincent (volume II Word Studies in the New Testament, op cit., see also

Swete, op cit., p. 138) claims that the phrase "the great city" never refers to Jerusalem. But this seems to be improbable in light of the last identifying phrase "where also our Lord was crucified."

Verse 9

The whole world sees "their corpse three and a half days, and they do not allow their corpses to be placed in a tomb." In the first image the singular form of corpse is used, but in the second image the plural is used because each body would require separate burial. The term translated "do not allow" (*aphiousin* - means they were not permitted to bury the corpses.) The beast wanted the whole world to see that he had overcome God's witnesses.

Verse 10

How did the death of God's two witnesses effect mankind? Mankind paid no more heed to the word of God than during the time of Noah and many of the prophets. "The ones dwelling on the earth rejoice (*chairousin* - present tense - they are at present - continually rejoicing) over them, and are glad (*euphrainontai* - present tense - continually making merry), and they will send gifts to one another; because these two prophets tormented (*ebasenisan* - 1st aor. indicative - disturbed their consciences) them that dwelt on the earth." The unChristian majority that dwelt on the earth rejoiced when the source (the two witnesses) of their tortured consciences was taken away. The testimony of the witnesses was unabated until they were killed. Relief came to the sinful hearts of the wicked only when they did not have to listen to the word of God "which is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).

Verse 11

"The exultation of the pagan world will be shortened." - (Swete, op cit., p. 139). The imagery of the resurrected witnesses probably came from Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 38:1-14). The ungodly rejoicers got the surprise of their evil lives when "a spirit of life (*zōēs* - this is not merely biological life - as this would require *bios*) from (*ek* - out of - God was the source of life - as He always is) God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on the ones beholding (or looking on) them." Note the radical contrast

from their making merry, and sending festival gifts to great fear. They thought that God and His faithful preachers were gone forever, but God's purpose will not be thwarted by the most depraved form of evil dwelling in the hearts of men. Paul told young Timothy that the time would come—"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12, see also I Tim. 4:1ff).

Verse 12

After the resurrection of the witnesses (as Christ's resurrection - following His testimony on Calvary) they were called into the presence of God by way of an ascension (note Christ's crowning victory through His ascension to the right hand of the father). Christ was also taken into glory on a cloud (Acts 1:9). The witnesses now had a divine vantage point from which to see "their enemies."

Verse 13

Even nature bore witness to the translated witnesses, through an earthquake. The ultimate result of its destruction was that—"The rest became terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven." Note the radical change from joy to terror. In fact they were so terrified that they recognized the God of heaven. This is the first time, throughout the entire ordeal of the seals and up to the sixth trumpet, that sinful mankind acknowledged the Lord and gave Him glory! This was probably not conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ but rather action brought on by their extreme degree of fear.

Verse 14

The preaching events brought the close of "the second woe"—"behold the third woe is coming quickly." (Reread 8:13 - for the mentioning of the three woes.) The second woe was disclosed after the sounding of the sixth trumpet. The events revealed in chapter 10:1 - 11:13 are the intervening occurrences before the sounding of the seventh trumpet in 11:15.

SECTION 34

Text 11:15-19

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God 17 saying,

We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark, of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Initial Questions 11:15-19

1. Who announced that the "kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord" - vs. 15?
2. At what other previous point does John mention the 24 elders?
3. How did the nations react to God's intervention - vs. 18? Why?
4. Was the Temple of God mentioned in vs. 19 located in Jerusalem?

The Seventh Trumpet-blast, or The Third Woe
Chapter 11:15-19

Verse 15

In contrast to the silence in heaven which followed the opening of the seventh seal, great voices are speaking as the seventh trumpet is sounded. What were the voices saying? "The kingdom of the world became (*egeneto* - 2nd aor. ind. - became in a single act - now!) the kingdom (this noun not in

text but implied by grammatical structure) of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign unto the ages of the ages." Here we note the title Lord applied to God the Father. This term is applied without reservation to Jesus Christ. This is a direct assertion of His deity. (See appendix at end of column on *The Titles for Christ in The Revelation*.)

Verse 16

We are once more in the throne room of heaven. The twenty-four Elders which were about the throne "worshipped God." The victory had won and God is being praised.

Verse 17

The twenty-four Elders are praising God—"because you have taken (*eilēphos* - perfect tense - ind. - action involved in the taking of the power is complete - effect still exists) great power to yourself, and did reign (*ebasileusas* - 1st aor. ind. - the reign was immediate - now!).

Verse 18

How does the world respond to God's reign? "The nations were wrathful (*ōrgisthēsan* - 1st aor. passive - indicative) and your wrath came (*elthēn* - 2nd aor. ind. came in a single act!) and the time of the dead to be judged (*krithēnoi* - 1st aor. inf. passive) and to give the reward to your slaves the prophets, and to the saints, and to the ones fearing your name, to the small and great, and to destroy the ones destroying the earth." This verse makes it very apparent that God is going to judge the dead too. Everyone will stand before the judgment throne and give an account of every word and deed. "Be not deceived; God is mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7, 1901 R.V.) Social status, level of education, I.Q., wealth, etc., will all be to no avail in that hour of judgment.

Verse 19

"The sanctuary (*naos* - does not mean Temple in the sense of the entire physical structure) of God was opened in heaven, and was seen in his sanctuary the ark of his covenant, and lightnings and voices, thunders, an earthquake and a great hail occurred." (See 8:5 - for same symbolism after the opening of the seventh seal.)

The Kingdom of God has come after the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15ff). The materials contained in the seven

trumpets section appear to cover the same ground as the seven seals - only evil and God's judgment are more intense.

Note: The imagery of the Jewish place of worship is often used in *The Revelation*. For a description of the Herodian Temple, which stood during the life and ministry of our Lord, and was destroyed by the Roman in 70 A.D. - see Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, V. 5. 1-7, Loeb Classics, Harvard University Press; and *The Mishnah*, translated by Herbert Danby, Oxford University Press, Fifth Edition: Kodashim (Things Holy) section on *Middoth*, pp. 589-598.

Review Questions - Chapter 11

1. Read Zechariah 2:1ff and compare with vs. 1.
2. What were God's two faithful witnesses doing - vs. 3?
3. What does the first class conditional of vs. 5 mean?
4. Discuss how Moses and Elijah could be called prototypes of the two witnesses - vs. 6.
5. Does vs. 7 imply that it often appears as though evil will prevail over God's righteousness? Discuss the problem of evil and the ultimate victory of Christ - as revealed in *The Revelation*.
6. Were the two witnesses significantly successful (vs. 8-9-10?) in their preaching of God's Word?
7. How did the non-Christian world respond to the death of God's witnesses - vs. 11?
8. Does vs. 13 specifically state that many non-Christians were converted in view of the phrase - "gave glory to the God of heaven"?
9. What is the meaning of the phrase "the kingdom (note that this is singular, not plural as in King James Version) of world became the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ" - vs. 15?
10. How does the sinful world respond to God's reign - vs. 18?

SECTION 35

Text 12:1-6

And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. 3 And there was seen another sign of heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. 4 And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of

heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. 5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Initial Questions 12:1-6

1. What was the great sign (*semeion* - one of the N.T. words for miracle) - vs. 1?
2. What does the symbolism of vs. 2 imply?
3. Does the sign of vs. 3 imply supernatural power for the great red dragon?
4. Who could possibly fulfill the imagery of vs. 5?
5. Discuss the fact that the two witnesses of chp. 11 prophesied 42 months (or 1260 days) and the fact that the woman was hid away for 1260 days - vs. 6?

The Woman with Child, and the Great Blood Red Dragon Beginning of Part Two - Chapters 12-22

Verse 1

The first eleven chapters make up the first half of the book of Revelation. Beginning with this chapter (12) we are entering the second half of the book (chp. 12-22). The trials and triumphs of the Church of Christ are the central theme of this section of The Revelation. Dr. McDowell states the basic issue briefly, simply, and succinctly in these words—

"God's sovereignty over the world in Jesus Christ has been proclaimed. By the series of visions under the breaking of the seals of the scroll, John has shown how that sovereignty stands as an established fact over against the problems of history which seem to deny it. But now it remains to portray the manner in which this rule of God has been projected into history and how its projection precipitates the inevitable conflict with the Caesars. The story of Revelation from this point on is the story of the conflict between the sovereignty of God in Jesus Christ and the pretended sovereignty of Satan expressed through the rulers of Rome." (Edward A. McDowell, *The Meaning and Message of The Book of Revelation*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1951, p. 129.

It is generally true that in the first eleven chapters the vantage point was the earth. The events of chapter 12 (and following) are seen from the viewpoint of heaven.

In verse one, the first woman to appear in *The Revelation* is a vital part of the vision. In the Old Testament the Theocratic Kingdom is pictured as a woman in travail (see Isaiah 26:17, 66:7; Micah 4:10 - read R. H. Charles on this verse). The metaphor of childbirth is common in the New Testament - John 16:21; Galatians 4:19.

The "great sign" (first in a series of signs) was "a woman having been clothed (*with* - not in text) the sun with "a crown of twelve stars." The imagery as a whole is clear enough, but the details are impossible to identify with certainty. This much is certain that Christ is the "masculine child" who will conquer Satan - (see Genesis 3:15). (See note on *Virgin Birth* immediately following chapter 12.)

Verse 2

This verse contains a paraphrase of Micah 4:10, where the daughter of Zion, the earthly Jerusalem that foreshadows the heavenly Jerusalem, is in travail before the Lord.

Verse 3

The second in this series of signs is observed "in heaven." The second sign was "a great red dragon" who was the adversary of God. The dragon is identified as Satan in vs. 9 (see Daniel 7:7; 8:10).

Verse 4

Satan tries to destroy the child (the Christ). Satan's attempts to destroy our Lord from Herod's slaying of the infants, the Temptation, to the Cross, etc. are most certainly involved in this symbolism. John declares that Satan "stood before the woman being about to bear, in order that (*hina* clause - purpose clause) he might devour her child whenever she bears (or delivers)."

Verse 5

"She bore a masculine son (following Alexander Campbell's Translation) - (*hion arsen* literally says a *male son*, but this is redundant. Campbell reasons that the emphasis was on the masculinity or strength of the son.) The great Shepherd of the

sheep was seized (*hērpasthē* - 1st aor. passive - was seized by someone (God) in a single act) to God and to His throne." This imagery depicts the Ascension of Christ.

Verse 6

"The woman fled" to "a place having been prepared from (*apo* - God was the source of the preparation) God, in order that there they might nourish her 1260 days." This is the same amount of time God gave His two witnesses to prophecy (see 11:3).

SECTION 36

Text 12:7-12

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven saying,

Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony. and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

Initial Questions 12:7-12

1. Read Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1, and Jude 9, then read vs. 7.
2. What was the outcome of the War - vs. 8?
3. Discuss and compare your image of Satan with the biblical information about his person - vs. 9.
4. Read Job 1:6-12 and vs. 10 - discuss and compare.
5. What enabled the saints to overcome Satan - vs. 11?
6. Will the powers of darkness continue to tempt man - vs. 12?

Verse 7

The grammar of this verse is difficult. There was a war "in heaven" (see Zechariah 3:1ff) between Michael and his angels, and The Dragon and his angels. The Dragon is Satan; but who is Michael? The Jehovah's Witnesses distort completely the person of Michael - when they identify him as Jesus Christ (claiming as they do that Christ is a created being). We first meet Michael the Archangel in Daniel 10:13 (see Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Eerdman, 1949, pp. 226-227), and then in Jude 9.

Negative critics attempt to ground John's symbolism, etc. in the Apocrypha, i.e., *The Book of Enoch*, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and *the Apocalypse of Moses*. This is absolutely unnecessary as the issues are already clearly mentioned in the Old Testament aspect of God's Word. (For good discussion of *Michael* - see *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, and *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* for article *Michael*.) In Daniel's great prophecy it is Michael the archangel who sustains the cause of Israel and spiritual Israel (or The Church) in *The Revelation*. This is especially his work at the time of the great tribulation and just before the resurrection of the dead. (See Daniel 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:16 - Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Eerdmans, 1952 reprint - for learned but simple statement of this phrase of Paul's doctrine of the "Last Things." The critical value of Vos' work is vitiated, because he does not give usable bibliographical information. This practice is acceptable for popular works, but certainly not for seriously advanced studies.)

Verse 8

Satan and his angels "warred" "but prevailed not, neither (*oude* - not even was their place found any more (*eti* - still) in heaven." The power of darkness will not be victorious over the power of light. This is the Christian's hope! (See Luke 10:18; John 12:31 - for Christ's assertion of His final victory over Satan.)

Verse 9

"The great dragon was cast (*eblēthē* - 1st aor. pass. - someone (God) - threw Satan out in a single act. It was not a struggle which required a process of determining who was sovereign - God or Satan). John describes Satan with further

proper names. In Semitic thought - names always stand for a characteristic of the person. "The being called one (*kaloumenos* - present-passive participle - continually being called by others) Devil, and Satan, the deceiving one (*ho planōn* - present - active - participle - the one continually deceiving - it is not merely an erratic deception, but a perpetual, never ceasing program) the whole earth (*holēn oikoumenēn* - whole populated earth (world in sense of people) this is one of ten or so times this word appears in the New Testament. We derive the word ecumenical from it, though it is not used in its biblical sense (necessarily) in contemporary ecumenical theology) was cast (same form as above) to the earth" in a single act.

Verse 10

Because Satan has been once for all cast down, John now reveals anew the message of our hope. "The salvation, and the power, and the kingdom (reign) of our God (each of these nouns have a definite article), and the power (or authority - same Greek term) of his Christ (*anointed one* - Christ is Greek equivalent (?) of Hebrew term translated Messiah), because (*hoti*) the accuser of our brethren (this name for Satan is not used elsewhere in the New Testament) was cast down (1st aor. cast in a single act - once for all - same form as discussed in vs. 9) the one accusing them before our God night and day."

Verse 11

"And they (our brethren or Christians - only—this vs. is eloquent testimony against contemporary universalism) overcame (*eniksesan* - 1st aor. - act. ind. they overcame in a single act - once nad for all - as a matter of fact) him (the accuser of the brethren), because of (the cause of the victory of the Saints) the blood of the Lamb." Here the vicarious atonement of Christ is once more asserted! (See appendix on *The Blood*.) "And because of the Word of their witness (implying the necessity of being loyal to Christ in order to obtain victory)." We see here the place of Christ in our redemption coupled with our faithfulness to the end. Both are essential for our salvation! "And they loved not (*ouk* stands after *kai* and before *ēgapesan* for emphasis on the not - 'absolutely not') their life until death." Jesus declared that whoever loves his life more than Him will surely lose life. Here we see an example of those who loved The Lord and His Word more than anything, even security, that this world could offer. Many Christians in non-western (some European countries too) have learned this same lesson.

Verse 12

The transitional preposition "Therefore" means on account of the victory through Christ "be glad (*euphrainesthe* - present imperative - middle voice - heaven is commanded to express joy continually)."

John then continues with a warning to the earth and sea—"because the devil came down to you having (constantly having) great anger, (*thumon* - rage, boiling animosity) knowing that he has a short time." Satan's time is limited by God; and Satan therefore takes full advantage of his permitted period to bring death, destruction, and temptation to the saints.

SECTION 37

Text 12:13-17(18)

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. 14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished, for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

Initial Questions 12:13-18

1. What change has taken place between vs. 1 and vs. 13 with regards to the location of Satan's influence?
2. How does nature help "the woman in vs. 13? Does this show God's ultimate control over all things?
3. The dragon dragon prepared to make war with whom in verse 17?

Verse 13

The dragon momentarily rallied from his defeat, and immediately began pursuing "the woman who bore the masculine child." Though it is too difficult to consider here in our brief commentary, the woman probably symbolizes both the mother of

our Virgin born Lord and Spiritual Israel - The Church. If we were producing a technical commentary this is the interpretation the present author would attempt to defend, or at least make feasible. Note that the action is again "on the earth."

Verse 14

Satan relentlessly attacks the "masculine child" in order to destroy him, but God's providential protection sustains in the hours of greatest threat. The identification of the time element here (as "a time and times and half a time") with the 1260 days of vs. 6 is most helpful. In both verses, the scope of time covered the period of the woman's nourishment.

Verse 15

Satan seeks to destroy the woman by way of a great amount of water (*hōs* or *as* - like a river - John is not declaring that it was a river). It is clear from this verse that Satan has great powers.

Verse 16

Nature is here utilized by God to protect the woman. Satan and his angels have great unnatural powers, because "the dragon cast out of his mouth" a river (see vs. 15 - *hōs* like or as a river). This clearly implies that the working of mighty deeds do not always find their source of power in God - often the source is Satan. Today we have many who preach things which are contrary to the scriptures and at the same time claim that God is blessing their ministry by enabling them to perform mighty deeds. The claim is easy enough to make, but it is impossible to prove that the deeds are of God!

Verse 17

Satan could not destroy The woman, as the woman stands for both the mother of Christ and Spiritual Israel or The Church. Christ said that "the gates of hades will not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), so he (Satan) redirected his forces to attack the Church. John calls *The Church* "the ones keeping (present participle - continually keeping) the commandments of God, and the ones having (present participle - continually having) the witness of Jesus." This description could only fit The Church of Jesus Christ giving faithful testimony. The two marks of a New Testament Christian are always (1) keeping the commandments; and (2) bearing testimony to Christ as Lord.

Verse 18

The 1901 translation places this last verse with chapter 13 and makes it verse one of that chapter instead of verse 18 of chapter 12. Why? We cannot here enter textual criticism, nor the problem of verse and chapter divisions (neither of which were in the original or oldest extant Greek texts), but the text reads "and he stood (*estathē* - 1st aor. passive voice - 3rd person sing. - instead of *estathēn* - 1st aor. passive 1st person singular) on the sand of the sea." The antecedent of *he* connects grammatically with vs. 17, but if the text reads *I*, then it would connect best chapter 13:1. There are texts which have both readings (not the same text), but the best attested reading is "he stood."

Note: For advanced students the following works will be imperative. H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Creation and Chaos in Beginning Time and End Time)* - this work is a comparative critique of *Genesis* chp 1 and *Revelation* chp. 12. This work takes a negative attitude toward God's Word via its form-analysis; and Pierre Prigent, *Histoire de l'exégèse*, J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1959 - (this is a history of the exegesis of *Revelation*, chp. 12 - excellent.)

Review Questions - Chapter 12

1. Read *Genesis* 3:15 and then discuss the significance of the victory of the masculine child over Satan.
2. Discuss Satan's attempts to destroy Christ as recorded in the Gospel record.
3. Who prepared the hiding place of the woman - vs 6?
4. Who do the Jehovah's Witnesses say that Michael is - vs 7?
5. How can we harmonize Christ's victory over evil and the empirical fact that evil persists to this day - vs. 8?
6. What enabled the saints to attain final victory - vs. 11?
7. Is the vicarious atonement of Christ alone enough for our salvation - vs. 11?
8. How does Satan's knowledge of his limited time affect his efforts to destroy the work of God - vs. 12?
9. Does Satan have supernatural power - vs. 15?
10. Discuss Satan's power in light of the contemporary claims to be able to perform miracles.
11. What are two marks of a Christian - vs. 17?
12. Discuss why the present author places vs. 18 with chp. 12 instead of placing it as vs. 1 - chp. 13. The 1901 gives the reading "he stood," yet still places the verse in chp. 13. What is the antecedent of *he* in this case?

AN OUTLINE TO THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE
OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

INTRODUCTION: The early twentieth century modernist-fundamentalist controversy; controversy renewed since publication of R.S.V. (1954) and the change of virgin (of K.J. Version, 1901) in Isa. 7:14 to young woman. See also the new Jewish translation.

I. VOCABULARY: ETYMOLOGICAL (OR ROOT) SIGNIFICANCE AND BIBLICAL USE:

A. *Oth* - sign—(not the regular word for miracle).

1. Num. 14:22; Deut. 11:3; Isa. 7:14.

B. *Mopheth* - wonder, sign, miracle—(regular word for miracle).

C. "*almah*"

1. Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:13; 6:8; Isa. 7:14.

D. *bethulah* - (metaphorically used of Israel as married to God)

1. Joel 1:8; Jer. 18:13; 31:4, 21.

c.f. Very important: Rebekah is called *bethulah* in Gen. 24:16 and *almah* in vs. 43.

II. OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 7:14f: Study of Background:

1. Situation under which Isaiah made the assertion.

2. The significance of the statement for 18th century B.C. Israel and for the Christian today.

III. SEPTUAGINT VERSION (Gr. version of the Hebrew Old Testament)

Parthenos (virgin): translates *bethulah*, *na'vah*, *almah*. L.X.X. use of parthenos to refer to young girl no longer virgin - Gen. 34:13.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

A. Matt. 1:23 - *parthenos*.

B. The virgin birth and the Biblical Doctrine of Christ (nature of).

V. THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND MARYOLATRY

A. Matt. 1:25 - "Knew her not till".

B. Luke 1:26-38—highly favored (passive participle - the having been favored one).

- C. Latin translation - *Ave gratia plena* (Hail, full of grace) (implies that Mary can and does dispense grace to sinners).
- D. K.J. Luke 1:28--Blessed art thou among women; Textually this phrase does not belong in Scriptures.
- E. Jesus' brothers (*adelphoi*) Matt. 13:55-56; Luke 11:27-28.
- F. Jesus refused special reverence to be accorded her (Matt. 12:46-50).
- G. Marian Congress at Ottawa in 1947 provided Mary with the status of co-redemptrix (queen of heaven - as co-redeemer).
 - 1. Pope Pius XII issued the bull, *Ineffabilis Deus* - Dogma of Immaculate Conception.
 - 2. *Munificentissimus Deus* - dogma of the bodily assumption of Mary.
- H. Mary's supposed Immaculate Conception and the Non-biblical doctrine of original sin.

VI. THE VIRGIN BIRTH IN PATRISTIC LITERATURE (APOSTOLIC FATHERS)

- A. 2nd Century attack and answers (attack on V.B. is not new).
- B. Justin Martyr - DIALOGUE OF TRYPHO

VII. SCIENCE AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- A. Modern scientific logic and the virgin birth.
- B. Miracle and the Biblical world view.

Note: Revelation, chapter 12, 1ff. Reference to Virgin Birth - "the masculine child" - problem of Virgin Birth in light of Revised Standard Version and new edition of Jewish Bible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bratcher, Robert G., "Study of Isaiah 7:14," *The Bible Translator*, Vol. 9, no. 3, July 1958; Good, but not exhaustive bibliography.

Christianity Today - Volume IV, No. 5, December 7, 1959.

McRay, John, *The Virgin Birth* - provides many valuable bibliographical items - vol. 3, no. 2, 2nd q., 1959, *The Restoration Quarterly* - the only competent quarterly produced by men committed to Restoration Principle - non-instrumental brethren.

Strauss, James D., "Miracle of His Coming," *The Christian Standard*, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 24, 1960

SECTION 38

Text 13:1-10

1 and he stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy, 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his throne, and great authority, 3 And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? 5 and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. 8 And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. 9 If any man hath an ear, let him hear. 10 If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Initial Questions 13:1-10

1. Both the *earth* and *sea* are accursed according to 12:12. Where does the beast come from in vs. 1?
2. What does the term blasphemy mean - vs. 1?
3. What did the dragon give the beast - vs. 2?
4. Are miracles performed only by God - vs. 3?
5. How did the "whole earth" respond to the beast - vs. 3?
6. Why did the earth worship the beast - vs. 4?
7. How long was the beast allowed to continue his evil deeds - vs. 5?
8. Was the beast victorious over the saints - vs. 7?

9. How extensive was the beast worship - vs. 8?
10. What were the saints to exhibit in contrast to those enslaved by the beast - vs. 10?

The Wild Beast from the Sea
Chapter 13:1-10

Chapter thirteen reveals two *enemy beasts*, one from the sea (vs. 1-10) and one from the land (vs. 11-18). Satan empowered the beast of the sea to work havoc on the earth. The description of both the beast of the sea and the beast of the land is a summary of the information found in Daniel 7:1-8.

Verse 1

John's next vision contained the "coming up" of the beast of the sea. This beast is described as having "ten horns." This imagery comes directly from Daniel 7:7. On the ten horns were ten diadems or symbols of the political power. The Greek word here is again (*diadēmata*) which signifies a kingly crown. On his *auton* - (can be neut. or masc. Since Satan is masc. we translate it as masc.) head were names (plural - *onomata*) of blasphemy (*blasphemies* - from two Greek words meaning to speak to hurt). The names of blasphemy are discussed by Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 161. He uses the original research of J. T. Wood who found Imperial letters among some epigraphic materials from Ephesus. Some of the blasphemous self-imposed names used by the Caesars during the first and second centuries A.D. were "Caesar God," "Great Sovereign Caesar," etc. Caesar demanded worship of his subjects as though he were a god. The New Testament Christians would neither apply the divine titles to Caesar nor worship him. This set the stage for radical and more intense persecution.

Verse 2

John uses the simile of a leopard to describe the beast. The leopards feet "were as the feet of a bear" (for bear see Daniel 7:5). Clearly this imagery implies strength for a chief characteristic of a bears paw is its deadly strength and accuracy, at close range when encountering a foe or is threatened with danger. The mouth of the beast was "as the mouth of a lion" (for Lion see Daniel 7:4. Here again we can feel the power of John's imagery. The most powerful weapon the lion has

is the vise-like grip and potential strength of his jaws. The mechanical advantage of the physical structure of the lion's jaw is enormous (depending of course, on the size of the lion). John's readers would have understood his imagery immediately. But the beast was only a subordinate of the dragon, the source of the beast's "Power," throne (or symbol of reigning), and great authority (this Greek word means both power and authority and is to be distinguished from the word translated power - *dunamin* - which primarily signifies physical strength).

Verse 3

What was the nature and power of this beast? John saw that one of the heads of the beast "has been slain unto death." In the same vision John saw that the "death stroke was healed" (*etherapeuthē* - was healed with a single, instantaneous act - 1st aor. ind. active tense). Here the powerful antagonists of "the Lamb" was also raised to life again. The Lamb standing as though it had been slain from the foundation of the world is now placed in sharp focus with a dead but now revived embodiment of evil - the beast. Here we note that this evil person not only has superhuman powers, but that it is adequate to raise from the dead. What is the response of unpenitent mankind to this marvel of malignant power? John declares that "the whole earth" wondered (*ethaumasthē* - 1st aor. ind. active - the whole earth followed the beast immediately - as soon as they saw the miracle) after the beast." When the "slain Lamb" lived again forevermore the entire earth did not immediately follow Him. In marked contrast we see here that men follow darkness rather than light, evil rather than righteousness, the condemner rather than the savior.

Verse 4

Instead of worshipping almighty God, the people "worshipped the dragon because (*hoti* is causal - the cause of their worship) he gave authority to the beast." The next level of idolatry comes when the whole earth worshipped the beast. They were acknowledging that there was more than one god. They worshipped Satan (the dragon) as the supreme diety of the evil trinity, and also the lesser power, the beast. The rebellious earth felt so secure in the clutches of the vile one that they kept on saying (*legontes* - pres. participle) "who is like unto the beast? And who is able to war with him?" This imagery places the shout of angelic

hosts over the victory of the Lamb in tension with the perpetual shouting of the whole earth that none is able to make war against the beast (see this ascription to God in Isaiah 40:18, 25; 46:5; Ps. 108:5; Micah 7:18 and Jeremiah 49:19).

Verse 5

The beast was not powerful by nature. The source of his authority, crown, and power was given (*edothē* - 1st aor. pass.) by the high strategy of hell. What was given to the beast? The capacity to speak "great things and blasphemies." The beast was given (same passive form as above) authority to act (work) 42 months. We have noted this same time element throughout *The Revelation* - either 42 months, 1260 days, or 3 1/2 years.

Verse 6

The enormity of the beast's blasphemies are brought out in this verse as John declares that the beast blasphemed God, His name (which stands for the character of the person. This is without question a Hebrewism), and His dwelling place (*skēnēn* - lit. tent or tabernacle, or dwelling place). The beast also blasphemed "(*tous* - the ones or them) tabernacling (or dwelling) in heaven." The plural form *tous* could mean God and His angel (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, angelic host), and all of the redeemed saints which have appeared in earlier scenes of John's drama of redemption.

Verse 7

The beast was given (same passive form as found in vs. 5) power "to make war with the saints, and to overcome (*nikēsai* - 1st aor. infinitive, overcome in a single act) them." The beast was the sovereign ruler; therefore, escape was impossible (Daniel 7:21-23). From a purely human perspective the cause of Christ was defeated by satandom. The saints were actually and completely "overcome." The extent of his conquest is pointed out - "every tribe, and people, and nation." It looked like God was defeated at the cross too! But God in His infinite love took the evil of men, and transformed into redemptive mercy. Ours is also a day when it appears that darkness prevails and not light. But darkness is no match for light, nor falsehood for truth, nor injustice and unrighteousness for the justice and righteousness of God in Christ. We shall prevail, because He

has prevailed for us. We shall be victorious for the victory has been attained already through the finished work of God.

Verse 8

How extensive is this idolatry to be? John declares that everyone will worship the beast "whose name has not been written in the scroll of life of the Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world." The death of Christ was without question involved in God's plan of redemption. (See Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:14ff and Ephesians chps. 1-3.)

Verse 9

John now gives a grave warning to all hearers. Every hearer had better heed that warning given in verse 8. Apostasy shall be so great that the majority of the religious people of the entire world shall follow the evil one while thinking themselves acceptable to God.

Verse 10

John is led by the Spirit to write this verse in a conditional form. "If anyone is for captivity, into captivity he goes; if anyone will kill by a sword, he must (*dei* - expresses absolute necessity) be killed by the sword." The foundation for the certainty of the saints is eloquently declared in this verse. John says, (*hode*) - "Here is the patience (or endurance) and the faith of the saints." What does *hode* refer to? The "here" refers to the ultimate, actual judgment of God upon all who persecute His people. If anyone is for captivity, God will give him captivity. If anyone is for murderous killing, then God will give him a taste of his own medicine.

SECTION 39

Text 13:11-18

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. 13 And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come

down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. 15 And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; 17 and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six.

Initial Questions 13:11-18

1. Where does the beast of vs. 11 come from? Compare with vs. 1.
2. What power does this second beast show in vs. 13?
3. What caused the deception of "them that dwell on the earth" according to vs. 14?
4. What did the beast request according to vs. 14?
5. Does vs. 15 show that the beast has great supernatural power? Note just what the verse says before you attempt to interpret the words.
6. What was to happen to those who refused to "worship the image of the beast" - vs. 15?
7. What was the purpose of the "mark" given in vs. 16?
8. How was the world effected economically by the mark of the beast - vs. 17?
9. The beast is identified as a what in vs. 18?

The Wild Beast from The Earth
Chapter 13:11-18

Verse 11

John's vision now encompasses "another beast." The source of this beast is not the sea, but the earth. This beast receives the paradoxical description of a lamb with the voice as of a dragon (the Greek word is *hōs* - like or as). This beast looks like a lamb and talks like a dragon!

Verse 12

This second beast gets his authority and power from the beast of vss. 1-10. The first beast received his authority, power, and throne from the dragon. Now, this second beast uses power mediated through the first beast. Here we have the trinity of evil! This beast is a henchman of the first sinister figure of darkness.

Verse 13

The extent of the power of the second beast is made crystal clear by John. "And he does (*poiei* - neut. or masc.) great signs (*sēmeia* - is one of three general New Testament words for miracles) in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) he even makes fire to come down out of heaven onto the earth before (*enōpion* - in front of) men." That the evil beast has superhuman powers is emphatically declared here. Still today men claim the power to perform miracles. Their message is not in harmony with the word of God, so we can be certain that God is not the source of their power.

Verse 14

What is the result of these great signs? "And he deceives (*plana* - pres. ind. act. can also be pres. subj. act., but context calls for active voice) the ones dwelling on the earth because (*dia* - causal force - the cause of the deception was the signs of miracles) of the signs which it was given (pass. voice) to him to do before the beast; telling to the ones dwelling on the earth to make an image (*eikona* - means a likeness) to the beast."

Verse 15

The might of this beast was so great that he breathed life into the image mentioned in vs. 14. The phrase "the image of

the beast" is used ten times in *The Revelation*; 4 times in chap. 13, and 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4. The power was given (passive voice) to the beast "in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) as many as might not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Since no Christian could committ such an idolatrous act, it signed the potential death warrant of every one claiming Christ as Lord and Savior.

Verse 16

The beast "keeps on making" (*poiei* - pres. act. ind.) the whole world receive a mark of identification. John's words are very clear when he says - "they should give to them a mark (*charagma* - is the official seal) on their right hand or on their forehead,"

Note: Paul used the word *stigmata* in Galatians 6:17 when speaking of the branding of Christ. (See H. N. Ridderbos, *Epistle to the Galatians* in the *New International Commentary of the New Testament*, Wm. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1953, see especially page 228.)

For the fundamental philological study of *stigmata*, see Deissmann, sec. ed., *Biblical Studies*, T. & T. Clark, 1901, pp. 349-360.

Verse 17

What was the significance of the mark of the beast? Socially and economically it was absolutely essential for a persons' well being and livelihood. John declares that "no one could (*dunetai* - the word for capacity or ability - no one was able to) buy or sell except the one having the mark or (there is no *ē* or *here* but is inserted for sense) the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Unless one was socially acceptable one could neither buy food, household needs, etc., nor sell his products of the field or labor. The union of the emperior cult had every source of income and outgo under its full control! A faithful Christian could not possibly exist under those conditions for very long.

Verse 18

John directs attention to the challenge which follows immediately upon the heels of "Here" is wisdom." The one having reason (*noun* - also means understanding or comprehension) let him count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." Much has been written on this cryptogram, but all that can be stated for

certain is just what the text declares - that it is a man. There is a textual problem here regarding the specific number which we cannot here consider. (See appendix immediately following chapter 13 for brief discussion of the Anti-Christ.)

Note: For those interested in the various efforts to identify this number with some specific person see, Swete, *op cit.*, pp. 175; Charles, *op cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 364; Joseph Bonsirven, S. J., *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, Beauchesne et ses fils a paris, 1951, pp. 232.)

Discussion Questions Chp. 13:1-10

1. Study Daniel chp. 7:1-8 and return to vs. 1 and discuss.
2. What does the term blasphemy mean - vs. 1? What were some of the names of blasphemy mentioned in vs. 1?
3. What possible purpose could John have had to use the imagery of the bear and lion in vs. 2?
4. Does vs. 3 imply that the realm of evil can also perform miracles as can God?
5. How extensive was the apostacy according to vs. 3?
6. Did the peoples of the earth feel secure while worshipping the beast - vs. 4? Were they sincere?
7. Does it make any difference to God what we think or do or who or how we worship as long as we are sincere and honest with ourselves and others?
8. Who was the source of the beast's authority, crown, and power - vs. 5?
9. Was God's purpose destroyed when the saints were overcome - vs. 7?
10. Was the death of Christ in the plan of God for redemption - vs. 8?
11. Upon what does the patience and faith of the saints depend - vs. 10?

Discussion Questions Chp. 13:11-18

12. What is the source of the power of the second beast - vs. 12?
13. Discuss contemporary claims to perform miracles - both Roman Catholic and Denominational in view of vs. 13?
14. What are the basic results of the signs of the second beast - vs. 14?

15. What was to be done to all who refused to worship the image - vs. 15?
16. Discuss the social and economic implications of the "mark of the beast" - vs. 17.
17. Though the person of vs. 18 cannot be infallibly identified, what do we know with certainty about this person - just from a study of this passage - without adding any speculation regarding the cryptogram?

Special Study: The Anti-Christ

Most men today deny that evil is sustained and carried on by personal forces which are seeking to dominate the spiritual world. But the Bible emphatically declares that the powers of darkness are personal in nature. We cannot here enter the debate with those who reject this particular biblical doctrine as primitive superstition. Those of us who believe that the scriptures are the Word of God cannot possibly deny a doctrine which our Lord and Savior taught with such penetrating clarity without repudiating His deity and therefore, His saving work on the cross.

We are not going to enter debate here as to whether Paul's "man of Sin," (II Thess. 2:3) or John's "dragon," and "anti-Christ" are to be equated. John uses the term anti-Christ in I John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3; and II John 7. He uses the imagery of the dragon and the two beasts in *The Revelation*. These fulfill the same spiritual function as the anti-Christ in the Epistles of John. Dr. G. Milligan's brief study (mentioned below in the note) is a distinct outline of the doctrine of anti-Christ. He traces the doctrine through the O.T. in general and specifically the apocalyptic sections of Daniel, Ezekiel, *et al.*, through the extra biblical Jewish literature, our Lord's teaching on the subject in the great eschatological discourses (Mk. 13:1ff; Matt. 24:1ff) and finally Paul and John's doctrine of the anti-Christian forces at work in the universe.

John's description without question covered the Roman Emperor cult, but his description is applicable wherever and whenever evil forces gain the upper hand in the world. Study and compare the following passages from John and Paul (Revelation 12:9, 13:1f, II Thess. 2:9f; Rev. 13:3ff, 14:11). Discuss these passages (also II Thess. 2:4, 9-12.) in view of the great evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian

evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian forces seem to dominate our world. How do we make Christ's victory over evil, and our Christian hope relevant to our age of advanced technology?

For those who care to scrutinize the many very difficult problems of evil from a Christian perspective see, Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil*, P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1963 (Catholic); the only comprehensive historical study of the problem (though not from a Christian view point) is Friedrich Billicsich, *Das Problem des Übels in der Philosophie des abendlandes* - (The Problem of Evil in Western Philosophy. The first 2 volumes cover up through Hegel; the third volume (not yet available) will bring the discussion up to the contemporary situation. For a discussion by men who believe the Bible to be the Word of God see Dr. M. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Van Kampen Press, Ind., Wheaton, Illinois, 1952; Dr. G. Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1952 - especially chp. 5. The Man of Sin, pp. 94; L. Boettner, *The Millennium*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1958, chp. 5, *The Anti-Christ* pp. 206; Dr. G. Milligin, *St. Paul's Epistles to The Thessalonians*, Eerdmans reprinted 1952; Robert Law, *The Tests of Life*, T. & T. Clark has some excellent remarks on this general subject in this theological commentary of the first Epistle of John; though Millar Burrows is by no means a person who holds a high view of The Bible, but he does have a good discussion of The Anti-Christ in his *Outline of Biblical Theology*, Westminster Press, Phil. 1956, pp. 195.

These works will also provide other sources and problems involved in our general theme, so this brief list is given hoping that some profound, dedicated Christian will be able to give further analysis to the problem of evil, and specifically the personal nature of the evil ones mentioned in the Word of life.

SECTION 40

Text 14:1-5

1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. 4 These are they that were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

Initial Questions 14:1-5

1. Where was the Lamb standing according to vs. 1? Where is Mt. Zion?
2. Where have we read of the one hundred forty four thousand before in The Revelation?
3. What was the "new song" of vs. 3, and who alone could learn the song?
4. Discuss the real value of a vital, spiritual song service during worship hour in light of the fact that it is through song that redeemed shout the praises of God.
5. Does vs. 4 teach that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than the marriage state (as according to Roman Catholic teaching)?
6. What spiritual or moral significance can the designation "virgin" have in vs. 4?
7. Does vs. 4 - "These were purchased from (*apo* away from, or out of) among men" stand in opposition to resurgent universalism (i.e., that everyone is going to be saved)? Does this phrase show that some men are not redeemed and why they are not?
8. What is the moral character of "those purchased" according to vs. 5?

The Vision of The 144,000 on Mount Zion Chapter 14:1-5 (Cf. 7:1-8)

Verse 1

John has now discussed the dragon, the beast of the sea, and the beast of the land or the false prophet. This "diabolical trinity" (John mentions it again in 16:3) is placed in the most radical tension with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The final sign in this series of scenes from the divine drama of redemption is the re-entry of the 144,000 (note that this would have been a large number to the 1st century church) discussed in chapter 7:4f. They are with the Lamb, with His seal (His name) on their foreheads. They are standing victoriously on Mt. Zion, the city of the great king. The king and His redeemed stand in an absolute contradiction to the beast and his fellow perveyors of darkness.

Verse 2

John now gives us a poetic description of the voice which he heard. The voice John heard was to give a preview of hope! How could the first century Christians continue to hope for ultimate and final victory - when the dragon and his cohorts had "overcome the saints"? The voice was sweet and harmonious like "harpers harping."

Verse 3

This majestic cast of the purchased ones were neither in despair nor despondent over the apparent victory of satandom. Quite the contrary, "they sing a new song." Only when one's heart is filled with the joys of salvation can one know the thrill of true spiritual singing. They were singing this song of praise in the very throne room of the universe. What is essential to one's life, before one can sing like this? John states that "no man could (*edunatō* - no man is able or can learn it) learn the song except the 144,000, the ones having been purchased from (*apo* - away from) the earth." Who are those "having been purchased ones" (*ēgorasmenoi* - passive - past - participle)? John identifies them as "those who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins or celibates." There is certainly no condemnation of marriage in this verse (read Matt. 19:12, I Cor. 7:1-8, Heb. 13:4). The image of the virgin (*parthenoi*) is a symbol of purity. The Bible uses adultery (see book of Hosea) as a symbol of a lack of purity. Chastity is a mark of every true follower of Christ!

This great throng was the "first fruit to God and to the Lamb." The firstfruit (*aparchē*) is a consecrated offering in both O.T. usage, and here. This is precisely what Paul asserts in The Epistle to The Romans, chp. 12:1. *The Hebrew Epistle* makes a like claim in chp. 13:4-5. Their spiritual purity was made manifest by the fact that "in their mouth was not found a lie (*pseudos* - anything false); they are unblemished." (See John 8:44 - "the father of lies." Lying became one of the chief temptations of Christians during periods of persecution. See Josephus, the Fathers, especially Cyprian and the problem of the lapsed).

Many strive in vain to identify this throne (especially *The Jehovah's Witnesses*). In chp. 7:1-8 it is made plain that if taken literally, these are all physical Jews from tribes of Israel. Nothing is stated there that this group is solely composed of

men. But in chp. 14 the group is specifically identified as males who are undefiled with women. There is nothing but difficulties in the path of anyone who claims that he can identify with certainty this group - other than the fact that they are the redeemed. Roman Catholic theologians cannot make out their case for celibacy from this passage either, contrary to their claims. Study the biblical teaching about marriage and divorce, and note the biblical use of the symbol of adultery for impurity.

SECTION 41

Text 14:6-7

6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

Initial Questions 14:6-7

1. What was the message of the flying angel - vs. 6?
2. What significance does this vs. have for the missionary enterprise?
3. What does the word fear mean in vs. 7?
4. What characteristics of God are discussed in vs. 7?

Three Angelic Proclamations, and a Voice from Heaven Chapter 14:6-13

Verse 6

The preview of hope is now made available to mankind. John saw "another angel flying in mid-heaven (see 8:13) having an eternal Gospel to preach over (*epi* - over, the extent of) the ones sitting on the earth." Every one could now have an opportunity to hear the glorious gospel of Christ. There will be no national, color, social, or intellectual lines drawn as this angel proclaims the good tidings of forgiveness through Christ.

Verse 7

Now the call is issued on behalf of the sovereign ruler of the universe for man to "fear (*phobethēte* - 1st. aor. middle voice - imp. plural - the middle voice means that they are to make themselves fear God) God and give him glory; because the hour of his judgment came" (*elthen* - 2nd aor. ind. God's judgment "came" in a sudden, single act!) The great voice requires three things of all who would escape God's judgment - (1) Fear God; (2) Give him glory; (3) Worship the creator of the universe.

SECTION 42

Text 14:8

And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Initial Questions 14:8

1. What was the message of this second angel - vs. 8?
2. Compare his message with that of the flying angel in vs. 6.

Verse 8

Immediately following the first angel, a second angel "followed saying fallen - (*epesen* - 2nd aor. ind. literally fell because of the immediate and singular act of collapse.) fallen is Babylon the great." The great rebellious, powerful, anti-Roman Christian empire is finished as sovereign over the minds and bodies of men. Right in the midst of her apparent victory over Christ's Church, John is led to announce that from the vantage point of the throne room of heaven - Babylon's fall was final, sudden and complete in God's plan of the victory of righteousness over unrighteousness. Mighty Rome might dominate the earth for a little while, but God's judgment will come; and she will not be able to stand against the wrath of the Lamb. Oh! What a message of hope to those 1st century Christians who were withstanding daily persecution for the glory of their Lord. We must never forget that there are people in our own day who pay dearly for their public acknowledgement of Jesus Christ.

SECTION 43

Text 14:9-12

9 And another angel, a third followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Initial Questions 14:9-12

1. What was the message of the third angel - vs. 9?
2. Does vs. 10 show that there are some who will not be redeemed, and that the Bible does teach that there is a hell?
3. Does the punishment mentioned in vs. 10 imply merely a purgatorial cleansing or probation?
4. How long are those individuals outside of Christ punished according to vs. 11?
5. Does vs. 11 assert that those being punished are conscious of their punishment?
6. What does John mean in vs. 12 - "Here is the patience of the saints."

Verse 9

The third messenger of the Lord comes on the stage of the universe to warn the one who "worships the beast and the image of it." The angel of God warns the idolators - just as the second beast threatened all who would not worship the image of the beast as related in chp. 13:15.

Those who had the identifying marks as followers of the dragon and his henchmen would receive the condemnation of the creator of heaven and earth.

Verse 10

The person who worships the beast "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God having been mixed undiluted (*akratou* - no water will be mixed with the wine of God's wrath. It will be full

strength!); and will be tormented by fire and sulphur before holy angels, and before the Lamb." John is declaring that as a matter of fact, the wrath of God will actually bring torment upon all who do not know Jesus Christ as savior.

Verse 11

The tormented idolators are described in this verse. Their torment is "unto ages of ages"; and they have not rest day and night". . . . John claims that their punishment is permanent; and that the tormented ones are conscious of their suffering. (See *Special Study* after this chp. on - *Yes, There Is a Hell!*)

Verse 12

John is asserting the same basic challenge here as in 13:10 (see that verse).

SECTION 44

Text 14:13

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

Initial Questions 14:13

1. Why are the dead in Christ called blessed in vs. 13?
2. Does this vs. show a personality trait of the Holy Spirit? If so, what?
3. Are Christian works important (or necessary) for our salvation? (Study Romans, Galatians and James on Faith and works.)

Verse 13

John's serious contemplation is broken by the command write (*grapson* - 1st. aor. imp. active). He was commanded by the heavenly voice to write - "Blessed are the dead the ones dying in the Lord from now (*ap arti* is a difficult phrase - but it can hardly mean that the ones who die in the Lord from now on which would imply that those who died before were not blessed. This cannot be the meaning.) The Spirit says - "in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) they shall rest from (*ek* - out of or away from) their weariness (or sorrow)." The Greek word

koptō means to strike or beat the beast in grief. When it is used in the sense of labor it always entails drudgery, and weariness of the soul (or sorrow). The Spirit promised rest from weariness "for their works (*erga* - physical labor) follows with them." God promises to bless those who die in Christ with victory; give meaning to their suffering, and assures them that their work for Christ's kingdom is not in vain.

SECTION 45

Text 14:14-20

14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Initial Questions 14:14-20

1. What is the imagery of vs. 14?
2. Will any escape the heavenly harvest according to vs. 15?
3. Who is the one "that sat on the cloud" - vs. 16?
4. What national song finds some of its imagery in vs. 17-20?
5. How far is a "thousand six hundred furlongs" - vs. 20?

Vision of the Harvest and Vintage of the Earth
Chapter 14:14-20

Verse 14

The remaining section of this chapter is concerned primarily with the judgment of God. John saw "a white cloud" and

one like a son of man was sitting majestically with a crown of sovereign authority on his head, and a sharp sickle for reaping in his hand. The symbols are vitally related. The kingly crown authorizes him to cast the sickle of judgment upon the whole earth.

Though the phrase "son of man" is without question a messianic title, we must note the Greek word *homoian* which means like, which makes the phrase a simile - "one sitting like a (no article here) son of man." The Jehovah's Witnesses completely distort this phrase into the claim that Jesus is nothing but a created angel. This claim is repudiated by the entire scope of the biblical doctrine of Christ.

Verse 15

That the "one sitting" on a white cloud was an angel is implied by the term (*allos*) another angel. This new angelic character was continually crying out (*krázōn* - present participle) "to the one sitting on the cloud, send (*pempson* - 1st aor. act. imp. mood - thrust or cast - immediately in a single act. There is to be no extended process of judgment; it will be swift, severe, certain). Why did the angel cry with such diligence in order to bring judgment upon the earth? The answer is forth coming - "because the hour came to reap; because (*hoti* - is causal same as above) the harvest of the earth was dried (*exeranthē* - 1st aor. passive voice - ind. mood; the word means over ripe - thus dried up, and the aor. passive means that some one (God) prepared the earth in a single, momentary act for judgment).

Verse 16

The one "like a son of man" responded to the dry" and thrust (*ebalen* - 2nd aor. ind. active voice - cast with a single throw) his sickle over the extent (*epi* - on, or extent of the earth); and the earth was reaped (*etheristhē* - 1st aor. passive voice - ind. case). The harvest of the world is now gathered. The harvest of the souls of men shall either be gathered through evangelism to Christ, or through judgment to condemnation. The harvest of men is eloquently depicted by Christ in John 4:35. . . "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." Now, we have the two possible harvests, the harvest of judgment, or the harvest of evangelism'. Which shall it be?

Verse 17

Still another angel went forth out of the sanctuary in heaven." The physical temple at Jerusalem had long been destroyed (in the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D.). This angel also had a sharp sickle for reaping. This is the same place (the sanctuary) from which the prayers of the saints went forth (study chps. 6 & 8.) The imagery of judgment continues also in this verse. "Another angel, . . . the one having authority over the fire" cried out "to the one having the sharp sickle." He was commanded to gather the clusters of over ripe grapes.

Verse 19

The clusters of over ripe grapes were gathered and "cast (*ebalen* - 2nd aor. ind. - active voice - same form and meaning as in vs. 16) into the winepress of God's great anger." The imagery of the wine press is a very dramatic way of showing that none shall escape the wrath of God. Some men deny that God's wrath (*orge*) will condemn those who are out of Christ. We are now witnessing a resurgence of universalism in the so-called Christian world, but this section of scripture, along with many others, repudiate the claims of universalism. (See the *Special Study on The Gospel, Guilt, and Resurgent Universalism.*)

Verse 20

The judgment which was inflicted upon the earth was so terrible that blood (*haima* - blood - note the change in imagery from the fruit of the grapes to blood) went out of the winepress as far as the bridles of the horses, from 1500 hundred furlong." A furlong (*stadiōn*) is a little over 606 feet, therefore, the blood was running over four feet deep over the total geographical extent of Palestine. In fact, 1600 hundred furlong (approximately 200 miles) would have run over the boundries of the Palestine of the N.T. period.

The two preceding images of judgment have been extracted from Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6. The imagery of Palestine is here used for the whole earth, just as earthly Jerusalem is taken as the whole earth in 11:8.

Much of the imagery of one of our national songs - *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* is taken from the Joel, Isaiah, and Revelation 14:14-20.

This chapter was inserted between two great series of God's judgment to insure the suffering Christians of ultimate

victory over sin, hell, and the grave, even if physical death was inflicted upon them as the results of persecution. Note how chapter 7 was also an insertion between the events of opening of the 6th and 7th seals.

Discussion Questions Chapter 14

1. Compare the teaching of chp. 13 with chp. 14 - regarding the persons involved, the marks, the significance of the marks.
2. Compare and discuss chps. 7 and 14 with respect to the 144,000 saints.
3. Discuss some spiritual requirements of worshipful singing in view of vs. 3.
4. Discuss the Roman Catholic claim that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than a married one in light of vs. 4.
5. What three things were required of mankind according to vs. 7?
6. What was the message of the third angel - vs. 9?
7. What implications are there in John's use of the imagery of undiluted wine for God's wrath in vs. 10?
8. Are the tormented ones conscious of their punishment according to vs. 11?
9. What assurance does God give the persecuted Christians in vs. 13?
10. Discuss God's judgment according to vs. 15
11. Compare the harvest imagery of vs. 16 with Jesus' use of the imagery in John 4:35.
12. What does vs. 19 have to tell us regarding universalism (i.e., that everyone will ultimately be saved?)
13. Read Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6 and discuss the judgment imagery of this section of scripture.

Special Study

Yes, There Is a Hell!

Many people in the contemporary religious world deny the existence of hell. The denial stems from many supposed reasons. Some contend that the doctrine of hell is barbaric superstition; others hold that the doctrine is in diametric opposition

to the love of God. Still others hold that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of hell. Naturalistic Jews, religious liberals, most contemporary theologians and many cultic groups, i.e., Jehovah's Witnesses all share the common attribute of denying the ultimate reality of hell or a future irrevocable punishment of all who are out of Christ.

From a logical perspective it is impossible to affirm and deny the existence of hell at the same time. Either hell exists or it does not! It is either a biblical doctrine or it is not! Those who are enamoured with the discipline of comparative religion take refuge in the so-called assured results of this field of research. It would not be difficult to show that many claim that the Jewish background of the doctrine of eternal punishment was found in the Persian concepts of Zoroasterianism. Since the biblical doctrine and the teaching found in this non-Christian, eastern religion are radically dissimilar we must demand that the unique elements be accounted for by other than the comparative method.

During the New Testament period, both the Rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai held the teaching of the existence of hell or eternal punishment. Our Lord clearly taught this doctrine in His preaching ministry. The doctrine is also present in the early Patristic literature. It is not surprising in view of the opinion of the Fathers concerning the doctrine of hell—that we would find the same thing asserted in the great creeds, and that is exactly what we find. This is all well and good, but we find many things, both in the Fathers and the Creeds which are not only not found in the Bible, but which contradict teaching of the Word of God. If this be true, then we cannot be satisfied merely to know that the doctrine of hell is solidly entrenched in historical theology, but we must examine the source of the fountain of life—the scriptures themselves. The scriptures stand in complete opposition to the universalism of the Alexandrian theologians—Clement and Origen. Their claims sound strangely contemporary. They asserted that God's judgmental punishment was merely remedial, and not for final and irrevocable condemnation. The Medieval Roman Catholic Church maintained that the doctrine of hell was biblically grounded. The great Reformation denominations also adopted the scriptural teaching about hell. From the 17th century down to the present situation there have been those who have maintained various doctrines of Universalism (everybody is going to be saved). Restorationism

(ultimately this is universalism too). Everyone is going to be *restored* to God because of Christ's atonement, regardless of their personal attitude toward Him. Annihilationism (maintained today by the contemporary arians, The Jehovah's Witnesses. When one dies that is the end of everything! Only the redeemed of God will be resurrected to life. There will be no unbeliever, damned, or otherwise, because the bodies of the unfaithful will merely return to the chemistry of the earth—that is their punishment according to this view.

If Jesus is not God incarnate, then He cannot be our saviour. If Jesus is God, then He could not possibly be wrong about what He taught! Jesus taught the doctrine of hell, therefore He could not have been mistaken about the nature and existence of hell, and at the same time been God in human flesh. Though it by no means exhausts the biblical teaching about hell, we shall limit these brief pages to the teaching of our Lord. The following verses by no means exhausts what Christ declared about judgment; but these will be sufficient for any reader to determine for himself whether or not Christ believed and taught the doctrine of hell.

(1) Matthew 7:20-23

20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in the day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Though this does not specifically assert anything about the nature and existence of hell, it does reveal the severity of God's judgment.

(2) Matthew 10:28

28 And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Gehenna)

This passage makes clear that man is a composite of soul and body; and that there is a hell over which God is sovereign.

(3) Matthew 11:23

And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hades (Greek word is *hades* - this word

is never translated) for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.

Jesus warns this evil and unrepentant city that Judgment will come, then it will be too late.

(4) Matthew 13:41-42

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. (See also verses 47-50).

Why would Jesus use this horrible imagery, if there is no hell?

(5) Matthew 25:45-46

Then shall he answer them, saying, verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least ye did it not unto me. And these shall do away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

Few people would deny that Christ promised everlasting life to those who follow Him. In general, they do not deny that He offers eternal life to believers. (Note that in this verse the "eternal (*aiōnion*) life" which Christ promises). What if it is true that the punishment promised to those who reject Christ is just the same span of time as is the "eternal life" of the righteous? (I am not here implying that eternity is nothing more than endless time. See an excellent, brief discussion of the contemporary theological debate concerning the nature of time and the relationship of Hebrew and Greek thought forms in Dr. James Barr's *Biblical Words for Time*, Alec. R. Allenson, Inc., Naperville, Illinois, 1962. He is of Princeton Theological Seminary).

(6) Mark 9:43-38

43 And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. 45 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. 47 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; 48 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Even though this is figurative language, it by no means follows that it is not true. Much poetry (even the Hebrew Poetry, *The Psalms*) is garbed in figurative language, but nevertheless expresses truth—just as a true indicative declaration expresses truth.

(7) Luke 16:22-26

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hades (this is the transcription of the Greek word—it is not a translation) he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. . . . And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

This teaching of Christ is clear. It will not do to claim that this is a parable and therefore figurative, because it would be no problem to show that as a matter of fact—figurative language does convey truth, both in and out of the scripture. A semantical analysis of the nature and function of our ordinary language will prove this. The form of this teaching is figurative, but its content is clearly believed to be factual by our Lord.

(8) John 5:28-29

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

Here, Christ asserts that both the righteous and the unrighteous shall be resurrected—the one for eternal life, and the other for eternal condemnation. This information merely co-operates John's assertion in *The Revelation*.

Does this evidence from the teachings of Jesus sound as though he believed that hell (future punishment of unforgiven sin) is to remedial, restorative, and thus temporal? Yes, *there is a biblical doctrine of Hell!*

Note: Dr. Edward A. McDowell's *The Meaning and Message of The Book of Revelation*, Broadman's Press, Nashville, contains some excellent materials on chp. 14, p. 147. He analyzes the chp. into *Seven Assurances and Warnings*:

1. Redeemed of Earth are in close communion with God and the Savior, chp. 14:1-5
2. The Gospel is Universal, chp. 14:6-7
3. Evil cannot prevail, 15:8
4. The Wicked will be punished, 14:9-12
5. The Reward of the redeemed is sure, 14:13
6. Christ is the sole Lord of the harvest, 14:14-16
7. The Wrath of God will come upon all who refuse Christ's saving work, 14:17-20

SECTION 46

Text 15:1

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

Initial Questions 15:1

1. What is unique about the seven plagues in vs. 1?
2. Does this imply that God's wrath is objective or subjective?

Preparation for the Last Seven Plagues
Chapter 15:1-8

Verse 1

Chapter 15 and 16 form a unit structured around the seven plagues. This chapter begins the last of the sevenfold pictures of judgment under the symbol of seven bowls of anger. John has gone through two other cycles of judgment chapters 5-8:1 (7 inserted between 6th seal and 7th seal which is opened at 8:1); the next series is presented through the imagery of seven trumpets and this is contained in chps. 8:2 thru 11. In this particular chapter John begins the outpouring of the seven plagues.

Another vision was now vouched-safe to John. He says, "I saw. . . seven angels having seven last plagues; because in them was finished (*etelesthe* - 1st aor. passive voice - the act of completion was singular, complete and final. The finality was a function of the purpose of God) the anger (the word is *thumos* not *orge* or wrath) of God."

SECTION 47

Text 15:2-4

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. 4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

Initial Questions 15:2-4

1. Discuss the content of the song of the Lamb, vss. 3-4.
2. Who are those who are victorious over the beast - vs. 2?

Verse 2

Now the scene turns to the theme of triumph, vindication of the righteous, and the new song of victory. John "saw the ones overcoming (*ek* - of) the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name" (see chp. 13:11-18). Immediately after mentioning the seven plagues, there is a song of triumph in heaven. The chorus is composed of victorious Christians, who have encountered and ultimately defeated their persecutors. They sing the song of Moses as well as the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses was a victory song as the results of crossing the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:31; 15:1-19; also Deuteronomy 32-33). The source of the imagery of the sea of glass now becomes apparent. Moses led Israel victoriously through the Red Sea, the redeemed has crossed the Red Sea of persecution into the city of God. God's victory enables Christians to sing even in impossible situations.

Verse 3

What is the content of this song? (See chp. 14:3 - "A New Song.") God is praised for "His great and wonderful works, Lord God almighty; righteous and true are (are - not in text) your ways, the king of the nations." The word Lord (*kurie* - see *Special Study on Titles of Christ in The Revelation*) reveals their

attitude toward the sovereign of the universe by submitting to His will even when things seemed hopeless in the great persecutions. The term God (*theos*) strikes the cord of biblical monotheism. This is most amazing in view of Caesar's claim to this title. Singing God's names revealed their absolute repudiation of anyone else's claim to this name, but the Christian God. The title, - the Almighty (*ho pantokrator*) means absolutely powerful. They sang this name even when it looked as though God was not powerful without limit, because His saints were being persecuted and the dragon had "overcome" the Church. If He is actually king (*ho basileus*) of the nations (*ethnōn* - generally applies to the Gentile peoples. If one was not an Israelite, he was a citizen of the nations), then Rome and her emperor is no king of the nations, as Caesar claimed.

Verse 4

The universal reign of the Christian God is again asserted by one of the great biblical questions - "who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?" The Bible does not mean by fear of the Lord what primitive religions mean by it. God's people were not afraid of Him! They did not placate Him with sacrifices seeking to turn His favor toward them. Fear means reverence or awe (the original sense of awful was reverence, now it has a negative connotation) in the scriptures when it applies to God. The book of Proverbs 1:7 contains a commentary on this word. The inspired author says that - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The Hebrew word which is translated beginning has the root meaning of head, chief, or first thing. I personally would translate this verse as follows - "The fear of the Lord is the chief source of wisdom." This brings out that knowledge of God should be the first (or head from root of Hebrew word) in the hierarchy of man's knowledge, rather than secondary, or last.

The song continues by declaring that God is Holy (see Isaiah 6:1ff), and that "all the nations will come and will worship before you; because your ordinances (or righteous acts - judicial decision for or against - see Romans 5:16) were made manifest." God's judgments will be public, and they will be just decisions, but whether they are for or against an individual, will depend on his relationship to the Lamb of God.

SECTION 48

Text 15:5-8

5 And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

Initial Questions 15:5-8

1. The imagery of verse 5 comes from the Temple. When was the Temple destroyed, and by whom?
2. Get a Bible Dictionary and look up the terms - glory, power, and discuss in vs. 8.

Verse 5

John utilizes once more imagery from Exodus. The heavenly temple is described here as "the tent of witness," as in Exodus 40:34, the tabernacle in the desert is so described. This "tent of witness" "was opened."

Verse 6

"The seven angels came forth" (out of the tent of witness) "out of the tabernacle (*vaou* - shrine) having the seven plagues." The angels were clothed as priests. They wore garments symbolizing their purity. (Note that the imagery of the "girded breast" is found also in 1:13. It is priestly dress.)

Verse 7

"One of the living creatures gave to the seven angels seven bowls full of the anger (see vs. 1) of the living God". . . . This took place around the throne of God. God was looking on!

Verse 8

John's imagery comes from Isaiah 6:1f. (There are other places where this imagery is used too.) "The Temple was filled with smoke" from the glory and power of God," and no man could (*edunato* - was able) enter into the temple, until

should be finished (or completed) the seven plagues of the seven angels."

Discussion Questions

Chapter 15

1. Discuss the two other cycles of judgment (chps. 5 thru 8:1; 8:2 thru 11).
2. What was unique about the seven bowls of anger as a series of God's judgments?
3. Read and discuss Exodus 14:31; 15:1-19 - the song of Moses mentioned in vs. 3.
4. Discuss the names used for God in vss. 3 and 4 in view of the situation of the Christians - due to persecution.
5. What does the Bible mean by the term fear when it is applied to God - vs. 4?
6. In what sense was the Old Testament Tabernacle "a tent of witness" (Exodus 40:34) - vs. 5?
7. According to vs. 7 when could men enter again into the temple of God?

SECTION 49

Text 16:1

And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

Initial Questions 16:1

1. What was the source of the great voice - vs. 1?
2. What were the angels commanded to do - vs. 1?

Pouring Out of the Seven Bowls

Chapter 16:1-21

Verse 1

A careful restudy of the two previous series of judgment will show that they are less connected than the series of the seven bowls of anger. They follow each other in rapid succession, except for the pause of anticipation while waiting for the last bowl (vs. 17).

The model of all the bowls of anger is the Egyptian plagues described in Exodus 9:10-11. Much of the imagery in the series of seven trumpets was also taken from the plagues of Egypt.

John hears the divine command to pour out the bowls "into the earth." The bowls (*phialas* - these were shallow bowls) were like those used for pouring libations. They were not vials.

SECTION 50

Text 16:2

2 And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image.

Initial Question 16:2

1. What were the results of the first bowl of anger - vs. 2?

Verse 2

The content of the first bowl brought a terrible plight to man's physical comfort. It repeats the picture of the Egyptian plagues discussed in Exodus 9:10-11 - "And came (*egeneto* - 2nd aor. ind. - the judgment came immediately) a bad, (*kakon* - bad - has a moral connotation) evil (*ponēron* - stresses the activity of evil or evil at work - see Paul's "Mystery of Lawlessness" - II Thess. 2:7) sore (*helkos* - a boil, or scab of leprosy) on the men having the mark of the beast" - The sixth Egyptian plague (Exodus 9:8-12) had this same effect on men.

SECTION 51

Text 16:3

3 And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea.

Initial Questions 16:3

1. What resulted from the second bowl - vs. 3?

2. What happens chemically to "the blood of a dead man" - vs. 3?

Verse 3

The second and third bowls (vss. 3-4) share the imagery of the plagues described in Exodus 7:20-21. The content of the second bowl is like the content of the third trumpet (8:10-11). The first bowl was poured out onto the earth; the second bowl is poured out "into the sea; and it became like (*hōs* - as or like) the blood of a dead man, and every soul of life died in the sea."

SECTION 52

Text 16:4-7

4 And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. 7 And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Initial Questions 16:4-7

1. What necessity of man was effected by the 3rd bowl - vs. 4?
2. What did "the angel of the waters" say about God - vs. 5?
3. With what did God reward the slayers of the saints and prophets - vs. 6?
4. Who is under the altar according to 6:9? Discuss the statement in vs. 7 in light of it.

Verse 4

The third bowl was poured out into man's water supply, "into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood." Man had no water to drink. The anguish caused by a lack of water is one of the most tormenting of human suffering. There was liquid to drink, but it was nothing but sickening blood. The imagery would have been appropriate in the biblical world. Blood played a vital part in the ritual of the mystery religions, and John's readers from Asia minor would have fully understood this symbolism, which is nauseating to most of us.

Verse 5

Immediately following the first three bowls in vss. 5-7 there is heard the voice of "the angel of the waters" who gives approval of God's judgment. The angel declares that God is holy and everlasting, "because you judged (*ekrinas* - 1st aor. ind. active - God's act of judgment was singular and final) these things." God will not permit evil to persist indefinitely. This is a fundamental part of the Christian's hope in Christ. Righteousness shall prevail, not evil!

Verse 6

The angel continues the charges brought against condemned mankind. Those who receive God's judgment deserve it, because they are responsible for the death of the saints and prophets. This imagery probably includes all those who are guilty of this crime against God's people, and His servants. God gave the guilty ones - blood to drink and they deserve it! (Worthy of it means they deserve it.)

This verse receives a marvelous commentary in Christ's lament over Jerusalem (Luke 13:34). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!" The words of verse six probably apply to Jews and gentiles alike, and should not be limited to this period of Roman persecution.

Verse 7

Here we note a repetition of vs. 4 of the song of the Lamb.

SECTION 53

Text 16:8-9

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

Initial Questions 16:8-9

1. How important is the sun to human life - vs. 8?
2. Fire is used in the scriptures both as a symbol of judgment and purification. In what sense is it used here - vs. 9?
3. How hard-hearted were those who failed to repent - vs. 9?

Verse 8

This fourth bowl has no parallel in the Egyptian plagues. The symbolism probably comes from Isaiah 49:8-10. The description given here in vs. 8-9 contrasts the destiny of the wicked with the destiny of the just (see also 7:16).

Verse 9

The great heat scorched mankind. Note the instruments of torture - first water was taken from men, now fire is the instrument of their punishment. What was the result of this punishment? Instead of turning to God for healing, "they blasphemed the name of God who hath power over these plagues." Men grew more hostile rather than penitent. They still refused to give God His due glory and honor.

SECTION 54

Text 16:10-11

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.

Initial Questions 16:10-11

1. Discuss the imagery of darkness in vs. 10.
2. What does human pride do to a man before God - vs. 11?
3. What are the works mentioned in vs. 11?

Verse 10

With the fifth bowl John returns to the imagery from Exodus 10:21-22, and the results are like those in vss. 10-11. The light supply was shut off. In order to test the devastating psychological effects of darkness, construct an area where you can sit in total darkness for an hour, then something of this imagery will become real.

Verse 11

Again the results of their punishment brought further and more vehement blasphemy than before - because of their pain and sores. Note that the punishment inflicted would produce the most painful spiritual or psychological effects on the lives of men.

SECTION 55

Text 16:12-16

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.

Initial Questions 16:12-16

1. What boundary line did the river Euphrates represent - vs. 12?
2. What is the geographical source of the water of the Euphrates? Unless the source is dried up too, would it be literally possible for the mighty river to be absolutely dry?
3. Discuss God's warning in vs. 15.
4. Where is Har-Magedon - vs. 16?

Verse 12

The sixth bowl is in the form of a prediction of the invasion of the diabolical barbarians from the east. This bowl was poured out into the great Euphrates river; and its water was dried (up), in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) the way of the kings from the rising of the sun (the East) might be prepared." The invaders could cross the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire, and visit mighty Babylon (Rome) with the havoc of war. The great natural barrier, the Euphrates, is now gone! There is nothing to hold back Rome's hated eastern enemies.

Verse 13

God's judgments bring forth a counter attack from the strategy room of hell. "Three unclean spirits" are set forth by the evil trinity - the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. In the East, the image of the frog stands for everything low and defiled. In most Eastern Religions, even today, the frog is a symbol for that which is absolutely dirty.

Verse 14

These unclean spirits are the "spirits of demons, working (*poiounta* - present, active, participle, they continually worked signs) miracles (*semeia* - signs - 1 of the 3 basic N.T. words for miracle) which go forth unto the kings of the whole earth, to assemble them together unto the war of the great day of almighty God." The forces of Satan have heard heavens challenge to their control over the universe, and the lives and destinies of men.

Verse 15

Paul makes the same claim in I Thessalonians 5:2 that Christ will come in judgment unexpectedly, "like a thief in the night."

John reverts to the first person, as God begins to speak directly—"Behold, I come as a thief." Only the one that keeps on watching and keeps on keeping his garments spotless will be ready when Christ appears again!

Verse 16

The decisive battle between righteousness and unrighteousness is about to open. The symbolic place of God's judgment is the valley of Megiddo (see Joel 3:1ff, for the prediction of this great day of judgment). The great battle ground of Palestine. The text gives the Hebrew - "Har-Magedon." This means the mountains of Megiddo. Some English translations contain an anglosized form of this word - Armagedon. The Hebrew consonant for our *h* was transcribed into Greek (via Septuagint), and Greek has no consonant for our *h*, but uses the rough breathing mark (*h*) for this sound. If the rough breathing mark is not transcribed, then the word would start with our *a*. (Armagedon) This is why we might find these different forms of this word in our English translations. (There are also differences in the spelling of the words, but this is due to faulty transcriptions of sounds).

It was in the valley of Esdraelon that Ahaziah the king of Judah was slain by Jehu (II Kings 9:27). Pharoah Neco of Egypt killed young king Josiah (II Kings 23:29) on this battle field. The memory of this valley had been indelibly written on the minds of everyone who knows the history of the Jewish people. Israel had gained a victory over the Canaanites here, and its memory was recorded in the song of Deborah (Judges 5:1f). (See the discussions

in the standard critical commentaries such as Charles and Swete, but for the best single discussion read I. T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*; New York, MacMillan Co., 1919, p. 685.

SECTION 56

Text 16:17-21

17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

Initial Questions 16:17-21

1. To what does "It is done" refer to in vs. 17?
2. Note that vs. 18 mentions the earth, then the scene switches to the great city in vs. 19. The city stands for the whole earth. To what city does the name Babylon refer?
3. How extensive was the geological upheaval mentioned in vs. 20?
4. How did men respond to God's judgment - vs. 21?

Verse 17-21

The seventh bowl was reserved for the precious air which men breath. Then "a great voice came out of the temple from the throne." God is speaking directly and says. "It has occurred." John had declared in 15:1 that the time when the seven plagues will finish or complete "the anger of God." The seventh bowl describes the completion of the wrath of God in phrases which we have seen already (see 8:7) and in terms of Exodus 9:23-24.

Babylon's fall was declared in 14:18; but here we have a description of the major events of the fall. The basic difference between the judgments of the bowls and those of the trumpets is that the bowls are far more severe. The Trumpets affect only

one-third of the elements involved, the bowls of anger affect the entire earth. The three series of judgments do not seem to this author to be three chronologically distinct judgment in different periods of history but each seem to be a general description of God's judgment. Each series presents the judgments with greater intensity and severity.

Discussion Questions Chapter 16:1-21

1. Study carefully the model of the Egyptian plagues in Exodus 9:10-11 and compare the imagery in vs. 1.
2. What kind of sore does John speak of in vs. 2? Study in Bible Dictionary concerning the diseases mentioned in the Bible, and find a clinical description of disease here.
3. How was the sea affected according to vs. 3?
4. Discuss the relationship of God's Holiness and the fact of His judgment in vs. 5.
5. Do you know any who were stoned in the Early Church? Why were they stoned?
6. Study Isaiah 49:8-10 in its context and then discuss vs. 8.
7. What are the extreme temperatures in which the human body can survive - vs. 9?
8. Could plants, animals, and men survive without the light of the sun - vs. 10?
9. Why was the Euphrates River used as important symbolism in vs. 12?
10. Are the forces of evil personal or merely principles at work in the universe, according to vs. 13?
11. What is the relationship between the final overthrow of active evil and the coming again of Jesus Christ according to I Thess. 5:2 and vs. 15.
12. Get a good recent map of the O.T. period involved and locate the valley of Esdraelon; then study the following Bible records of battles: II Kings 9:27ff, II Kings 23:29; Judges 5:1ff. Then does this help you understand John's use of this imagery?
13. Now that you have completed studying this third section of God's judgment, go back and examine the general techniques of the first two series of judgments, the seven seals - chp. 6: - 8:1; and seven trumpets chp. 8:2 - 11:15. Note their differences and similarities and the development of their intensity and severity.

SECTION 57

Text 17:1-5

And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication, 5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Initial Questions 17:1-5

1. Discuss the O.T. and N.T. use of the symbol of adultery with respect to faithfulness or lack of faithfulness to God.
2. How extensive was the influence of "the great harlot" - vs. 2?
3. In the N.T. period, what did the color scarlet signify-- vs. 3?
4. Discuss the economic significance of the dress of the woman in vs. 4.
5. What does the word mystery mean - vs. 5?

The Vision of Babylon Seated on the Beast
Chapter 17:1-5

Thus far we have noted that five enemies and the followers of the fifth enemy have been presented. The dragon, the beast from the sea, the beast from the earth, the false prophet, the great harlot, Babylon, and those who wear the mark of the beast. John relays the fate of those who wear this mark in chaps. 15-16. God grants to John an inspired vision in chps. 17-19 in which the ultimate defeat of Babylon, the beast of the sea, and the false prophet are revealed. R. H. Charles erroneously charges that the book under study introduces the subject of the fate of Babylon and then fails to discuss it. First, we must not forget that the original Greek Text had no chapter nor verse divisions. In view of this fact Charles' criticism is

irrelevant. The content of chp. 17 relates the nature and history of the harlot, Babylon; chp. 18 manifests the ultimate and final defeat of the enemies of "The Light of the World;" Chp. 19 relates the holy rejoicing in heaven because of Satandom's irrecoverable fall! The victorious Christ and those that are "more than conquerors" are presented.

The harlot is seated on waters, an O.T. symbol for evil. We shall learn later that this is not John's meaning. Almost these very words are used in Jeremiah 51:13. The description of the harlot given in vs. 2 is without question taken from Isaiah's (23:15-17) description of Tyre. The harlot was arrayed in scarlet, the color of royalty. This woman has the same general characteristics of the beast which is described in Jeremiah 51:7; as the one who attempts the destruction of God's elect. We must also emphasize that the Church and the all-Anti-Christian powers occupy the same territory, the earth. God's purpose involves the safety of the remnant (The Church), and the destruction of the five enemies and their evil cohorts. Part of chapter 17 is an explanation of John's visions (vs. 8-18).

Verse 1

The judgment of Babylon (16:19) was already revealed in chapter 14:8. The actual description of the judgment is provided in chapters 17-18. Another prophet of God, Nahum (3:4) uses the imagery of the harlot when speaking of Nineveh.

One of the seven angels commands John to come and see the judgment of Babylon - "the great harlot sitting on many waters." This description was originally given by Jeremiah (51:13) when speaking of physical Babylon. But John cannot be speaking of real Babylon on the Euphrates restored once more; because Isaiah (13:19-22) prophesied that it would never exist again as a powerful empire. Babylon on the Euphrates controlled many canals which were used for irrigation (like the Nile for Egypt). Rome did not have access to such a source of wealth.

Verse 2

The harlot is described as the source of sensual gratification (not merely sexual) of the kings of the earth." The kings practiced fornication (*eporneusan* - 1st aor. indicative, the aorist tense is used to show the established fact of illicit practices) with this harlot. This imagery comes directly from the

prophetic pronouncements concerning the disloyal, disobedient people of Israel. The apostacy of the church from her Lord is here asserted (see Jeremiah 2:20, 3:1, 6:8; Isaiah 1:21; Hosea 2:5, 3:3, 4:14; Ezekiel 16:15, 16, 28, 31, 35, 41, 23:5, 19, 44). The spiritual *apostacy* of the people of God is asserted as a matter of fact in both the O.T. and N.T. It is impossible to harmonize this biblical doctrine with the claim of some denominations that a saved individual can never become an apostate from Christ (The Greek word from which we derive apostate comes from two words - one meaning of or away from, and the other meaning to stand, thus to stand off from an earlier commitment to Christ).

John further describes the moral decadence through the imagery of drunkenness. The moral degradation has extended through out the entire earth. "The ones dwelling on the earth became drunk from the wine of her fornication."----

John is led to the wilderness "in the spirit." The woman of chapter 12 had already fled to the wilderness. John saw "a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, being filled with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The harlot sits clothed like a queen. The kings of the earth are her lovers. Swete has an excellent discussion on the maternal imagery used here of Rome. This relationship with the provinces and their rulers was widely known as late as the fourth century. (See Swete, *The Apocalypse of John*, *op cit.*, p. 217 for this type of information. Swete and Beckwith are the best readily available sources.) The martyrdom of Christians was the result of an official Roman policy.

Verse 4

The wealth of the harlot is most clearly asserted in the description of her dress. She was no cheap hussy; she was a member of the first century "jet set"—(a name given to the decadent, wealthy European and American men and women of our own day). She "was having been clothed in purple and scarlet (*chrusio kai kokkinon* - only the wealthiest of the wealthy could dress in purple and scarlet garments), and having been gilded (decked or covered) with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand being filled with abominations and unclean things of her fornication," . . . Culturally, the great harlot represented the highest level of Roman society. She possessed the things that men and nations fight to the death to

obtain. Roman culture fell because the seed of her collapse was being sown, even in the first century. She fell, never to rise again in the fifth century A.D.

Verse 5

John draws his imagery from the 1st century practice. Roman harlots wore their names written on their brows. This was a publically visible sign of their illicit profession. The badge of infamy contained the name—"Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Her evil, lustful life was public knowledge, but her power, prestige and social status made it impossible for even the morally sensitive person to stand for righteousness. In fact, Christians were slain as martyrs of the Faith because of their publically expressed indignation. (See I Peter 5:13, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Jerome for the use of the symbol Babylon for the Roman Empire.)

SECTION 58

Text 17:6-18

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come. 9 Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: 10 and they are seven kings, the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. 13 These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast.

14 These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. 17 For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. 18 And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Initial Questions 17:6-18

1. John saw the drunken harlot and "wondered with a great wonder." What did the angel ask him in vs. 7?
2. Who does John say shall wonder at the woman in vs. 8?
3. What city of the N.T. World is surrounded by 7 mountains - vs. 9?
4. How can the beast of vs. 11 be an eighth king, and yet be out of the seven mentioned in vs. 10? Check a good commentary or Bible Dictionary on Nero (redivivus).
5. Does the "for one hour" in vs. 12 imply that the ten kings will reign only for a short time under the authority of the beast?
6. Are the forces of evil unified - vs. 13?
7. Who initiates the war in vs. 14?
8. Discuss the descriptive terms for Christians in vs. 14 - "called and chosen and faithful."
9. What does the symbol of the waters mean according to vs. 15?
10. Does vs. 17 show that God uses evil and those who are enthralled in evil to do His will - ultimately?
11. What does "until the words of God should be accomplished" - vs. 17 mean?
12. The woman is identified as what, in vs. 18?

Verse 6

The great harlot was drunk, not with wine, but with the blood of the saints (*hagiōn* - those that are holy, set apart. Compare with biblical doctrine of the saint with the erroneous Roman

Catholic doctrine of Sainthood. They stand in irreconcilable contradiction), and from the blood of the witnesses. (*Marturōn* - one who is martyred, because of his bearing public witness of Jesus Christ). "And seeing her I wondered with a great wonder," What did John see that caused him to be amazed at the content of his vision?

Verse 7

The angel asked John—"Why did you wonder?" Now the angel is going to explain and identify his imagery. John did not understand and the angel provides him with an inspired, revealed interpretation of the symbolism. How often in *The Revelation* does God see fit to give John an interpretation of his imagery? The imagery of the "seven heads and ten horns" are now to be interpreted (note that the imagery is taken from Daniel).

Verse 8

The interpretation now follows. "The beast which you saw was, and is not (or does not now exist); and is about to come up out of the abyss, and goes into destruction (*apōleian* - does not mean annihilation, but rather being cut off from the presence of God. (See the note after this verse). The entire earth, with the exception of the redeemed will also wonder or marvel at the beast. There are many attempted explanations of the beast who "was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss,"—but a very plausible one is the *Nero redivivus myth*, which was very prevalent late in the first century. We shall give an explanation of this theory in our discussion of vss. 9-12.

Note: *Queber* (Hebrew) always means Grave, but *Sheol* does not always mean grave (e.g., *II Sam. 22:6*—"The sorrows of Sheol"). Surely this reveals consciousness. The J.W.'s doctrine book, *Make Sure of All Things*, p. 154, defines Hell as the "grave." In the grave, the claim is made that man becomes extinct or annihilated. Space forbids any extensive examination of this claim, but we will consider two terms (*olethros*) and (*apollumi*). Lexicons provide no comfort to those who seek to find an annihilationist doctrine in the scriptures of the N.T. (for *olethros* see H. J. Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 64; Liddell and Scott, new edition, p. 1212-1214; and Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, p. 566). All of these lexicons are in agreement that the term means ruin, death, destruction, but they give no evidence that the term means annihilation. The standard text which receives most consideration is *II Thess. 1:6-9* (the import is even clear in the N.W.T.)

". . . eternal destruction from the face of the Lord." Here we clearly see that the wicked are separated from God's presence (face of

God always means His presence in the Scriptures). Paul uses a form of this same word in *I Cor. 5:5*—"unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved." (R.V. 1901) The last statement is a purpose clause. The flesh was separated not annihilated, in order that the Spirit would be saved in the judgment.

The other important word we mentioned is (*apollumi*). The noun form means destruction and the verb form to destroy, etc. This is the word found in *Luke 15* concerning the lost sheep (vs. 3, a form of this word is translated *lost, not annihilated*) vs. 9 contains a form of this term and plainly says the coin was lost, not annihilated (after all it would be difficult to find something that had been annihilated) vs. 62 says that the son was lost and found again; it must be very apparent that an annihilated son could not be found.

The Scripture makes inseparable the redemption obtainable only in Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the escape from Hell or the ever lasting separation from the presence of God.

For an excellent study of the term Sheol see the *Bulletin of The Evangelical Theological Society*, Dec. 1961 - for the article by R. Laird Harris, *The Meaning of The Word Sheol* as shown by *Parallels in Poetic Texts*, p. 129.

Verse 9

John states that—"Here *is* (does not appear in the text) the mind (*ho nous* - the faculty of understanding and judgment) having (present participle - means that the mind constantly possesses) wisdom." Now we learn what the symbols mean. "The seven heads are seven mountains (the city of Rome was built around the geographical terrain of seven mountains) where the woman sits (*kathē tai* - present indicative implying that she constantly occupies the territory) on them,"—(The last phrase in the Greek text of verse 9 is translated with verse 10 in our English Bibles).

There are other cities in the world who occupy seven hills (e.g. Constantinople, Jerusalem, etc.), but they are all inappropriate for John's imagery.

Verse 10

"And there are seven kings; five fell (*epesan* - 1st aor. ind. expresses the fact that five kings fell - in a final, complete act. Expresses the complete over throw of these puppet kings. It is used in The Septuagint for violent overthrow of kings and nations - Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 1:15). One is (*estin* - presently is king), the other not yet come (*ēlthen* - 2nd aor. ind. - shows the fact that "the other" king has not yet appeared on the scene of Roman history); and whenever he comes he must (*dei* - expresses necessity) remain a little while (*oligon* - means a short period of time).

Verse 11

"The beast who was and is not," even he is the eighth, and is of (*ek* - out of) the seven, and goes into destruction." (See note after vs. 8 on the word here translated destruction). John's riddle needs clarification. There are seven kings. There is to be an eighth one, but he is out of the seven. How can he make plausible sense out of this riddle? The seven kings could have been the seven Roman Emperors - (1) Tiberius (ruled from 14 - 37 A.D.; (2) Caligula ruled from 37-41 A.D.; (3) Claudius, 41-54 A.D.; (4) Nero, 54-68 A.D.; (5) Vespasian, 69-79 A.D.; (6) Titus, 79-81 A.D.; (7) Domitian, 81-96 A.D. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were in power for a short period of time after Nero, but they were not seriously taken as emperors. "The five are fallen." It is possible that Nero was omitted from the list because of the myth of his coming to life again. Domitian (81-96 A.D.) is to be identified as "the one is" (vs. 10). On the basis of the *Nero redivivus* myth, Nero could meet the requirements of John's imagery in vs. 11 - "even he is the eighth, and is out of the seven". . . . The eighth one was originally one of the seven.

Verse 12

"The ten horns" are now identified as "ten kings." These kings have not yet come to power. God's omnipotent knowledge enables John to have this information revealed to him. These kings and their reign are short lived. They "receive authority (same Greek word for power) as kings one hour (*hōran* is more specifically a very limited period of time than is *oligon* - a short period or a little while in vs. 10) with the beast." God has control of the universe, even when it appears to man that evil powers dominate the cosmos.

Verse 13

Do the powers of darkness have a unified loyalty to evil and error? (See Acts 20:3; I Cor. 1:10 - for same expression applied to Christians.) John gives us a categorical answer. "These have one mind, and they give (*didoasin* - present tense - active, indicative - they continually give) their power (*dunamin* - power which they exercise as rulers) and authority (*exousian* - the authority which their kingly office carries to the beast." Here we see that earthly governments can and are used for the forces of evil. Individuals in a given society can be moral and

yet, the society, as a whole, can be rotten to the core. From a Christian viewpoint how is the individual related to his environment? In what sense do individuals exist in our mass society? If men are brought to Christ as individuals who are responsible to our Lord, how can we reach that individual as he participates in our anti-individual social structure? No Man is an Island! In one real sense of the term, there are no such things as individuals in our technological oriented, depersonalized cultures—Read chapter 13:2. Here we are told that the dragon gave both his authority and power to the beast, so that they all have just one purpose; and all of their authority, etc., is dedicated to the ways of evil. (Read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* - now available in paperback; for background details of Rome's rise and fall.)

Verse 14

The forces of evil gather to make war with the Lamb. Satan tempted Christ because he did not know the ultimate nature nor the power to overcome evil which our Lord possessed. Again, Satan puts the Lamb to the test, and calls Him to do battle. John's imagery does not remind us of any species of Pacifism which is so dominate today under the auspices of the love of God. "The Lamb will overcome them; because He is Lord of lords and King of kings (see Deuteronomy 10:17; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 1:5)—and the ones with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Here John is giving us three characteristics of a child of God. The first two reveal God's approach to man; the third manifests man's response to God's call through the Word, and being chosen in Christ. (See II Peter 1:10; Romans 8:28ff; Revelation 2:10,13.) The passage found in II Peter 1:10 is crystal clear that the Christian man has something to do in order to make his "calling and election sure." The entire passage from the pen of Peter implies that if we do not do the things listed there - then our "calling and election" is *not* sure! We must not fail to see the significance of the third characteristic of the victorious Christian - faithful!

Verse 15

The Angel interprets the imagery of the waters in this verse. The waters "are peoples and crowds, and nations, and tongues." (See Isaiah 8:7; Psalm 18:4, 16 - for the symbol of water.)

The greatest danger any conquering nation has is the people whom they have enslaved. The Roman empire was the melting pot of the heterogeneous population of the world.

Verse 16

The ones who revelled in the immoral mire of the infamous Roman life are going to revolt. Even Rome's closest associates were about to throw off allegiance to the empire. The worst possible enemies anyone can have are those who are formerly intimate friends. This is to be Rome's fate. "The ten horns (vs. 12 - are kings which have no kingdom - yet) and the beast, these will hate the harlot, and will make her naked and having been desolated (*ērēmomenēn* - perfect - passive - participle - meaning that she is completely desolated, and that her condition was brought upon her by outside force. This is the significance of the passive voice), and will eat her flesh (the text has a plural *fleshes*), and will consume (*katakausousin* - this form gives the picture of completely burning to the ground. This is the force of *kata* - the initial part of the word) - with fire." The empire will be pillaged and sacked, and burned until the glory of her wealth and power is no longer to be seen. It is gone forever!

Verse 17

Even in the midst of this severe persecution God had not abdicated His throne. God permitted men to be enthralled with evil. Paul makes this same claim in Romans chapter 1:24-32, when he declares that "God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts". . . . Paul uses the phrase - "God gave them up" three times in nine verses. The second chapter of Romans begins "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O Man,". . . . Even though God gave them up unto their evil passions, they were responsible to Him, and would give an account of every word, deed, and thought on the great day of judgment. God permitted evil to persist, "until the words of God should be accomplished." The Hebrew concept of word means both spoken and the produced effect. God's word shall not return unto Him before it accomplishes His divine purpose. What is the relationship of human effort to the divine plan of the ages?

Verse 18

Now the last image is identified by the angel. The woman, the great harlot "is the great city having a reign (or a kingdom)

over the kings of the earth." No other city could meet the requirements of this imagery - other than Rome, the capital of the immoral Roman empire! Rome controlled all the small, satellite kingdoms in the civilized world. God's wrath will always be poured out - even upon so-called Christian nations. Is not this the plight of our contemporary, western, Christian civilization? We need revival immediately, if we are to survive.

Discussion Questions Chapter 17:1-18

1. In what passage in *The Revelation* has the judgment of Babylon already been announced - vs. 1?
2. Name one O.T. prophet who uses the imagery of a harlot - vs. 1.
3. Study Jeremiah 51:13 and discuss John's description of Babylon - vs. 1.
4. Study the Book of Hosea for background in considering the imagery of fornication as signifying spiritual apostasy - see Hosea 2:5; 3:3, 4:14, etc. - vs. 2.
5. According to the teaching of vs. 2 can a saved person ever be lost?
6. Does the wilderness play a great place in biblical literature? What significance might it have - vs. 3?
7. Is there any *necessary* connection between sin, culture and wealth - vs. 4?
8. What is the source of John's imagery in vs. 5?
9. Is the biblical doctrine and the Roman Catholic teaching about sainthood compatible - vs. 6?
10. Did John understand the vision of the great harlot - vs. 6-7?
11. What is the myth of *Nero redivivus* - vs. 8?
12. Does the word destruction mean annihilation according to the note after vs. 8?
13. What is a plausible explanation of John's riddle in vs. 11?
14. How could John know about the ten kings who had not yet come to power in vs. 12?
15. What does John say in vs. 12 which implies that the reign of evil is to last only a very short time?
16. The Body of Christ is not united. What power does Satan have which enables the forces of darkness to be of one mind, which the forces of light do not possess - vs. 13?
17. Discuss the statement found in the comment on vs. 13 - that no man is an island.

18. What are the three characteristics of God's children according to vs. 14?
19. What are the former friends of Rome going to do to her according to vs. 16?
20. According to vs. 17—how long is God going to wait until He avenges the faithful Christians?

SECTION 59

Text 18:1-20

After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5 for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double unto her the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. 8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, 10 standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for the one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; 12 merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most

precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men. 14 And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and men shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; 16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! 17 for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, 18 and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her.

Initial Questions 18:1-20

1. The angel of vs. 1 left the throne room of God. What does this vs. say about this angel?
2. Is it possible that cities and nations are used, as a whole, for good or bad - vs. 2? Discuss the problem of the good individual and the totally corrupt society of which he is a part. If evil dominates, what happens to the good which individuals do? This thesis is of vital concern to contemporary as well as first century Christians. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, is a brilliant analysis of this problem.
3. In vs. 3 we see the problem of the big nation and the little nations. Does this imagery apply in our own day?
4. What was the economic effects of alliances with the great harlot - vs. 3?
5. How is it possible to have "fellowship with sin" - vs. 4?
6. How does God humiliate the proud city - vs. 7?
7. God's judgment is so sure and severe that it will take how long for her plagues to come - vs. 8?

8. In the great power struggles between nations are all morally responsible for their actions, regardless of their attempts to justify any given action as politically expedient - vs. 9?
9. In vs. 10 we note sacred sarcasm against any and all who trust in their own strength (misplaced trust) - vs. 10. Discuss.
10. Discuss the relationship between morals, merchants, and money - vs. 11.
11. What would happen in our world, if the things were no longer of value - vs. 12? Would nations give their wealth to escape a nuclear holocaust? Would the money mongers exchange their wealth for their safety?
12. How can we make merchandise of the "souls of men" - vs. 13?
13. How did the merchants respond to the destruction of the great city - vs. 15?
14. How long did it take God to make desolate the great city - vs. 16?
15. How were the great merchant ships affected by the destruction of the great city - vs. 19?
16. Has God vindicated His people by His judgments - vs. 20?

The Doom of Babylon
Chapter 18:1-24

John gives us the announcement of the collapse of Babylon in this chapter.

Verse 1

John saw "another angel coming down out of heaven." The heavenly messenger proclaims the ruin of Babylon (vs. 1-8). John uses a series of quotations in this section of *The Revelation* from Jeremiah 25:15, 27, 50:8; 50:39; 51:8; Isaiah 21:9, 47:7-8; 48:20; Psalm 137:8. The fall of Babylon has effected the economy of the world. The merchants, the kings of the earth, and the seafaring people are mourning over their economic catastrophe. The imagery of the laments come directly from Ezekiel, chapters 26-27.

The angel came directly from the throne room of God because "the earth was lightened with his glory." The entire populated earth was to hear the announcement of doom.

Verse 2

The angel cried - "Fallen fallen (*epesen*) is Babylon the great, and became a dwelling place of demons, and a prison of

every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and having been hated bird,". . . . The mighty city has become so corrupt that evil spirits make it their home. The luxury of Rome provided the seed of immorality!

Verse 3

The kings and nations of the earth shared the guilt of decadent Rome. ---"And the merchants of the earth became rich (the English word, waxed, of the 1901 translation comes from the German word *wachsen* - to grow or increase) from power of her luxury" (*strēnous* is a late Greek word for arrogance which stems from luxury).

Verse 4

The angel hurls down the challenge for the Christians to - "Come forth, my people, out of her, that (*hina* - purpose clause) you do not share (the Greek word is to have fellowship with) in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues." God's judgment is coming. May the people of God be in but not of the world when His trumpet sounds to assemble mankind in the valley of judgment. Jeremiah 51:6, 45; Isaiah 48:20, and II Cor. 6:14-18 issues the same command to come out! This is one of the greatest paradoxes of the Christian life - how to witness to a lost world, and yet not become tainted with her sins. One thing is certain, the Church cannot be a ghetto institution and carry out the great final commission of our Lord.

Verse 5

Their iniquities have reached heaven. God's universe is still a moral universe, and "whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap."

Verse 6

The double recompense was a vital part of the Levitical law (see Exodus 22:4,7). The Spirit of vengeance has already been manifested in *The Revelation* 6:10—"How long O Master, the holy and true, doest thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? "The divine justice demands that the evil city (the entire Empire) be rewarded for her iniquity. The voice that John heard said, "Give back (*apodate* - 2nd aor. imp. mood signifies a command to return double as she gave to you) to her as indeed she gave back, and double (imp. mood - command again) double unto her double according to her works; in

the cup in which she mixed - mix (again imper. mood) to her double." There will be a pay day some day! Evil shall not always prosper nor prevail. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." The verse implies that the persecuted Christians are to retaliate. Each major verb is in the imperative or command mood. In the historical situation, the Christians were in no condition to retaliate; therefore, in the plan of God Christians alone shall prevail, and mercy, justice, and righteousness shall run down the hills of the new Jerusalem as mighty waters. One of the central problems of a Christian World-view is the phenomenon of evil. How can God be both *just* and *justifier* of the alien sinner? How can God be both Holy and all-powerful and permit evil to persist? How can the Christian God permit His people to be persecuted and slain? Does this verse speak of the O.T. *lex talionis*? (See also *The Sermon on The Mount* - Matt. 5:38-48). Does this verse imply that the great harlot is to receive twice as much punishment as she deserves? The phrase *kata ta erga autēs* ("according to her works") clearly shows that the harlot receives just the amount that she deserves!

Verse 7

Swete's words are very appropriate—"Let her share of misery be proportionate to her arrogant self glorification." (Swete, *op cit.*, p. 230). The great harlot is humiliated by her loss of wealth and status. (Our age is not the only age which has been burdened by - *The Status Seekers*). Their wealth and social status is now replaced by "torment and sorrow. Because (*hoti* or causal or force - shows the ultimate cause of her torment and sorrow) in her heart she continually says, because (*hoti* - again the cause) I sit a queen, and I am not a widow, and shall by no means (*ou mē* - the double negative is an idiom for absolutely not) see sorrow." This is manifestly a belligerent, arrogant attitude. The self-image of the great harlot made her ready for the visitation of God's judgment. There is no fall like the fall which comes when one thinks he is on top! This is true of individuals or nations, or empires, or civilizations (see Arnold Toynbee's *History* for his analysis of the fall of the great world civilizations). All the great civilizations, including Rome, fell at the height of their power. Why? Their moral decadence destroyed the ethical foundations of her society. Societies have been built on *reason* (Plato's rationalistically oriented *Republic*); *law* (Roman civilization contributed concepts of Law which are still inseparably bound to the 20th century, western civilization);

religion (Jewish civilization and Roman Catholic Europe, up to the modern era of Newton, Galileo, Descartes, Leibniz, *et al.*) Religion had been used for over one thousand years as a foundation of society; yet, it contributed to the collapse of Medieval Europe. The 1955 *Harvard Report on Education* claimed that Western civilization would never again utilize Christianity as the foundation for our social structure. This may be true, but no one could seriously claim that Biblical Christianity has ever been used as the foundation for human civilization. Here we have the insoluble paradox between humanly engineered society and the Kingdom of God! What place does human effort really play in the working out of God's purpose in the universe? (See W. A. Beardslee, *Human Achievement and Divine Vocation in Message of Paul: Studies in Biblical Theology*, Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 635 East Odgen Ave., Naperville, Illinois.)

Verse 8

Jesus warned those of us who fail to lay up treasures in heaven where "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt." This is exactly the situation we find in this verse. The great harlot was not building for eternity, but rather, for the pleasures available only for a season. Moses understood this problem very well. A person cannot serve both God and Man. God's spirit enabled Moses to serve the living God, even at the expense of earthly possessions—"When he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ's greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26). The fall of Babylon was inevitable, because of the power and purpose of the living God. John heard the voice out of heaven say—"Therefore (*dia touto* - transitional preposition) in one day her plagues will come, death, and sorrow, and famine, and she will be burned down (utterly consumed) with fire; because (*hoti* - causal force - the cause of death, famine, and destruction by fire) the Lord God is strong (and not in text) - the one who judged her." (*krinos* - 1st aor. participle, the fact is asserted that the judgment is over.) How long can the strongest stand in the presence of the living God, when they are enthralled with evil? God's messenger stated that the mighty Roman Empire would last one day (*en mia hēmera*). The proud, arrogant harlot thought that she would be able to stand against her strongest enemy, but she forgot to con-

sider the greatest of all of her enemies - the Holy, Righteous God! She thought that no one could call her to give an account, but the all-mighty "is the one who judged her." She was unprepared for that summons!

Verse 9

This verse begins a section which extends to vs. 20. Those who repeatedly committed fornication with the great harlot lament - kings, merchants, and navigators. This is followed by the scene of rejoicing in heaven. "The kings of the earth will weep and wail over her"—when all the petty kings of the earth see that the giant harlot is fallen, they will express their loss with intensive crying, and wailing or agonized mourning. The source of their income and immoral pleasure lies in debris heaps. This will be their immediate response—"whenever they see the smoke of her burning,"—if this is the response of the men of international influence, how will the lesser persons respond? The rulers of the earth have yielded to her temptations; and have enjoyed the prestige of her wealth. What do these men deserve - when they stand in judgment?

Verse 10

The destruction is so extensive that the ruins of her can be seen by those—"standing from afar because of the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, Woe, the great city Babylon, the strong city! Because in one hour came (*ēlthen* - 2nd aor. ind. - it came in a single, final act) your judgment. Note the paradox between the descriptive phrases - "the strong city," and the great (*megalē* - great both with respect to power and size or extent of control of the nations of the earth) and the fact that it only took God one hour to judge her. This imagery shows the greatness of God. What men think is great and powerful will be absolutely powerless, when God comes in judgment. It took centuries to build the mighty Roman Empire and God leveled her cities, wealth, prestige "in one hour." Can America learn anything from this pronouncement by the voice out of heaven?

Verse 11

Beginning in this verse through verse 14, Rome is pictured as the great commercial city controlling the economy of the world. (Check 13:17—"And that no man should be able to buy or to sell save he that hath the mark,"---) This implies an absolute control of commerce or international trade. Does the Gospel of

Christ have anything to say to the economic systems of our day? Does redemption in Christ contribute anything to the political and economic situation of our own day? The preceding two verses mentioned the response of the rulers of the world to the fall of Babylon. Now in this verse the heavenly messenger describes "the merchants of the earth." John uses imagery taken from Ezekiel chapters 26-27, where he describes the fall of Tyre. The merchants "weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargo anymore." The merchants were not particularly grieved because of the fall of Babylon, the great harlot, but because their income was cut off.

Verses 12-13

What were the cargos of the merchants? They were the status symbols of the first century. Our contemporary status symbols, at least for middle class society, are new homes and automobiles. The cargoes which came from all over the world were things which only a very wealthy culture could afford. Note 17:4, and notice again the apparel of the great harlot. The things by which she sought power and security were all perishable. Paul warns us not to be "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:1f). The glamorous fashions of this world will not avail us anything on the day of judgment. All men will be leveled before the throne of God; wealth, social status, education, prestige will not aid their possessors in that hour of God's righteous indignation. I heard Billy Graham telling of his personal audience with the queen of the Netherlands. After a short while, Billy began talking to this head of a royal house about Jesus Christ. Suddenly, she got stiff and reared back and said—Mr. Graham, do you mean that I must repent too? He replied, yes, your majesty, you must repent too! This will be the plight of us all—none shall escape, for there is no hiding place from the wrath of the Lamb. Read the items listed in the cargo, but pay special attention to the last two items in the list—"and bodies (*sōmaton* - slaves - but men were so cheap, that they were listed as nothing but bodies - merchants of men were called Body-merchants), and the souls of men." How cheap are bodies and souls of men in view of Calvary? The moral degradation of the great city becomes most apparent when we see that that which is in the image of God can be purchased in the market place. (See also Col. 2:8f; II Peter 2:3 on the theme of "Using People"). When human life becomes a commodity everything else is lost! For further study on these two verses find out where these

cargo items came from and note how universal was Rome's control and significance. Rome was the biggest thing that man had built on the earth - but it is now fallen! How small this giant had become "in one hour."

Verse 14

What is the relationship of man's spiritual needs and things? The 20th century finds mankind locked in a bitter struggle between a materialistically oriented, atheistic communism and the so-called Christian West. The hideous truth is that we are just as materialistically oriented as the communist world ever dared to be. "And the fruit which your soul lusts (*epithumias* - basic immoral desire means to want more than anything else in the world. It is used in a good, positive sense by Paul in I Tim. 3:1, when speaking of Elders desiring their office more than anything else in the world) after-departed (or went away) from you, and all the sumptuous things and the bright things (glittering things) perished from you, and shall find no more at all (*kai ouketi ou me* - means will absolutely never be found again).

Verse 15

The merchants wail, because their priceless cargos - suddenly become worthless! The things that thrilled them had been destroyed "in one hour." Their lust for luxury has now turned into "weeping and sorrowing."

Verses 16-19

These verses recount the words and haunting memories which dashed through their minds as they watched from afar. They just cannot bring themselves to accept the fate of the filth of Rome "because in one hour (*hōra* - hour is the shortest period of time used in the Bible) such great wealth was made desolate (*ērēmothē* - 1st aor. passive voice indicative - in a single act - God made the wealth and its supposed security - desolate!) The angel next presents four groups of people—(1) Shipmasters, (2) The ship's passengers, (3) Sailors, and (4) Traders—as a group who "stood from afar." Through their stunned gaze they were muttering—"what (city - not in text) is like unto this great city!" The vastness of her influence is seen in the assertion that "By which all the ones having ships in the sea were rich from her worth (costliness);" The great harlot was the only city in the world who could afford to consume the luxurious cargos mentioned in verses 12, 13, 16.

Verse 20

God has sealed the downfall of Babylon and heaven is commanded to rejoice "Because God has judged your judgment on her." The eternal city is eternal no more!

SECTION 60

Text 18:21-24

21 And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bride-groom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

Initial Questions 18:21-24

1. What did the great millstone cast into the sea symbolize - vs. 21?
2. Is the joy and happiness gone from the city according to vs. 22?
3. Why will there be no more craftsmen - vs. 22?
4. Why will there be no more grinding of the grain - vs. 22?
5. What social, family and individual issues might be raised by the fact that there shall be no light from the lamps - vs. 23? What about the source of oil necessary for the lamps?
6. Is it possible that there were no more young left after the destruction in view of second clause of vs. 23?
7. Can a nation or a society be responsible for crimes which were engineered and executed by their leaders - vs. 24?

Verse 21

John next saw that "one strong angel lifted a stone like a great millstone, and threw (*it* - not in text) into the sea, saying, thus with a violent impulse Babylon the great city shall be

thrown down, and by no means shall be found any longer." The imagery speaks of the final destruction of the eternal city.

Verse 22

The places of entertainment are destroyed. This entertainment might have occurred in the great religious Temples which were the sanctuaries of the immoral mystery religions. The musical instruments which were used in the services of the pagan religions are no longer heard in the great city. There are no crafts-men whatsoever. If there is no market for a given product, then men will not learn the craft. International economy has collapsed, therefore it would be utter folly to continue to make products which will not be purchased. There is no grain produced and no one to buy (or who could buy it); therefore, "the sound of a mill shall be no means be heard in you any longer."

Verse 23

The great city is in ruin! Her places of entertainment, Temples, homes, and public buildings have gone up in smoke. Men no longer go out in the night to hide in the flickering shadows of half-lighted buildings in order to committ their immoral acts. No one can be found who is still arrogant because of the luxury of the great harlot. Darkness has captured the city which spawned malignant darkness. The "light of a lamp by no means shall shine in you any longer."-----The young men and women have left, or were killed in the great judgment, because "the voice of the bridegroom and bride shall by no means be heard in you any longer; because your merchants were (*ēsan* - imperfect tense—their merchants used to be the great ones of the earth, but this is no longer true) the great ones of the earth, because by your sorcery all the nations were deceived." Most men are easily deceived, particularly when they labor under the delusion that wealth, luxury, and physical force are adequate to provide for security. Some men have no committment about anything; they just want to be on the winning side. Contemporary man has observed the rise and fall of some very powerful men. Whenever power is not tempered by Christian morality, it will inevitably destroy its possessor.

Verse 24

In the great city, which was bred and nurtured by evil, the great heavenly voice charges her with another barbarian activity

—butchery. (See Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 242 - now in paperback - excellent, standard work!) It was a common thing for the socially elite of Rome to butcher Christians in order to celebrate a Roman holiday.

Discussion Questions Chapter 18:1-24

1. What was the angel's message in vs. 4?
2. Discuss the Holiness and Righteousness of God in view of the persistent problems of evil - vs. 6.
3. Does vs. 6 imply that God demands more punishment than is deserved?
4. What was the attitude of the great harlot in vs. 7?
5. Discuss the relationship of God's purpose and human achievement - vs. 7.
6. How long does it take God to bring destruction upon the great harlot - vs. 8?
7. What groups of people are mentioned in vs. 9?
8. What were the cargoes of the ships? Discuss the items as "status symbols" - vss. 12-13.
9. What does vs. 13 tell us about the value of a man in first century Roman culture?
10. What does the goals of a person tell us about that person - vs. 14?
11. What has happened to turn the priceless cargoes into worthless trash - vs. 15?
12. What are some of the implications of the relationship of luxury and spirituality - vs. 19?
13. What has happened to the lights, the craftsmen, brides and grooms, the mills, the places of entertainment in the great city - vss. 22ff?
14. What barbarian activity is implied in vs. 24?

SECTION 61

Text 19:1-8

After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: 2 for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that

corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And a second time they say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying Amen; Hallelujah. 5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Initial Questions 19:1-8

1. What does Hallelujah mean in vs. 1?
2. Discuss how the truth, justice, and righteousness are related in God's judgment of the great harlot - vs. 2.
3. Discuss the spiritual implications of the imagery of "the harlot" in vs. 2.
4. What does the Bible mean when it speaks of fearing God - vs. 5?
5. What is the significance of the assertion in vs. 6 - that "the almighty reigneth"? (Reigneth is the translation of a form which means - keeps on reigning or continually reigns.)
6. Is God really reigning in the above sense in view of the rapid development of the forces of evil in our own day?
7. Who is the wife of the Lamb in vs. 7?
8. Discuss the difference in the dress of the great harlot (17:4) and the wife of the Lamb - vs. 8.

Triumph in Heaven; Two Hallelujah Psalms; An Angelic Message Chapter 19:1-10

A great shout of joy is heard in heaven because of the overthrow of the great Harlot. These shouts of jubilation also introduce the great scenes of final victory. The heavenly songs are modeled after their O.T. counterparts.

We have passed through the great woes and have seen the ravishing effects of evil upon both the spiritual and physical

creation. Now, we enter the great section of Hope! This hope is grounded in God's victory through Christ. Our Christian hope stands in radical contrast with the contemporary nihilistic attitudes. In the prevision of hope we see the tension between cynicism and the Christian faith, defeatism and hope.

Verse 1

What was the message of the heavenly chorus? "Hallelujah (from two Hebrew words meaning - praise Yahweh - see the note after chapter 19 on *Handel's Messiah*). Read Psalm 70; Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6. The great *Hallel* is the technical title for Psalms 104-109. They were sung primarily at the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles.) The salvation (the Emperor cult claimed that Caesar was the only savior of men), and the glory, and power of our God." The chorus was claiming that salvation, glory, and power belong to almighty God, and not to the great harlot. Why do these characteristics belong to God—only?

Verse 2

"Because true and righteous are his judgments;"----This theme is the same as we find in Romans 1:18 - 3:20. God will judge according to man's own works. The only hiding place will be the everlasting arms of the Lamb of God. Another reason for praising God is—"because he judged (once for all -) the harlot who defiled (*eptheiren* - the imperfect tense expresses the habit of defiling) the earth with her fornication, and he avenged (*exedikēsen* - 1st aor. indicative, God avenged the Christians, once for all) the blood of his slaves out of her hand." This entire section of scripture cries out against all forms of universalism which are so prevalent today. The nature of the Holy, Living God can not appease sin!

Verse 3

Again the heavenly chorus - shouts - "Praise Yahweh" (Hallelujah)! God's judgment had brought to an end the malignant disease which the great harlot had spread by her fornications.

Verse 4

The twenty-four elders, who first appeared in 4:4, then again 5:8, praise God "and worshipped saying Amen (so be it?); Hallelujah."

Verse 5

Another voice joined the great chorus in praising God. "The small and the great" are alike commanded to praise (*aineite* - present, imperative - commanded to continually praise God). There is no one excused for any reason! God is no respecter of persons; He requires the same response from everyone. Being an educated, or wealthy and cultured person in no way places one in a more advantageous position with God. In human society and before men, these factors certainly give their possessor advantage, but will not sway God one wit!

Verse 6

The next to sing the Hallelujah chorus was a "vast crowd." They sang - "because our Lord God reigned" (the tense shows *the state* of His reigning). During the most intense periods of persecution it would not be abnormal for the faithful to ask - whether or not God reigned as sovereign in all of His Creation. When the human situation is dominated by sin and evil, it is very difficult for us to understand how God was in fact the victor over sin, death, and hell at the cross. The Church has often been charged with an escapist attitude of "other worldness." It presents every Christian with a profound problem, when we attempt to relate our pilgrimage in "this world" to the ultimate victory in the city of God. (See Augustine's *The City of God*; and Etienne Gilson, *Les Metamorphoses de la Cite' de Dieu*, Paris, 1952.

Verse 7

John now uses the imagery of the marriage of the Lamb. Praise continues - "because came the marriage of the Lamb, and the wife of Him prepared herself," . . . The O.T. speaks of God as the Bridegroom of Israel in Isaiah 54:6; Hosea 2:16; Ezekial 16:7. Christ appears as the Bridegroom in Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:19f; Luke 5:34f, and John 3:29. John the Baptizer said of Christ - "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of this bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full" (John 3:29 - 1901 translation). In the N.T. Christ is the Bridegroom of His Kingdom (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25f; Rev. 3:20; 19:7, 9; 21:2, 9; 22:17). See A. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, Eerdmans reprint, chp. 9, pp. 139, *Mothers, Daughters, and Wives in Israel*