**Revelation of Jesus Christ**

**Chapter 1**

1:1-3.

***The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.***

The purpose of this book is threefold.

1. Letter to the seven churches reveal the serious deviation from the truth of God’s word was occurring among many churches in Asia. We see the Lord’s rebuke for their compromise and sin, and his call for them to repent and return to their first love.
2. It was written to encourage the churches to strengthen their faith, resolve and their loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of persecution or even if it means death.
3. It was written to provide future generations with God’s perspective on their fierce conflict with Satan forces, by revealing the future outcome of history. It also discloses the events the last seven years before the return of our Lord.

Upon the departure of Jesus from the Temple, the disciples began showing Jesus what a beautiful structure it was, believe it Jesus would have been impressed by the architecture of the building, but Jesus was not impress by it, instead he told the them one day there will not even be one stone will remain upon another. This statement really drew concern from his followers that prompted them to asked him this question, *Tell us,”They said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Matthew 24:3b.* Jesus answered their question throughout the entire twenty fourth chapter.

*Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. [5] For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. [6] You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. [7] Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. [8] All these are the beginning of birth pains. [9] “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [14] And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:4-14.*

Although Jesus gave this answer, these questions are still being asked today, but many don’t believe the answer Jesus gave. John, who wrote the Revelation also with the help of the Holy Spirit, continue to enlighten our understanding, that the promise of being blessed to the reader who spend their time reading this book.

God said the things written in this book will soon take place. In God’s economy, timing is not the same as it is in our economy. For one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day. 2 Peter 3:8. Therefore, soon may mean a thousand years form now.

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. Isaiah 55:8.*

**Soon take place**: - there are some who are saying they have heard their ancestors speaking about bible prophesy back then, and nothing has change since, therefore, they don’t believe bible prophesy any more, but the Lord said, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Matt.24:35.*

No one really knows when or what “soon” means when it come to God’s timing. Jesus gave a parable concerning what will happen in the end of days.

*The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?****43****It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.****44****Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.****45****But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk.****46****The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.* ***47****“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows.****48****But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Luke 12:42-48.*  Let us not be deceive my brethren, the words of this prophesy will come true.

There is a special blessing awaits those who commit to read this prophesy and take it to heart, because again the scripture said the time is near.

**Take it to heart: -** This has reference to those who live their lives like it is the last day they will experience life. It also means “to consider” “to think about” “contemplate” “to evaluate” “to ponder” “to take something into consideration”.

**1:4-6**

***John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30702a)***] before his throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.***

Although John was the author, but the message was not his. It was given to him by the Lord to give to man concerning the last day events. He was used as God’s mouthpiece to carry his message to his people. John even acknowledged this message was from Jesus to give to his church. He described the one who gave him the message as the one who was, and is, and is to come.

This is what makes the difference between followers of Christ and all other denominations. The other leaders who started those religious movements have all died, and their bones can be found somewhere, but the difference between them and Christ, is that although Jesus died, but he rose from the dead and is still alive and will never die again.

The writer to the Hebrews said, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8.* There are some who believe the Bible was written to keep people in bondage, but if that was not true, I rather still believe in him, because he is only one who made some promises and it does not matter how long it takes, every promise made by God will be fulfilled regardless of how long it may take. 2Cor. 1:20.

There is no comparison when it come to Jesus. There may be some who see him as one of the prophets, even as Peter said when he was asked, who do people say that I am? Matthew 16:14.

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.****16****For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.****17****He is before all things,and in him all things hold together.****18****And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.****19****For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,****20****and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:15-20.*

Paul said this about Jesus. *Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,* ***10****that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,****11****and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11.*

**1:7-8**

***“Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30705c)***] So shall it be! Amen. 8“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”***

When Jesus returns, not only those who were with him, when he first came will see him, but everyone will. The scriptures said, *Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. [14] For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. [15] According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thess.4:13-17.*

I cannot say how it will be done with the different time zone, but with the internet today, we are able to see our love ones in the wink of an eye, but that is the least of our concern, because God owns everything. (Psalm 24:1). The power of social media today also belongs to him, we should never forget that God is omnipotent, He is the Lord of all, and all power belong to him. He is the only one whom the scriptures said, *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, [10] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11*

1:9-11

***I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.10On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea***.”

John was exiled on Patmos because of his faith In the Lord Jesus. The scriptures said, *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2Timothy 3:12-13.*

Jesus said in his sermon on the mount, *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10.* John was quite aware of what was ahead of him as he continue to testify about the resurrection of Jesus.

He knew of the treat the religious leaders of his day gave. The religious leaders threaten the disciples. *Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. [19] But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! [20] As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” [21] After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. Acts 4:18-21.*

Since the pandemic, the enemy has increase the fight against the people of God. The persecution against the church seem to be intensifies. It have the appearance of the end of the world, and we would think this would caused men would to run to God, but this is not the case. Man continue to search for answers everywhere but God, and the political leaders are making promises they are unable to provide.

John was able to speak because he was a part of the “suffering” that broke out against the church, He was not speaking as one who received information from some other source. He witness was a part of the persecution and suffering

John did not care even if it cost him his life, he was willing to stand up for his King. Jesus also warned us that severe persecution will come upon his followers. Jesus said, *“ you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.****10****At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,****11****and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.****12****Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,****13****but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:8-13.*

Trials and persecution was designed test the faith of believers, sometimes, it may even feel as if God have abandoned us, but God promised to be with us even to the end of the ages. *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith---of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire---may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1Peter 1:7.*

While John was exiled, he had such an encounter with God that made such an impact on him, he felt as though life left his body. This is the same experience Isaiah had. He wrote, ***In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. [2] Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. [3] And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy , holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” [4] At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. [5] “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” [6] Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. [7] With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for. ” [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? ” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” Isaiah 6:1-8.***

Many times persecution or sufferings, pushes us to draw closer to God. Life seem to be the school of God that he uses to teach us what we need. The prophet Isaiah said, ***Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. [21] Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” Isaiah 30:20-21***

The writer to the Hebrews said, *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? [8] If you are not disciplined---and everyone undergoes discipline---then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. [9] Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! [10] They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. [11] No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:7-11.*

The description of the one who was giving the message was a sight to behold. He said he turned around to see the voice of the one speaking*. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands,****13****and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rev+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30711d)*] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.****14****The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.****15****His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.****16****In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sunshining in all its brilliance. Rev.1:12-16.*

**Revelation 1:17-20**

**When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. [18] I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. [19] “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. [20] The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lamp-stands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp-stands are the seven churches.**

He was overwhelmed with the suddenness of the vision; he recognized this as a divine visitation; but he was not aware that it was the Savior himself. It is not probable that in this vision he would immediately recognize any of the familiar features of the Lord Jesus as he had been accustomed to see him some sixty years before; and if he did, the effect would have been quite as overpowering as is here described.

A divine visit will always bring fear to the recipient, it does not matter how holy you are, and how devoted you are, one visit from the divine will always caused us to be afraid.

**Chapter 2**

***1:10-11***

***On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea***.”

Ephesus and Smyrna were coastal cities, whereas Pergamum and Thyatira were inland cities. Three of the letters are in Revelation 3. Each of these messages contains a unique description of Jesus, his command, and his promise. All but one—the church in Laodicea—receive some commendation.

All but two of the seven letters—those to the churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia—also contain a critical rebuke. Like the churches of today, should they be addressed by the lord Jesus would have both good characteristics and some that would needed correction.

2:1-7. **The church in Ephesus**

***“To the angel[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rev+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30719a)***] of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. 3You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary.4Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.7Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.***

**Angel of the Church: -** this has reference to the messenger of the church. In every church, God has a messenger whom he has selected to bring his message to his people. Some may believe this is one like that “ArcAngel”, but it is the one whom he has given the assignment to deliver his message.

As I studied the messages, I can only conclude, the time came for judgement in the churches, as we studied each message. We will notice how the Lord addresses himself, which is quite different from each of the churches.

This has to do with the message he was bringing to each church. As we proceed, we will notice each of the messages. They carry strong rebuke, along with very encouraging words, which tells us, although God is just and holy, and cannot tolerate sin, we still see his compassionate heart, through Jesus Christ.

In his letter to this church, he addresses himself as the one who holds the “**seven stars” in his right hand and walks among the seven lampstands.** The lampstands are the churches and the stars are the angels, which really are the prevailing spirit.

**Ephesus: -** In the ancient world, Ephesus was a center of travel and commerce. the city was one of the greatest seaports of the ancient world. Considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, Ephesus’ Temple of Artemis was dedicated to the goddess of the hunt. Only the foundation and one column remain of this temple which once measured 425 feet

 2:2

***I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.***

God is omniscient, which means he is not ignorant our ways, although we may try to hide from him, which is totally fruitless. For no man can hide from God. The psalmist said If I say, *“Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,”* ***12****even the darkness will not be dark to you; The night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. Psalm 139:11-12.*

These brethren had toiled to the point of exhaustion and borne the hostility of a society that were at odds with their goals and efforts. much of the church’s problem came from some who tried to place themselves within the community of believers.

These are the ones Christ describes as “evil men”. They called themselves apostles but are not. They were found to be false. This is seen even in churches today, some claimed to be prophets, and all they do is suck the life out of God’s people.

Paul told the saints in Philippi, *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.****20****I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare.****21****For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.****22****But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. Philippians 2:19-22.*

This Ephesian church tested those who claimed to be apostles, and found them not ony self-deceived, but they were deceivers also. They were liars because when they were tested, they could not measure up to their pretentions.

The Lord commended them for their perseverance and endurance in spite of the hardships they faced, they never got tired.

Whenever the apostle Paul thought about the brethren in Colossae, he wrote, *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,****4****because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people—****5****the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel****6****that has come to you. Col.1:3-6a.*

*2:4-5*

***Yet I hold this against you****:* ***You have forsaken the love you had at first****.****Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.***

This warning could not have come at a better time. This is because God is so merciful, he did not want to destroy them. The psalmist said “*As a father has compassion on his children,  so*

*the Lord has compassion on those who fear him”; Psalm 103:13.*

Perhaps this is the same message the Lord is sending to the modern-day church. He is calling the church to return to its first love. We may be guilty of spiritual prostitution. We claim we are in Love with him, but upon careful observation, it is obvious there is some one else in our lives.

The scripture said God is a jealous God. “*You shall have no other gods before[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=exo+20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-2055a)*] me.*

***4****“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.****5****You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,****6****but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.* *Exodus 20:3-6..*

*“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Matthew 6:24.*

Good works and good teachings are not adequate substitutes for the rich relationship of mutual love shared by those who experienced God redemptive love. These brethren found themselves in a state of apostacy. The passion they had for the relationship with God was gone, their hearts were occupied with other priorities.

The parable Jesus shared about the sower, gives an example of how this is possible. *Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;****19****but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Mark 4:18.*

*See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.****13****But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.****14****We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.****15****As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts  as you did in the rebellion*. *Hebrews 3:12-15*

**2:5**

***Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place*.**

**Consider: -** *to learn thoroughly; to note accurately; to be aware; to see with one view; to be conscious. [It means to sit down and learn] (vines).*

To be occupied with always being busy does not allow one the luxury of sitting down to consider, but there are times we must pull away from the noise, shutting everything down to be able to pay attention or even to evaluate our lives. In the business world, they call it, “taking an inventory”. During inventory, they closed their business, with the sign on the door that says, taking inventory.

The psalmist said *“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations,
    I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10.* It during those times, we get to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us about us. We get an opportunity to shift our focus away from others and looking in the mirror, and if we don’t like what we see, then we must decide to change.

**Repent: - “***to perceive afterwards” “Metanoeo”*

*[metanoeo [meta – “after” implying “change”; noeo – “to perceive” Nous – “the mind which is the seat of moral reflection.*

*[pronoeo] “to perceive beforehand” signifies “to change one’s mind or purpose” (Vines)*

This warning for them to repent does not give them much choice, even as it does for us today, for the scriptures commands this from all. *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands* ***all people everywhere to repent****.* *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” Acts 17:30-31*

Failure to adhere to this command have eternal consequences, just as what happen to Esau. The scriptures said,***“****See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done”. Hebrews 12:16-17.*

Love seems to be the lampstand of this church. The love they had for God was evident by they way they treated others. Perhaps they slowly began to misuse God’s people, taking advantage of them, forgetting the main them that gave them God’s favor.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17**If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? **18**Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

The scriptures said, *This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence:****20****If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.****21****Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God****22****and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.****23****And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.****24****The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1John 3:16-24.*

It is obvious that when the people of God began to exploit or abuse God’s people, the lampstand has been removed, those churches have lost their first love. They forgot what they did to get them where they are, and God is calling them to repent, and do what they did at first.

This is not only true for the local church, but it is also true for families. The church is called the family of God, therefore this practice must begin at the home, before it can be seen at the church.

**Removing the lamp stand from its place.**

The lamp-stand provides a place to hold the lamp, so that men can see the light and escapes the traps the enemy sets for them. Jesus said to his disciples*, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35.*

Love is the delible mark for the church. The scriptures said, **“***And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” 1Cor.13:13*

**2:6**

***But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.***

Although the lord was not pleased with their behavior, he still commended them for their passion against what some in the church were involved with. They hated the practices of the Nicolaitans.

**Practices of the Nicolaitans**.

These people were called “followers of Balaam” whose practices were strongly condemned. They may have been identical with those who held the doctrine of Balaam. They seem to have held that it was lawful to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality, in opposition to the doctrine of the Church. ( [Acts 15:20](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/15-20.html)  [Acts 15:29](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/15-29.html) )

The early Church fathers branded them with a name which expressed their true character. The men who did and taught such things were considered followers of Balaam. ( [2 Peter 2:15](http://www.biblestudytools.com/2-peter/2-15.html) ;  [Jude 1:11](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jude/1-11.html))

In a time of persecution, when the eating or not eating of things sacrificed to idols was more than ever a crucial test of faithfulness, they persuaded men more than ever that was a thing indifferent.

This was bad enough, but there was a yet worse evil. Mingling themselves in the orgies of idolatrous feasts, they brought the impurities of those feasts into the meetings of the Christian Church. And all this was done, it must be remembered not simply as an indulgence of appetite: but as a part of a system, supported by a "doctrine," accompanied by the boast of a prophetic illumination. (Smiths bible dict)

 In our society today, these practices seems to be accepted, not only by society, but also within the church. No longer are these practices being condemned, but accepted, and have become part of the world we live in.

These are being even taught withing our schools, and for parents who opposed this are being persecuted and called by all kinds of names.

God was pleased with the church in Ephesus, because they stood up and opposed these practices, and the church today heed the called from God, he said, “*Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28916d)*]* ***18****And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 2Corinthians 6:17-18.*

**2:7**

*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

There are rewards for being faithful to the commands of God. Once Peter said to Jesus, *“We have left everything to follow you!”* ***29****“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel****30****will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. Mark 10: 28-30.*

The scriptures said, ***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it---not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it---they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:22-25***

***2:8-11. The Angel of the church in Smyrna***

***“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. [9] I know your afflictions and your poverty---yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. [10] Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. [11] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.***

The way the Lord is being described as he spoke to this church is quite different from the way he described him in his message to the church in Ephesus. Here he is being described as the first and the last, who died and came to life again.

**Smyrna**:- was known for its schools of science and medicine. Located on the slope of Mount Pagus, was a theater that could seat up to 20,000 spectators. The city also celebrated Olympian games that were very popular.

Smyrna severed its relationship with the Pergamos ruler King Eumenes in 197 B.C, it sought aid from [the Roman Empire](https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/the-roman-empire-in-new-testament-times.html). The people of the city, because they had never established any ties to the Roman Empire, sought to create a bond by creating a Roman based cult. The 'Rome cult' of Smyrna soon spread to other locations and may have led to the worship of the pagan goddess Roma.

Paul the apostle likely began [the Christian church](https://www.biblestudy.org/maturart/how-to-start-a-church/why-start-a-church.html) in the city. One of apostle John's students, Polycarp (who lived from 69 to 155 A.D.), is thought to have played a major role in leading the church in Ephesus during the second century. Tradition states that he was killed as a martyr in Smyrna.

***I know your afflictions and your poverty---yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.***

Again we see the Lord commending these brethren for their ability to endure the serious afflictions and poverty they endured.

*Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. [33] Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. [34] You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. [35] So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. [36] You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. [37] For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.” [38] And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” [39] But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved. Hebrews 10:32-39*

The scriptures said *For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. 2Chron.16:9a.* The Lord wanted them to know he is seeing and hearing everything. Nothing escapes his eyes.

The psalmist said, ***Take notice, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise? [9] Does he who fashioned the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? [10] Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge? [11] The Lord knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile. Psalm 94:8-11.***

They were some who profess they were Jews, but they were not. These people seems to be those who were of Jewish extraction, and professed to be Jews, they were not true Jews; they indulged in a bitterness of reproach, and a severity of language, which showed that they had not the spirit of the Jewish religion; their behavior had the appearance of people who were under the guidance of the influence of their own interpretation of the scriptures.

The Lord described them as members of the “synagogue of Satan”. These people say they are Jews (the people of God), and they persecute those who believe in Jesus the Messiah (the true people of God). In reality, by rejecting the Jewish Messiah, they have renounced their status as “true” Jews, and that is why Jesus calls them “liars.” This distinction between ethnic Jews and faithful Jews is also seen in [Romans 9:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.6) (“Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel”) and [Romans 2:28–29](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.28%E2%80%9329) (“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter”). By their persecution of the true people of God, these unbelieving Jews had become a synagogue of Satan—a gathering of people who were actually following the devil’s priorities.

The synagogue of Satan is mentioned twice as the Lord sent his message to the various churches. It is being mentioned in his message to this church also to the church in Philadelphia. In both cases, the synagogue of Satan is seen opposing the mission and message of the church of Jesus Christ.

**2:10**

***Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.***

The people of God will most likely undergo sufferings of various sorts, just as the early church brethren experienced during their times they experienced scourgings, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and even death itself in various forms; these brethren knew some of them shall suffer; they all had known beforehand what it means to live for Christ. The Lord sometimes gives his people previous notice, and sometimes he may not. He wants his followers to be always prepared for anything.

Jesus, in his answer to the disciples, also warned them of serious persecution that was coming on the earth. He said,*“ you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [14] And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:9-14.*

The apostle Peter also reminds us, ***Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. [13] But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? [18] And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. 1 Peter 4:12-19.***

The signs are all around us, it has began to take shape. The god of this world is already positioning his generals in strategic places, for him to take full possession of this world. It is evident what he is doing. He has taken control of the government, the medical industry; the education system; the world economy; you name it.

He is making it very difficult for Christian’s to live in this world. I believe it is the reason why believers are being warned by various ones. The scriptures said “***And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. [12] The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light”. Romans 13:11-12.***

The Lord encouraged the saints to remain faithful even to the point of death. This is easier said than done, and especially when those who we care for are it’s out food and shelter.

The woman who the Lord sent Elijah to, was supposed to provide for him until the famine was over. When Elijah got to her house, she informed him, she had just a little food for her and her son to eat, then lay down and die.

The man of God told her, it is fine, but just bake him a little meal first. Because of her obedience to the man of God. God fed her, her son ad the man of God until the famine ended. God wants us to know, it is never over until he said it is over.

Jesus said, ***How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! [20] Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. [21] For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now---and never to be equaled again. Matthew 24:19-21.***

Sufferings and persecutions should never surprise those who decide to live for Christ. It is because the systems of this world always oppose what the kingdom of God stand for. The church and the world would always be at war with each other. The church and the world would never walk in agreement. The scriptures said, *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? [15] What harmony is there between Christ and Belial ? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? [16] What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.*

The writer to the Hebrews spoke about many who have been listed in the hall of Faith, ***All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. [14] People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. [15] If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. [16] Instead, they were longing for a better country---a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. Hebrews 11:13-16 NIV***

*Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days****. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. [11] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.***

We have the same caution given that the church of Ephesus received. ***Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.***

The scriptures said, ***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it---not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it---they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:22-25***

**2:12-17. The church in Pergamum**

“***To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. [13] I know where you live---where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city---where Satan lives. [14] Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. [15] Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. [16] Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. [17] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.***

The Lord is described as the one who has the “***sharp, double-edged sword”.*** My wife and I had to stand before a certain judge some time ago, and to this very day, when every the name of that judge is mentioned, I remember the bad experience I had in dealing with her,

The name of a person carries so much weight, and depend on the situation one maybe dealing with, they may not want that person to help them.

Perhaps the Lord address himself to the church as such because of what he wanted to say to them. The word he had was not one to be taken lightly or carelessly. It was a very serious message. One that would surely cut to their heart and at the same time was able to bring healing.

The writer to the Hebrews said “***For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. [13] Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account”. Hebrews 4:12-13.***

The apostle Paul also describe the word of God as the “sword of the Spirit” Eph.6:17. In the gospel of John, Jesus is also called the “word of God”.  *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was with God in the beginning. John 1:1-2.*

Therefore, it is not unusual for the Lord to describe himself as the word of God.

***2:13.***

***I know where you live---where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city---where Satan lives.***

**Pergamum:-**

Today, the city of Pergamum, is now modern-day Turkey, are in ruins. But when the Apostle John wrote his letter to the church there, it was one of the most influential cities in the Roman Empire.

Pergamum had a unique status that was different than any other city because it was the political center, “It was from there that all the rulings were made that affected the whole of Asia Minor.” The people of Pergamum were inventors and innovators. They perfected a parchment made out of calfskin and built the world's first psychiatric hospital.

They were known as the "Temple-keepers of Asia." The city had three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman emperor, another for the goddess Athena, and the Great Altar of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. Many scholars believe this altar is the “Throne of Satan” mentioned in the book of Revelation.

They also worshipped a myriad of Greek and Roman gods, but when Christianity arrived with the belief in just one god, the city's pagan priests went on the attack and their most famous victim was a man named Antipas. Jesus called Antipas "my faithful martyr." He was the bishop of Pergamum, ordained by the Apostle John, and his faith got the attention of the priests of Asklepios.

“He had cast out so many devils that the demons had been complaining to pagans, saying, ‘You’ve got to do something about this Antipas’,” The pagan priests went to the Roman governor and complained that the prayers of Antipas were driving their spirits out of the city and hindering the worship of their gods.  As punishment, the governor ordered Antipas to offer a sacrifice of wine and incense to a statue of the Roman emperor and declare that the emperor was "lord and god." Antipas refused. “If you reject the divinity of the emperor, then that is the equivalent of rejecting the city of Rome,” “and believers were killed for this.” Antipas was sentenced to death on the Altar of Zeus. Most of that altar still survives today, and surrounding it are some of the world's most famous marble friezes. They depict the *Gigantomachy,* or the battle between the Greek gods and the giants. At the top of the altar was a hollow bronze bull, designed for human sacrifice.

“They would take the victim, place him inside the bull, and they would tie him in such a way that his head would go into the head of the bull. Then they would light a huge fire under the bull, and as the fire heated the bronze, the person inside of the bull would slowly begin to roast to death. As the victim would begin to moan and to cry out in pain, his cries would echo through the pipes in the head of the bull so it seemed to make the bull come alive.”

Even in the midst of the flames, the elderly bishop Antipas died praying for his church. The year was AD 92.  A few years later, the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation, mentioning the death of Antipas in Pergamum. Today, all that's left there is the foundation; the Altar of Zeus is more than a thousand miles away.

In the 19th century, German engineers dismantled the altar and took it to Berlin. The so-called "Throne of Satan" went on display in the city's Pergamon Museum in 1930, just in time to inspire one of the most brutal dictators the world has ever seen. *By Rick Renner, the author of*[*A Light in the Darkness*](http://shop.cbn.com/cbn/item.A-Light-in-Darkness-Volume-1-Seven-Messages-to-the-Seven-Chu.9780977945986.htm)*, a study of the seven churches of Asia Minor.*

***2:14.***

 ***Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. [15] Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.***

The Lord commended them for their steadfast faith, even in the midst of suffering. ***Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city---where Satan lives.*** Yet they were guilty of having among them those who held on to the teachings of Balaam.

**Teachings of Balaam;-**

They taught the midianite women how to beguile the Israelites into acting treacherously against the Lord. *While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, [2] who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. [3] So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. And the Lord's anger burned against them. Numbers 25:1-3.*

Also in *“They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and enticed the Israelites to be unfaithful to the Lord in the Peor incident, so that a plague struck the Lord's people. Numbers 31:16.*

Balaam became a prototype of all corrupt teachings that betray believers into compromising with worldly ideologies. The place Pergamon, where the scriptures said, it is where Satan sat enthroned, there were some in the church who decided that accommodation was the wisest decision.

 ***They ate food sacrificed to ]idols and committed sexual immorality.***

This may have the appearance of something light, but the Lord rebuke this church for these sins. The food perhaps was food that was offered to idols, and then brought to the market for sale, all because they wanted to make a profit. Greed was what drove those who presented this food before the Jews. They lack self control which ended in God’s dis-approval.

He also rebuked them for sexual immorality, which in our society have the appearance that there is nothing wrong with sexual immorality. The scripture said, *And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16:15.*

Sex sins are so prevalent in our society, that it has become a way of life for many, that even some in the church are afraid to speak against it. This problem of freedom of having sex is the direct result of many children in this world without fathers, also an increase of all kinds of sexual diseases, and the more believers fight against this behavior, it is the more society is promoting it.

The Apostle Paul address this in his letter to the church in Rome. “*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. [24] Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. [25] They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator---who is forever praised. Amen. [26] Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. [27] In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. [28] Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. [29] They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, [30] slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; [31] they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. [32] Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them”. Romans 1:21-32 NIV*

Peradventure the Lord is upset with the church of today. We appluad those indulge in such behavior, and condemn those who speak out against it. As children of God we must call sin by its name, because we will all stand before the God who call us to give an account for how we live.

Not only did he rebuked them for their involvement in eating food offered to Idols; for their sexual immorality, but also for having among them those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

**Teaching of the Nicolaitans: -**

The name “Nicolaitans” is derived from the Greek word *nikolaos*, a compound of the words *nikos* and *laos*. The word *nikos* is the Greek word that means *to conquer* or *to subdue*. The word*laos* is the Greek word for *the people*. It is also where we get the word *laity*. When these two words are compounded into one, they form the name *Nicolas*, which literally means *one who conquers and subdues the people*. It seems to suggest that the Nicolaitans were somehow conquering and subduing the people.

The Nicolaitans taught that it was a necessary compromise. They also would compromise with God's inconvenient laws. They were considered as those who practice anti law. They taught a brand of grace that became a license to sin when you really wanted to get around a law.

***2:16.***

***Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.***

The lord wanted to give them an opportunity to return to right standing with him. His compassion and love for mankind compels him to take action. The same judge of all the earth is saying the same thing to the church today. Someone said history repeats itself, and theses things were written so that we should judge ourselves so that we will not be judge.

The sword in his mouth is the word of God, and this is what we will all be judge by. *“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. [14] For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil”. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*

**2:18-29. The church in Thyatira**

***“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. [19] I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. [20] Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. [21] I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. [22] So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. [23] I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. [24] Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, [25] except to hold on to what you have until I come.' [26] To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--- [27] that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery' ---just as I have received authority from my Father. [28] I will also give that one the morning star. [29] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.***

Observe once again, the Lord addresses himself quite differently in this church. His name to this church is called, “the son of God”, what he was about to say to this church, they needed to pay heed to this word.

The writer to the Hebrews also gave this warning. *We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. [2] For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, [3] how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. [4] God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Hebrews 2:1-4.*

There are some who make light of the word of God, they fail to realized God means everything he says, and says everything he means. He said this about his word, *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. [13] Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account”. Hebrews 4:12-13*

He wanted this church to pay attention to what he had to address with them. His eyes was like blazing fire and his feet ***like burnished bronze.*** Fire in the eyes of the speaker symbolizes anger, and his feet was ready for judgement.

The apostle Peter said *“The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? [18] And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good”. 1 Peter 4:7,17-19.*

***2:19***

***I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.***

* **Deeds**: - works
* **Love:** - mutual affection
* **Faith**: - firm persuasion
* **Service:** - serving one another
* **Perseverance**: - steady persistence in a course of action.

While the love for the Lord by the church in Ephesus was lost, the lord commended this church for their love for him.

***2:20***

***Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.***

The longest letter to the seven churches is addressed to the least important of them in size and political importance. But, regardless, the letter is one of the most instructive and interesting of all seven.

The church at Ephesus couldn’t stand false teachings and false prophets, but they had no love. Thyatira was a church filled with love but tolerated the false and pervasive teachings of the prophetess Jezebel. We can conclude from this that righteousness of character is another mark of a Christian and a true church.

How was it that she could have church members so confused and muddled that they believed that it was alright to include immorality as part of their Christian experience? Though no one knows for sure, but it probably centered around the fact that she was playing upon idea that Christians were free in Christ. She understood that to mean you could do anything you wanted and would still be saved.

Jezebel may have physical died thousand of years ago, but her spirit still live on today, and it is causing all kinds of problems in the church.

The apostle Peter warned us about such people.  *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them---bringing swift destruction on themselves. [2] Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. [3] In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. 2Peter 2:1-3.*

These religious spirits are filling our churches today, they have the same appearance as being genuine, and without the spirit of discernment, we can be easily deceived also.

The way to recognized these spirits, is to listen what comes out of their mouths. The apostle Paul hand an encounter with such spirits in his day.

*Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. [17] She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” [18] She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her. Acts 16:16-18*

She sounded as though she was really promoting the kingdom of God, but it was the sprit that was in her was trying to draw people away from the truth, to begin to to follow her. She was an agent of Satan, until she got delivered by the apostle Paul.

These spirits will not just leave because of the nice songs we sing, or the money we give to support the work of the kingdom of God. The only way to bring deliverance to those bound by these spirits, it must be by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said,*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, [19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Luke 4:18-19.*

***2:21***

***I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. [22] So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. [23] I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.***

This is God’s judgement against all who follow her ways, if they fail to repent. The scripture said, *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. [31] For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” Acts 17;30-31.*

For those who decide to repent and turn away for a lifestyle of sin and unrighteousness, He promise to forgives. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1John 1:9.*

As being the word of God, he is able to search the hearts and mounds of each persons and will reward each person accordingly. I am aware that some may not like the reward they will receive, but because no one can fool the Lord, we must remember his eyes run through and fro on this earth. *For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.” 2 Chron.16:9.* The scriptures also said,  *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Gal.6:7.*

The name the lord addresses himself saying he is ready to judge them, and there is no one who can escape, because everything is open and laid bare before him.

**Chapter 3**

***3:1-6* The church in Sardis**

***“****To the angel of the church in Sardis write:*

 *These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. [2] Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. [3] Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. [4] Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. [5] The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. [6] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. It was the most obstinate of the foreign powers encountered by the Greeks in the time of their existence. It has been said, this city competed with ten other Asian cities for the privilege of building an imperial temple, but they lost out to the city of Smyrna. It was in this city that gold and silver coins were first being made, also it was famous for the art of dying wool.

The church of Sardis came under servers denunciation the other seven churches. Although it was untroubled be heresy and free from outside opposition, it appears to have soften its stand against the pagan environment that even though it appears to have the appearance of life, it was spiritually dead.

This church reminds of the time our Lord Jesus came to the fig tree expecting to find figs, unfortunately, there was none. He cursed the tree, it was never able to ear fruit again.

*Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. [19] Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Immediately the tree withered. [20] When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” they asked.* *Matthew 21:18-20.*

This very spirit f this church exists in our society today. Within the western world, there appears as though a religious spirit have taken over, making people feel good in their sin without any genuine repentance, no change in their lives, there seem to be little conviction from the Holy Spirit.

**Seven Spirits and seven stars:**

 We are reminded of the letter to the church of Ephesus, the Lord described himself as “the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand” Rev.2:1.

The seven stars are being identified as the angels of the seven churches. Rev.1:20, but as the one who holds the seven spirits speaks of the one who has full authority within all churches.

The church of our Lord is being lead by him and not by man. The Lord said to Peter, “*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. [19] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:18-19.*

**I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.**

This commendation does not really means much, for the Lord is really rebuking them, because they had the appearance of being alive, but in reality there was no life within this church. I am sure that there were some who remained faithful to the Lord, like within all churches, there is a remnant to will remain faithful to the Lord.

Although there may have been a some who did not fall into the state of apostasy, the majority of people had so fully compromised their walk with the pagan environment that the church was only called “a church” by name only, but had no effect on the world.

Although this church appeared to be dead, there was still the possibility of life for them. The Lord said, “*Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God”.* This let us know there was still hope for this church.

The scriptures said *“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. [9] He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; [10] he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities”. Psalm 103:8-10.*

The mercies of God is seen throughout the scriptures, even when he is not happy with us, he always provide us with a way to fix what is wrong. We are reminded of the word he gave to the church in Thyatira. ***I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. Revelation 2:21 NIV.*** The KJV said he have given her “space to repent”

This is what the Lord does with all of us, each day we live, we continue to enjoy his mercies, as he gives us time to set our houses in order. The scripture said, …*: “Today, if you hear his voice, [8] do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3:7-8.*

The scriptures encourages us, ***And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. [12] The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. [14] Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.* *Romans 13:11-14 NIV.***

The church in Sardis had established a name in their community, but is was evident that before the eyes of the Lord, their works had not measured up, they were lacking.

This reminds us of the hand writing on the wall, that caused the king to be of great concern that he called for Daniel to interpret what it meant. Daniel said, *“This is the inscription that was written:* ***mene, mene, tekel, parsin*** *[26] “Here is what these words mean: Mene : God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. [27] Tekel : You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.” Daniel 5:25-27.*

Throughout the scriptures, the mercies of God is always seen, although he is angry with sin, he always provides a way to help man correct what is wrong, instead of judging man, he is always quick to grant him pardon.

The scriptures said, ***“Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, [13] because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment”. James 2:12-13.***

The Lord has accused these brethren of not completing the work they have started. Which tells us we will not only be judge for not doing what he asked us to do, but we will also be judged for failing to complete the task.

It is so easy to blame others for us not fulfilling our task, but no one will have any excuse when we stand before the Lord. ***You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. [2] Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. [3] So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? [4] Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? Romans 2:1-4.***

Jesus gave an example of the man who thought his excuse was valid. ***“Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!' [24] “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. [25] So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' [26] “His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? [27] Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.***

 ***[28] “ 'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. [29] For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. [30] And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25:11,24-30.***

We see the apostle Paul also reminding one of his disciples concerning completing his assignment. ***Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.” Col.4:17.***

***3:3.***

***Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.***

This warning is applicable for the church today, for the church is. Known by so many as the sleeping giant. It has compromised so much with the world, that the church looks just like the world, and it has become difficult to know the difference.

In the book of Exodus, Moses told the Lord, it is his presence that will define who the people of God are from the people of the world.

***Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' [13] If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” [14] The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” [15] Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. [16] How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” [17] And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.” Exodus 33:12-17.***

The presence of the Lord in the church is what makes the difference form those who are truly children of God from those who are children of the world.

The Lord has called this church to “Remember”. How soon the people of God tend to forget, simply because the god of this world will do everything possible to caused us not to remember the word of God.

Jesus also gave us an example of the evil one who will endeavor to everything in his power to make us fail to remember the word of God.

***Jesus said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, “ 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.' [11] “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. [12] Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Luke 8:10-12 NIV.***

If we forget the word of God, we will become easy prey for the evil one. *We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. [2] For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, [3] how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. Hebrews 2:1-3.*

The scriptures said, *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it---not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it---they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:22-25;*

**Ways to Remember the word of God.**

**1. Trusting the Word of God.**

**2. Studying the Word of God.**

**3. Using the Word of God.**

**4. Delighting in the Word of God.**

**5. Obeying the Word of God.**

Paul told the church in Philippi, ***Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me---put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Phil. 4:9.***

***3:3. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.***

The beautiful compassionate heart of our Lord is seen where he is giving this church an opportunity to make things right, just as he is doing with us today. This warning could not have come at a better time, especially with what we see taking place today.

People do not seem to have much time to play around. Time is of essence now, that someone said time is running out on us. Not only the Lord warned us about discerning the time, but also the apostle Paul reminding us of the urgency of the hour.

***Be very careful, then, how you live---not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Ephesians 5:15-17.***

***“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. [37] As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; [39] and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. [40] Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. [41] Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. [42] “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. [43] But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Matthew 24:36-44.***

The Lord said to the church in Sardis, ***Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. [5] The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. Revelation 3:4-5.***

Great is the reward for those brethren who refused to compromised their faith and soil their garments by a joining with the world system. This is the pattern that is evident before our eyes today. The Lord spoke to me and said, son, look at what they are doing, they are not hearing from me, they are following each other, and not listening to what I am saying.

I am aware of the spirit that occupy the church today, it is a religious spirit, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of God.

The scriptures warned us concerning this spirit. ***But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. [2] People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, [4] treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--- [5] having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5***.

The Lord commended the few saints who refused to get the garments soiled by the system of the world. The time is now my brothers and sisters, for us to judge ourselves,

***For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? [18] And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. ! Peter 4:17-19.***

Let us judge ourselves so that we would be judged. ***“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. [2] For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. [3] “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? [4] How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matt. 7:1-5.***

Great is the reward for those who refuse to soil their garments, who refuses to compromised their walk with God.

***The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. [6] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Revelations 3:5-6.***

**The church in Philadelphia**

***“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. [8] I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. [9] I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars---I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. [10] Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. [11] I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. [12] The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. [13] Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.***

The church in Philadelphia was faithful in keeping the their faith in the Lord’s word, and refused to deny him in their lifestyle. Although they endured opposition from the world, and they resisted the temptation to compromise their faith with the world and all the evil treats from other churches, they persevered in their loyalty to Christ and to the truth of the gospel. Because of their perseverance and faithfulness, God promises to deliver them from their hour of trial.

The way the Lord addresses himself shows the authority that has been given to Him by his father. ***The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life---only to take it up again. [18] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” John 10:17-18.***

He is not like any of the other prophets or man of God, who spoke the word of God. The authority he has is not only for this earth, but also in Heaven. The scripture said ***The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16] For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. [17] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. [19] For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:15-20.***

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**Key of David:** Again, the authority he has, that whatever he shuts, no one can opens, and what he opens, no one can shut. The Lord speaking to his disciples said, *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19.*

He did not just say, the “Key of the kingdom” but the “keys”, which tells us the Lord has entrusted the same authority he has to the church. Keys are only given to those who are responsible, and shows some form of responsibility. For the scriptures said, ***“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. [11] So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? [12] And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? Luke 16:19.***

Before he could entrust such responsibility to these men, it was important that they understood the responsibility that goes with that authority, for there was a time when two of his disciples wanted to call fire Dow from heaven to burn up some peoples.

***And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, [52] And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. [53] And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. [54] And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? [55] But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. [56] For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. Luke 9:51:56.***

Authority without responsibility could bring more harm to the body of Christ than good, also responsibility without authority is no good either, for it is like giving a police officer a badge with something to enforce it.

**“I Know your deeds, see I place before you an open door, that no one can shut”**

There are times when all that we know to do to succeed seem not to be working, it is like every door seem to be shut, and we wonder if it is the devil that is trying to keep what God has for me away, and yes, there are times when the evil one will try to hinder us from receiving what God has for us.

The scripture said, ***“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.*** *He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. [14] He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. [15] All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.****” John 16:13-15***

The Lord reminded these brethren that he realized they have very little strength. Although they appear to be weak, as the Lord address them, we see these brethren were passionate when it came to their faith in the Lord. They refused to allow opposition they faced to interfere with their walk with the Lord. The Lord said they have kept his word and did not deny his name.

***Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9:26.***

***3:9.***

***I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars---I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.***

I will make - Greek, “I give” -  is, I will arrange matters so that this shall occur. The word implies that he had power to do this, and consequently proves that he has power over the heart of man.

***I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars***- They profess to be Jews, but really are of the synagogue of Satan. This mean that although they were of Jewish extraction, and boasted much about their heritage, they were under the influence of Satan, and their assemblages deserved to be called his “synagogue.”

***I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.*** The word rendered “worship” here, means, properly, to fall prostrate; and then to do homage, or to worship in the proper sense. So far as the word is concerned, it may refer either to spiritual homage, that is, the worship of God; or it may mean respect as shown to superiors.

 ***3:10***

***Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.***

We know somethings about the God we are serving and one of them is that he cannot lie. The scriptures said, ***People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. [17] Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. [18] God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. Hebrews 6:16-18.*** He also said that He *is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Numbers 23;19.*

This promise he made to those who kept his command and endured patiently, was not only for this church, but for all who walked in obedience to his command, and was willing to patiently endure the various persecution being brought upon them because of the testimony of Jesus Christ.

As the one who was given the Key of David, his authority enabled him to keep those who put their trust in Him even in the midst of persecution. The psalmist reassured us of this,  *“If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling, [10] no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. [11] For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; [12] they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. [13] You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent”. Psalm 91:9-13.*

This is the day that the members of the body of Christ are being put to the test. What the church is experiencing today, none of us ever experienced before. The pandemic has allowed the church to truly be who God called to to be, while every thing that is not real, will be shaken off.

Jesus said, ***“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [14] And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*** ***Matthew 24:9-14.***

Some perhaps have grown weary of social media, tired of doing church on line, they are starving to get back into in person worship celebration, and because of the rise and fall of the numbers of COVID-19, churches are taking the necessary precautions to keep their parishioners safe as possible, thereby delaying bringing people back for in person worship celebration.

In the meantime, some have fallen away from the faith, they have lost their interest in the things of the kingdom, and have slowly drifted without realizing it. The scripture said, ***See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. [13] But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. [14] We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. Hebrews 3:12-14.***

**How to prevent your self from drifting?**

**A. Encouraging each other daily.**

**B. Staying connected.**

**C. Being intentional.**

**D. Keep your armor on.**

**E. Be faithful.**

The Lord never made a promise that as a child of God things would be easy, the fact that what he has promised to his children, is always a process to get it. ***I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.***

The apostle James said, *“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him”. James 1:12.*

Peter said, *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. [13] But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? [18] And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.* *1 Peter 4:12-19.*

Those of us who name the name of Christ should be prepared to experienced some kind of testing. There is no skipping of grades, each must be prepared, and wisdom said, be ready, because no one knows when it will be their time, only God knows.

***I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*** ***Revelation 3:11.***

There are many prophetic words that have been spoken in our generation, where the Lord spoke to his servants about his coming, and it is always the same, “I am coming soon”. My wife had a vision of the Lord writing it in the clouds, “I am coming soon”. No one knows how soon is soon.

The scriptures said *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”. 2Peter 3:8-9*

Soon to us could mean shortly, but the Lord does not operate in our time frame, he only sees eternity, therefore because we have no clue of what “soon” really means, it is best we sold always be ready for his return.

The Lord said in his answer to the question being asked by his disciples at the very beginning of chapter 24:  ***As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Matthew 24:3.***

“***Therefore keep watch,*** *because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. [43] But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. [45] “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? [46] It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Matthew 24:42-46 NIV*

The crown of life is awarded to all who are willing to endure to the end. this is the same promise the apostle Paul talk about, *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day---and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2Timothy 4:8.*

Although there are millions of people who have with stood the persecution even to the end, there is still a crown of life awaiting those of us who will not give up.

***3:12.***

***The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.***

The Lord continues to expand on the reward of those who endure and remain faithful. He will make them a “pillar”. I recall a prophetic word that came to me many years ago from a certain man of God. He said God had made me a “pillar” in that house. I thought that was a great prophetic word. But that is not what this scripture is saying. He said he will make you a pillar in the temple of his God.

If someone describes you as a pillar of strength, he's saying you're reliable and supportive, much like a pillar or column of a building that helps hold the structure up. The spelling of the word pillar looks like it has two pillars right at its center, holding the word up.

1. Becoming a pillar of perfect character with a firm and permanent position in God's Temple.

2. Remaining close to God forever. The phrase literally reads, "by no means will you go out."

3. Bearing God's name and the character, majesty, authority, honor, etc., that His name represents.

4. Living and working with God at His headquarters for all eternity.

 **The Laodicean Church**

***3:14***

***“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.***

**Laodicea**: - This city was very wealthy during the Roman period. Not only that, but it was located on the major trade routes that connected it to other important cities like [Ephesus](https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-places/biblical-riot-at-ephesus/), Smyrna and Sardis. It was the center of textile production and banking. Perhaps it was the reason it was noted as being one of the wealthiest cities in the Bible

This harsh pronouncement by the Lord suggests that the believers in the church in Laodicea—which today is located in modern Turkey—wavered in their commitments to the Lord.

The scriptures warned against those who weaver in the faith.

*But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. [7] That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. [8] Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. James 1:6-8*

The difficulties that this behavior placed upon the believers of Asia, were expressed in great detail throughout the Book of Revelation.

Those who refused to worship the image of the beast (the emperor) were killed. Christians were not permitted to buy or sell unless they had taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13).

The pressure upon wealthy believers to maintain their lifestyle was very intense and since a great deal of Laodicea’s wealth depended upon trade, the Christian merchants were in trouble.

They had to decide to cooperate with the imperial cult and maintain their trade associations, or take a stand and reaffirm their faith in Christ. Some of the saints compromised their faith in such ways that the caused the Lord to say, “I ***will spit you out of my mouth***” (Revelation 3:16).

In this letter, the Lord addresses himself in these four titles; The “**Amen” “Faithful” “True witness” “ Ruler of God’s creation”**

**Amen** is commonly used after a prayer, creed, or other formal statement. It is spoken to express solemn ratification or agreement. It means “it is so” or “so it be.”. Amen is derived from the Hebrew āmēn, which means “certainty,” “truth,” and “verily.”

**Faithful:- “***Remaining loyal and steadfast”* He is unchangeable. Heb.13:8

**True Witness:-** *Accurate or Exact.*

*The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. John 19:35 NIV*

**Ruler of the Creation:-** *One who has being delegated authority to rule, or govern.*

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16] For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. [17] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. [19] For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Co.1:15-20*

***3:15-16***

***I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm---neither hot nor cold---I am about to spit you out of my mouth.***

A lukewarm Christian is someone who claims to be a follower of Jesus but lives as though they are sufficient in themselves and don’t need Him. They are satisfy with attending church, and are content in their own ways and unwilling to apply the principles of the scriptures to their lives.

***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it---not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it---they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:22-25***

**Signs of a Lukewarm Christian.**

 This person lives a different life on Sunday than they do the rest of the week

 Their friends don’t know they are a follower of Christ

 They would rather be accepted socially than reveal their Christian faith

 The word of God is not a priority to them.

 Prayer is only important to them during troublesome times.

 They very rarely share their faith.

 Their attendance at church is only for social reasons.

This address he called these believers showed the spiritual condition of the saints of this church, because of their compromise with the world, the resembled the condition of the systems of their society.

**Chapter 4**

*After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” 2At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. 3And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.*

*4Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.*

*5From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30774a)*] of God.*

*6Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.*

**Voice I first heard**: - John referred to what he first heard as he began this letter. *On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, [11] which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.” [12] I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, [13] and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. Rev.1:10-13*.

**Jasper**: - *Out of all the gemstones, jasper is****the best for stress****. It is known as the “supreme nurturer” and it said to help achieve a state of calm and Zen. It protects your energy by absorbing all the negativity, so it's a great one to have on hand when going through a hard time.*

**Ruby**: - *The ruby is known as a protective stone that can bring****happiness and passion into the life of the wearer****. Apart from its red color, this is why the ruby makes a perfect gift for a loved one or on occasions such as Valentine's Day or an anniversary.*

**Emerald**: - Emerald was one of four sacred gems given to Solomon by God in the bible. These were said to have granted the owner power over all creation. The figure of Solomon in this text is synonymous with wisdom, making the theme of emeralds and intelligence follow closely.

**After this**: - he was making reference to the divine revelations he received concerning the seven churches. We must remember the revelations he received was not just for the future, but also for the present. The Lord told him, “Write, therefore what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later” Rev.1:19.

There are times when the Lord will reveal things to us, where some are for the moment, while some are for future events. When we fail to pay attention to them, we suffer the consequences of failing to deal with them.

As mentioned before concerning Job in the OT. As the youngest of his friends who visited him during the time of his crisis, spoke up concerning the Lord’s way of communicating with man.

“***But I tell you, in this you are not right,   for God is greater than any mortal. 13Why do you complain to him   that he responds to no one’s words[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=job+33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13664a)***]? 14For God does speak—now one way, now another—   though no one perceives it.15In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people  as they slumber in their beds,16he may speak in their ears  and terrify them with warnings,17to turn them from wrongdoing  and keep them from pride,18to preserve them from the pit,   their lives from perishing by the sword. Job.33:12-18.***

**Open Door**: - this represents hope for mankind, there is still time for man to come in. in the letter to the church of Laodicea and the letter to the church in Philadelphia, These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 8I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Rev.3:7-8.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. Rev.3:20.

**Come up here**: - Here again we have an invitation from the Lord, and always has something wonderful to say to us. The only one who will invite us to things that will bring us harm, is the enemy of our soul. We must remember the words of our Lord, his only intention is to bring us harm. John 10:10.

Observe what the Lord has to say, I will show you what must take place after this”. This is also seen when the visitors visited Abraham. They said, ***Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? 18Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-443c)***] 19For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” Gen.18:17-19***

The scriptures said, *The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. Psalm 25:14*. nothing happens on earth unless the Lord reveals it to his servants first, he always gives man an opportunity to make things right, before disaster comes, it is when we fail to pay heed to his warnings, we suffer the consequences.

Failing to pay heed to the Lord’s warning could cost you, ***Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones, 20so that their body finds food repulsive and their soul loathes the choicest meal. 21Their flesh wastes away to nothing, and their bones, once hidden, now stick out. 22They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death Job.33:19-22.***

**In the Spirit**: - this is what the apostle Paul most likely experienced when he said.  *I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. 3And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— 4was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. 2Cor.12:1-4*.

Steven also had a similar experience. ***When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” Acts 7:54-56***.

This is the place in our spiritual journey, where this experience allows us to see things in such a ways we have never seen before. Our whole outlook on life changes.

The prophet Isaiah describes it as such. *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory.”4At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.5“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” Isa.6:1-5.*

**Twenty Four**:- According to the Bible, number 24 is a symbol of priesthood. It means that this number is closely connected with heaven. It is used as a symbol of duty and work of God, who is the only true priest

**Seven spirits of God**: - **Revelations 1:4-5; 3:21; 4:5; 5:6.**

1. The Spirit of the LORD. John 15:16
2) The Spirit of wisdom. Eph.1:17
3) The Spirit of understanding. Isa.11:2
4) The Spirit of counsel. Isa 11:2
5) The Spirit of power. Isa. 11:2
6) The Spirit of knowledge. Isa.11:2
7) The Spirit of the fear of the Lord.11:2

**4:6-7**

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.7The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

The description is very similar to that what the prophet Ezekiel saw. *Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. 11Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body. 12Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went Ezek. 1:10-12.*

I thought of what these meant or represents. When I think of the “**Lion**”. I immediately reflect on courageous and bold. He is not afraid of anyone, it matters not how big or powerful its enemy is, he will dare anyone, who will attempt to challenge him. In the mind of the lion, he only envision “overcome” “victory” he never sees himself losing. I would use the phrase that King Solomon used, “The righteous are as bold as a lion” Proverbs 28:1.

The **ox** is an unusual animal. They usually move in packs, very rare will an ox move around by itself. Although they are very large, and very strong, they are no match for the Lion.

**Strengths**. *Prudent, follow procedures step by step, take things slowly, unlikely to be influenced easily*

**Weaknesses**. *Stubborn, self-opinionated, persist their old ways, deaf to others advice and foolhardy.*

**The face of man**:- of all God’s creation, the man is called God’s special possession. He loves all he has made but when it comes to the man, he said, he made the man in his own image and likeness. Therefore, I see the man as compassionate and loving, for the man has the ability to show the heart of God toward his creation.

**The Eagle**:- When I think of the eagle, it is the only bird that has the ability to fly very high and spot on earth the smallest thing and with it powerful wings is able to fly with such force and speed and catch what is one the ground without any opposition. I see the eagle with great vision.

What John was looking at was true authentic worship. Here we see these beasts that had a funny appearance, and a wonder when it comes to their looks. Day and night, all they did was worshipping the one who sat on the throne.

*Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “ 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come.” Rev.4:8.*

We get bored after singing one song too many times, but not so with these beasts. It was all they lived for, they lived for worship, and the one on the throne never get tired of listening their voices. I just can imagine what it song like, and especially seeing our world has so many cultures.

The Jamaicans may have a reggae beat, the Trinidadians may have the calypso beat, the Spanish people will have they Spanish beat. etc. Because variety is the spice of life, I guess it is the reason why the Lord did not make only one culture in the world.

The one on the throne never stop them or get tired of them giving him worship. You may recalled when our Lord Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he followers were giving him worship, and some who did not understood what that was all about tried to stop them, but he said don’t do that.

“**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” [39] Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” [40] “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” Luke 19:38-40.**

One thing we do know is that the Lord enjoy his children giving him worship. One scripture said, “Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises”. Psalm 22:3. NIV

 **4:9-10.**

***Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, [10] the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say***:

Worship belongs to God and him only, you may recalled the man who was healed by the apostle Paul in Lystra. *When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” [12] Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. [13] The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. [14] But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: [15] “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. [16] In the past, he let all nations go their own way. [17] Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” [18] Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. Acts 14:11-18.*

God only accepts the kind of worship He requires. “*Woman*,” Jesus replied, “*believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” John 4:21-24*

This scene had to be awesome for John to behold, nothing on earth could be compare to it. Just to see and hear these living creatures give Glory, honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, and when the twenty four elders saw this, they immediately cast their crowns before him, and the beautiful sound of worship filled the atmosphere as they sang, “*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” Rev.4:11.*

As mortals we have various competing gospel song to see which ones the people sang quite frequently, and we called the best gospel songs, but this is not the case in heaven. There are no competition, because this worship is not for man, but for the Lord.

**Chapter 5**

***5:1-5***

***Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. [2] And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” [3] But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. [4] I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. [5] Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”***

As the scene continues, what John saw astonished him so much that he became very emotional, for the one who sat on the throne had in his hand a scroll that no one was able to open and read, and because it concern events that should take place in the future, it was important for John to know what was written in it. the fact the Lord told him to *Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this,* it disturbed him that there was no one who was qualify to open it.

You may recalled in the days of Daniel, King Belshazzar had a party with his friends. When he was high in spirit, he saw the finger of a man writing on a wall that astonished him.

***The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.” [8] Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. [9] So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled. [10] The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. “May the king live forever!” she said. “Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! [11] There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Daniel 5:7-11***

As John began to weep, the voice of “one of the elders” encouraged him to weep no more. For although the situation seem hopeless, there was hope. He was assured that there was one who was qualified to open the scroll and read what is written.

In our society today, some believe the pope of the Roman Catholic Church is the one who was qualify, but the pope is a man just like any other man, he is disqualify. There are some who spend all their lives worshipping something or someone, and although they may be sincere, they are sincerely wrong.

The scriptures said ***“I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. Isa. 42:8.*** We must remember God cannot be mocked, for whatsoever a man sow he shall reap. Gal. 6:7.

The only one qualified to open the seals, was ***the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”*** His name is Jesus the Messiah.

 ***5:6***

***Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.***

The sight of a lamb represents one who was innocent. The prophet Isaiah said, *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. Isa.53:7*

This lamb had some scars on it showing he was wounded. ***He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. [4] Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. [5] But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isa.53:3-5***

The scriptures said *Just as there were many who were appalled at him---his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness--- Isa.52:14.*

The scars on his body will never go away, it is there to show mankind what he went through in order to pay the price for our sin. Although there are some who do not believe he went through what he experienced and even though they see the scars, they may still not believe, because the god of this world have blinded their minds.

Jesus visited his disciples after he rose from the dead, but some did not believe. *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus ), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” [26] A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” [27] Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” [28] Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” [29] Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” John 20:24-29*

The scars on his body are a testimony of what he went through for us, to show us that we do not have to pay for our sin, because the price has already been paid. The prophet Isaiah said, *Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. [11] After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied ; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Isa.53:10-11*

***The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.***

**Seven spirits of God: - Revelations 1:4-5; 3:21; 4:5; 5:6.**

1. The Spirit of the LORD. John15:16
2) The Spirit of wisdom. Eph. 1:17
3) The Spirit of understanding. Isa.11:2
4) The Spirit of counsel. Isa 11:2
5) The Spirit of power. Isa. 11:2
6) The Spirit of knowledge. Isa.11:2
7) The Spirit of the fear of the Lord.11:2

**Horns**:- represents authority and power

**Eyes** :- represents intelligence

What John sees remind us of what he saw at the very beginning. *John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, [5] and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, [6] and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father---to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Rev.1:4-6.*

***5:7-8***

***He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. [8] And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people.***

Hope returned to John when he saw there was one who was able to take the scroll for the hand of the one who sat on the throne.

This scriptures said, *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; [7] rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. [8] And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death---even death on a cross! [9] Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, [10] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil.2:6-11*

I am so thankful it was not an ordinary man, because pride may have filled the heart of an average person, and he began to discriminate and chose who he wants to be with him, but that is not what our lord is about. The scripture said, *“For God does not show favoritism”. Romans 2:11.*

As the Lamb took the scroll, the scene has changed to another level of worship. The elders not only had golden crowns, but in their hands, they had musical instruments. They had harps along with golden bowls.

**Harp:** This was the national instrument of the Hebrews. It was invented by Jubal ( Genesis 4:21 ). Some think the word kinnor denotes the whole class of stringed instruments. It was used as an accompaniment to songs of cheerfulness as well as of praise to God ( Genesis 31:27 ; 1 Samuel 16:23 ;

***Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him. 1 Samuel 16:23 NIV***

There are some denominations who condemn the use of instruments during worship, but the one who sits on the throne loves harmonized sounds of instruments. The Holy Spirit seem to respond powerfully during genuine worship.

Some have even misunderstood worship that is acceptable by God. Some of the times, even what we call worship songs, are really songs of testimony, the are used to encouraged the saints, but has nothing to do with what God requires.

I would say that worship has to do with what we give to God, and it has nothing to do with the flesh. As i listened to some of the Lyrics in gospel songs, and watch the ones who is singing, it is all about themselves, and promoting their interest.

Some have the appearance of a show or some kind of concert, where they are selling something, and has nothing to do with what the Lord Jesus spoke about to the woman at the well.

The woman said to Jesus, *Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” [21] “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” [25] The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” [26] Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you---I am he.” John 4:20-26 NIV*

She really thought what her ancestors did was truly worship. It was not until she really had an encounter with Jesus that she really understood what true worship was all about. This is actually saying, one cannot truly worship God the way he need to be worship without divine revelation of who the one on the throne is.

Once there is an encounter, it changes the way we truly worship the one on the throne. It is the primary why salvation has to be a personal experience. Yes we are encouraged not to forsake the assembling of our selves, also the scriptures encourage fellowship, but to really have an experience of the one on the throne, it is personal.

Along with the Harp these twenty four elders had, they also had golden bowls filled with incense which John describes are really the prayers of the saints. The psalmist prayed, *“I call to you, Lord, come quickly to me; hear me when I call to you.* ***May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice”. Psalm 141:1-2***

Although some of our prayers are not being answered as yet, it does not mean God is not listening, we can be assured nothing escape his eyes, and he takes note of the cries of his children. *The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry; Psalm 34:15. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. Psalm 34:17*

**Incense:-** Incense: from the Latin "to burn," "a mixture of gums or spices and the like, used for the purpose of producing a perfume when burned;" or the perfume itself of the spices, etc., burned in worship. The incense employed in the service of the tabernacle walls compounded of the perfumes stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense. All incense which was not made of these ingredients was forbidden to be offered. (Exodus 30:9) It is the golden vials, and not the odors or incense, which are said to be the prayers of saints. (Smith's Bible Dictionary)

Not using the right ingredients will send of an awful sent, it is called “strange incense”, which will be rejected by God. Perhaps it is what caused Cain offering to be rejected, even the sons of

 ***5:9-10***

***And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. [10] You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”***

**What qualify Jesus to take the scroll?**

From the very beginning when men sinned, God had in mind a plan to redeem man. It required the shedding of blood, for it was impossible for us to experience redemption without it.

***But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. [4] It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. [5] Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; [6] with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. [7] Then I said, 'Here I am---it is written about me in the scroll---I have come to do your will, my God.' ” Hebrews 10:3-7 NIV***

From Adam to this very day, no one on earth was qualify to do it, because our blood was contaminated by sin. It is the reason why men had to bring some animal before the priest, who had the animal killed, and its blood sprinkled upon everything. The blood of all those animals although it was required by the law, it was not possible to cleanse us. The blood only serve as a covering for our sin.

But not so with the blood of Jesus. His blood was shed once and for all. He never have to go through what he went through again.

The scriptures said, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. [19] After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits--- [20] to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, [21] and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also---not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand---with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him. 1Peter 3:18-22.*

 **The** **apostle** **creed**:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Jesus, the land of God is the only one who is worthy to take the scroll and break the seal to reveal to us what is written on it, therefore, he is worthy to receive the new song, *“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. Revelation 5:9 NIV.*

The scriptures said, *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col.1:19-20.*

**Kingdom of priests:-** As saints we must see ourselves as belonging to another kingdom, one that is not of this world. The disciples were expecting Jesus to set up a kingdom like the one they are familiar with. They questioned him after his resurrection,  *“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:6.*

***Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in Heaven, saying “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” Revelation 11:15(NKJV).*** We will deal with that when we get to that chapter.

The distractions we faced today in our fight against the evil one will be over for those who live for Christ. Currently saints are facing some of the greatest battles, for the enemy of God wants man to remain in a state of unbelief, but the scriptures said, ***At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [14] And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:10-14***

As priests in his kingdom, serving God will be our natural response, no one will have to encourage us to serve God, just as we have a responsibility toward our families, communities, etc. it will be what we do day and night, and we will not get tired or bored, because it is what we are made for, and that is to worship God.

***5:11-12.***

***Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. [12] In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”***

Joining with those of us who overcome, will be thousands upon thousands of Angels assisting us in this worship celebration. These angels who will be worshipping with us, will not be able to have the type of testimony we who have over came will have.

Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart sang a song years ago that said, *Angels never knew the joy that is mine, For the blood has never washed their sins away, Though they sing in heaven there will come a time, When silently they'll listen as I sing Amazing Grace.*

*It's a song holy angels cannot sing, Amazing Grace how sweet the sound, It's a song holy angels cannot singI once was lost but now I’m found.*

The reason why it is impossible for angels to sing that song, is because they do not have the ability to repent. Doom awaits any angel that sinned against God. Jesus did not come on earth the redeemed Angels, but mankind. The scripture said, *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.* Also, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17.*

For those of us who have never seen or heard the voice of an Angel, will have plenty of opportunity to do so, for they will join us in this beautiful festive celebration.

***5:13-14***

***Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” [14] The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.***

Where I currently live, when it rains, and especially at nights, we have the opportunity t hear many of God beautiful creatures making wonderful songs. Songs i have never heard while living in the city. Some of my family members are not familiar with those sounds. While I am having a glorious time listening to them. Sometime it sound like when one sings tenor, the other sing base, while the other sing Soprano, and the other sings alto.

The creatures also enjoys rehearsing for the big day that is coming. For the time is coming When all of God creation will join in this worship experience. Yes you may not understand what they are saying, but their creator understand what the birds, the snakes, the ants the trees, everything God made will respond in genuine worship and that is when the four beats will say Amen.

**Amen-**  *'means 'it is and shall be so,' and by men, 'so let it be.'"* (Vines). *All the promises of God are amen in Christ " that is, firmness, stability, constancy.*

Again, we see the four beasts leading in worship, as they lead out, the elders fell down and worshiped. The vision that john described in these past two chapters has to do with heavenly worship, a worship that man king is unfamiliar with, but will become very familiar when then kingdoms of this world has become the kingdom of God.

**Chapter 6**

***6:1-2. First seal***

 **Four horsemen of apocalypse.**

This is the beginning of the “Four horsemen of apocalypse”. This is what the prophet Zachariah mentioned in his writing.

The prophet Zechariah had a vision of almost the same as that of John. *I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains---mountains of bronze. [2] The first chariot had red horses, the second black, [3] the third white, and the fourth dappled---all of them powerful. [4] I asked the angel who was speaking to me, “What are these, my lord?” [5] The angel answered me, “These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. [6] The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south.” [7] When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, “Go throughout the earth!” So they went throughout the earth. [8] Then he called to me, “Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north.” Zechariah 6:1-8 NIV*

***I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” [2] I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.***

The real actions now begins and the Lamb who took the scroll, broke open one of the seals. The seal that broke open moved one of the creatures to give John a forceful command. John’s description of the voice that spoke to him, he said it sounded like “thunder”.

John was familiar with the sound of thunder, the sound of thunder when the weather is stormy, sometimes could be very fearful. Sometimes it is followed by lighting, and it is just as dangerous and the lighting itself. Lighting with thunder have caused severe damage to property, and sometimes if it hits you, it can become very harmful. John description of this sound was like that.

As he looked at where the sound came from, he was able to see a very strange sight. Standing before him was a white horse with someone on it. The rider had i his hand a bow and he wore a crown. He rode as one who is on a mission, he was not playing, me look like he would kill anyone who stood in his way.

This time of playing was over for man, time seem to have come to an end, now the judgement of God has really began. All the warnings man was given to prepare to meet their God was ended. The scripture said,*: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3:7-8.* This is all the time you and I have to set our houses in order.

No one can bargain with the one who is on the white horse. He was on a mission and would not stop until his mission is complete.

John seems to be more focused on the riders than the horses. This first horseman is holding a bow and given a crown and is obsessed with conquest.

The bow was a weapon of military triumph during the olden days. The crown has always been the conqueror's headdress. Some bible scholars have argued that this first horseman is Jesus Christ, but that interpretation is inconsistent with the immediate context and the symbolism of the other three riders. Therefore, most biblical scholars recognize this first rider to represent military conquest. Some believed he may also stand for the Antichrist, who is a charismatic leader, that will soon emerge as a false imitation of Jesus Christ.

***6:3-4. “Second Seal”***

***When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” [4] Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.***

 **Red horse;-  *War-bloodshed.***

*During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man mounted on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses. [9] I asked, “What are these, my lord?” The angel who was talking with me answered, “I will show you what they are.” [10] Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, “They are the ones the Lord has sent to go throughout the earth.” [11] And they reported to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, “We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace.” [12] Then the angel of the Lord said, “Lord Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?” [13] So the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. [14] Then the angel who was speaking to me said, “Proclaim this word: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion,* *Zechariah 1:8-14.*

Jesus also spoke to his disciples concerning what will take place in the future. *“Teacher,” they asked, “****when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?****” [8] He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. [9] When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” [10] Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. [11] There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. [12] “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. [13] And so you will bear testimony to me. [14] But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. [15] For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. [16] You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. [17] Everyone will hate you because of me. [18] But not a hair of your head will perish. [19] Stand firm, and you will win life. Luke 21:7-19*

***When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” [4] Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.***

As the second seal was opened, another rider came out on a Red horse. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword. (NIV)

*He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. [25] He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. Daniel 8:24-25 NIV*

***6:5-6. “Third Seal”***

***When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. [6] Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”***

The scales in the hand of the rider on the black horse represents “Death by famine”. There will be scarcity of goods which will result in high rise of prices for food, which will make it difficult for people to enjoy the kind of life they had before the famine.

The cost of goods and services will skyrocket, that the government will try to find answers, but it will not be possible, because this is the work of God.

The balance indicates a time of scarcity, when the basic commodities of life will be measured out at greatly inflated prices. The prophet Ezekiel wrote, *He then said to me: “Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, [17] for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin. Ezekiel 4:16-17 NIV*

***When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied. Leviticus 26:26 NIV***

The most common interpretation of the black horse is “famine”. It’s a direct result of warfare in ancient times when an enemy invades another country, as we can clearly see the effects of the war Russia brought upon Ukraine. Globally every country feels the effect of this war.

The warning given to this horseman, not to hurt the oil and wine sets limits to the amount of destruction he was able to carry out. We must remember from the scriptures God’s Judgement comes in one of these three forms. In Famine; plague; sword, and all because of man’s rebellion against him.

 **(4) 6:7-8. “*Forth Seal”***

***When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” [8] I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.***

As the forth seal is broken, the rider on this horse had the color of a corpse. Authority wad given to him to hurt 1/4 of earth’s population, it is said the population on earth today is approx. 8 Billion people. COVID was responsible for taking the lives of over 60 Million people, and is still active today.

The scriptures did not tell us where this will take place, but we know that of the earths population, a lot of people will die. Ezekiel describes this as, *“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments---sword and famine and wild beasts and plague---to kill its men and their animals!*  *Ezekiel 14:21.*

We are hearing of more shark attacks on swimmers than ever before, the very animals seem to be on a prowl to attack man more so now than ever. I am not in the place to say that what we are seeing in our times is due to the “pale” horse rider, but I know we as the people of God need to pay attention to the times we are living in.

The scriptures said,*“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. [43] But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*  *Matthew 24:42-44 NIV*

 ***(5) 6:9-11. “Fifth Seal”***

***When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. [10] They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” [11] Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.***

It appears as though the seals were divided into two groups, four and three. Now that the four horsemen had ridden forth, the entire scene changes.

The breaking of this fifth seal reveals an altar in Heaven, which beneath it were the souls of those who were being martyr for Christ. Jesus warned the disciples of this type of suffering that would come upon them. ***“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:9-13.***

***6:12-17. “Sixth Seal”***

***I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, [13] and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. [14] The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. [15] Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. [16] They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! [17] For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”***

The earthquake in January 2010, in the country of Haiti, that was responsible for a total of 200, 000 deaths was one of the most shocking news that really affected the entire world. Some were pointing their fingers at various reasons why God allowed it to happen in that country. I do not know why it happened in that country, although there are speculations as to why, but God knows the answer.

I have heard testimonies from some who were there at that time. It was gruesome sight, as there were families who were buried alive, the rescuers were having difficulty recovering bodies, even with the hopes of finding some alive. Days after, there were still aftershocks. It was said that over three million people were affected by it.

Even after countries were able to raise over 58 million dollars to help rebuild that country, to this very day, Haiti is still feeling the effect of that earthquake.

What John saw as the sixth seal was broken terrified him, he did not say there was an earthquake, but the earthquake was great, saying one that the earth have never seen. It shook the earth so great that it made what happened in Haiti look like kids play.

***“This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. [7] I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, ' says the Lord Almighty. Haggai 2:6-7*** .

This shaking did not affect what’s on earth, but also it shook the heavens also. John said, the sun turned “***Black like sackcloth made from goat hair”***

**Sackcloth** was a coarse black cloth, commonly, though not always, made of hair. It was used for sacks, for strainers, and for mourning garments; and as thus worn it was not an improper emblem of sadness and distress. The idea here is, that the sun put on a dark, dingy, doleful appearance, as if it were in mourning. See the Isaiah 13:10 note; Matthew 24:29 note; Compare Isaiah 24:23; Isaiah 34:4; 1,3; Isaiah 60:19-20; Ezekiel 32:7-8; Joel 2:10; Joel 3:15-16; Amos 8:9.

**Moon Blood Red:** - Either from the smoke and vapor that usually precedes an earthquake, or as a mere emblem. This also would due to the calamity, and perhaps the symbol may be so far limited and modified by this as to denote war, for that would be most naturally suggested by the color - red, even as we saw when the rider of the red horse appeared to take peace from the earth.

**Stars fell from heaven:**

We know from science that the earth is the smallest of the planets, therefore, should the stars fall on the earth, they will totally destroy the earth. We have heard of times when a meteorite fell into the sea, causing a great tsunami which destroys entire communities. The world consider these as natural disasters, but they are not natural, these are purely un-natural for man to witness.

The scriptures said that “stars fell just like when one shakes a fig tree, and the figs began to fall”. Those of us from the Islands are quite familiar with figs falling when the tree has been shook. We cannot pick them up fast enough before more began to fall.

This description John gives concerning the way these stars were falling, tells us, there will be no break for one to run for cover. There will be disaster after disaster. While the leaders are trying to help some, there will be one more. These will affect the economy greatly. For it took over 58 million dollars to help the land of Haiti, which to this very day are still recovering.

***The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.***

John also record in a later chapter.  *Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. Rev. 21:1.*

What the heavens appeared to be, looked like a scroll, for it began to fold up or roll back. This was the only way he was able to describe what he was looking at.

Stephen also had such an experience. The scriptures said, *But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [56] “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” Acs 7:55-56.*

The prophet Isaiah said, *All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. Isa.34:4*

There is a certain religious group who believes what we will be living on this current earth That cannot be true, because the scripture said the first heaven and the first earth will pass away, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

***Every mountain and island was removed from its place. [15] Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.***

The movies tend to make light of these events that John is describing, therefore, men don’t seem to take these events seriously. Although, the heavens is not really a scroll, but it was the way John was able to describe what he was looking at, in order to give us a basic idea of what he saw.

The mountains and Islands seen to have moved out of their place. Perhaps all the waters receded and gathered into one place, making the land one place, which would be filled with mountains and valleys.

In the days of Noah, when the waters receded, all the land seem to move into one place, but I believe the land did not truly move, it was as the waters, went back, the land part of the earth appears to be one.

There are some places were once covered with water, and lately the water seem to recede causing land mass to appear. Some scientist are coming up with all kind of reason for this, and perhaps their answer may be valid, I do not know, but even scientist have acknowledge there are strange situations that are popping up all over the world.

Last Wednesday after bible study, I received a message that there are some strange locusts that they labeled as biblical plagues attacking vegetation in the west. There are no answers as to where they come from.

We saw the political leaders in the days of Daniel, being troubled by a dream, that he called all his magicians to interpret his dream, but they were unable. It was not until they contact the man of God, “Daniel” they were at ease.

***They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! [17] For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”***

Men would seek some form of covering and protection, for they would have never seen anything like what their eyes were beholding. The prophet Isaiah prophesies, *The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, [18] and the idols will totally disappear. [19] People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. [20] In that day people will throw away to the moles and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. [21] They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.* *Isaiah 2:17-21.*

With all the arrogance of man, their pride, wealth, their military strength. None of these will be able to protect those who are ungodly from the presence of the Lord God.

The Psalmist said, *Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? [8] If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. [9] If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, [10] even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. [11] If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” [12] even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. Psalm 139:7-12*

**Chapter 7**

***7:1-3. “Sixth Seal”***

***After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. [2] Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: [3] “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”***

These vision the Lord were revealing to John, must have been very troublesome for him, for God was showing the end time events and they were not good. Everything he saw speaks of grave disaster that will come upon mankind in the future.

My brethren, perhaps what we are seeing taking place today are signs of what John saw, and our political leaders, and some spiritual leaders are giving false hope to society. The scriptures said,  ***Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, [2] for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [3] While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. [4] But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 1Thess.5:1-4*** .

His description of these four angels that are holding back the four winds of the earth speaks of a lack of comfort to man during those times of difficulty. The parable Jesus gave in the gospel of Luke 16 concerning the rich man who is in torment said he cried out to Abraham,  *'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' Luke 16:24.*

As the sixth seal was being opened, John saw another angel, who had the seal, commanding the four angels who were given authority to harm land and sea, to wait until the people of God received their mark.

The winds represents wars and various commotions on earth. Daniel had a vision of this. *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. [2] Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Daniel 7:1-2.*

Perhaps this is what Daniel saw in his vision. *“The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. [5] “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' [6] “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. [7] “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast---terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. Daniel 7:4-7.*

John saw another angel coming from the East with the “seal of the living God”. This is quite different from the other angels he described. This seal he was carrying was to put marks on those who belong to God. He was assigned to put a certain mark on the foreheads of the children of God, so that as the disaster began, those who belong to God will escape.

Moses commanded to Jews who lived in Egypt to put the blood of the lamb upon the door post and lintel and do not go outside. Those who followed the instructions he gave was spared. Any house that did not have the blood upon their doors had death in their home.

***The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.*** ***Exodus 12:13.***

The blood upon the doors was the seal that protect the members of those families from the death plague. As it was in the days of Moses, so will it be in those days. Those without the mark on their foreheads will experienced the wrath of God.

The prophet Ezekiel prophesy, ***Now the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple. Then the Lord called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side [4] and said to him, “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it. ” [5] As I listened, he said to the others, “Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. [6] Slaughter the old men, the young men and women, the mothers and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the old men who were in front of the temple.*** ***Ezekiel 9:3-6.***

In order to received this mark, one must be born again. Born into the family of God. The scriptures said, *“Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. [6] Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. [7] You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' John 3:5-7.*

There may be some who believe that because they attend church, or maybe being born into a christian family, or read their bibles regular, or visit the sick, or being actively involved in church activities, that will qualify you to receive the mark.

***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith---and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph. 2:8-9.*** I want to encourage all make sure they have this mark of them, so they can escape the the wrath of God. The Lord also spoke on this in the gospel of Matthew 25.

***7:4-9.***

***Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. [5] From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, [6] from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, [7] from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, [8] from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000. [9] After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.***

John did not mentioned the one who was speaking and gave him that number, but he recorded the number he heard, that there were 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. This is not very encouraging, because one would think that because they are the Jews, there would be more that that number.

The scriptures said, *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. [23] His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. [24] These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. [25] Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. [26] But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. [27] For it is written: “Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” [28] Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. [29] At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. [30] But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son.” [31] Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. Galatians 4:22-31.*

Although Abraham had eight sons, but only to one of them the promise was made to, and that was Isaac, the son born from Sarah. Therefore, as we look at the ones who received that mark, they were only those who are from the tribe of Isaac.

He saw they were listed in the same way they were born. ***“These are the tribes, listed by name: At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion; it will follow the Hethlon road to Lebo Hamath; Hazar Enan and the northern border of Damascus next to Hamath will be part of its border from the east side to the west side. [2] “Asher will have one portion; it will border the territory of Dan from east to west. [3] “Naphtali will have one portion; it will border the territory of Asher from east to west. [4] “Manasseh will have one portion; it will border the territory of Naphtali from east to west. [5] “Ephraim will have one portion; it will border the territory of Manasseh from east to west. [6] “Reuben will have one portion; it will border the territory of Ephraim from east to west. [7] “Judah will have one portion; it will border the territory of Reuben from east to west. Ezekiel 48:1-7***

 ***7:9.***

***After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.***

John is still describing the events of the sixth seal. He was looking at another crowd of people that did not have the appearance from any of those who were listed among the 144,000. These were a different set of people.

There were so many, it was not possible to even begin to number them. They came from everywhere, which means their languages were different; their culture different. This proves that in the kingdom of God, there can be no division, and God shows no favorite. He loves every member of his creation.

I believe there will be some who will be shocked to see some people who they thought would not be among this number. Jesus said, *I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. [12] But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 8:11-12.*

Jesus said, ***“Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' [23] Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:21-23.***

The Jehovah witness believed they are part of the 144,000 John describe about. Their belief clearly states. ***Heaven****. Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, and the faithful angels reside in the spirit realm. \* (Psalm 103:19-​21; Acts 7:​55) A relatively small number of people​—144,000​—will be resurrected to life in heaven to rule with Jesus in the Kingdom.​—Daniel 7:​27; 2 Timothy 2:​12;*

 They also believe this about the **Earth**. *God* *created the earth to be mankind’s eternal home. (Psalm 104:5; 115:16; Ecclesiastes 1:4) God will bless obedient people with perfect health and everlasting life in an earthly paradise.​—Psalm 37:11,* They are in total error in their beliefs concerning the things of the future.

This group of people were all given white Robes, holding palm branches in their hands as they stood before the one who sat on the throne. *The white robes were emblems of innocence or righteousness, uniformly represented as the raiment of the inhabitants of heaven.*

*The palms branches in their hands represents “Emblems of victory” Branches of the palm-tree were carried by the victors in the athletic contests of Greece and Rome, and in triumphal processions. It has been said The palm-tree - straight, elevated, majestic - was an appropriate emblem of triumph.*

These people were not just standing there observing the scenic picture of what was happening, they were there to worship the one on the throne and the Lamb. As our Lord made his way to Jerusalem,

***A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. [9] The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” [10] When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” [11] The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.” Matthew 21:8-11.***

As the Lord sent Moses to deliver his people from under the cruel hand of Pharaoh. He did not deliver them for them to sit and do nothing. He told Pharaoh, *Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. Exodus 8:1.* Worship is very important to God, and he won’t permit anyone to interfere with his worship.

You may recalled what Jesus said to the woman he met at the well. He told her, ***Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” John 4:23-24.***

These people who stood there before the Lamb and the one who sat on the throne, are those who fought the good fight, who ran their race, and kept the faith. The scripture said, ***Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day---and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2Timothy 4:8.***

***7:10-12.***

***And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” [11] All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [12] saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”***

This seem to be a continuation of the jubilant worship experience we spoke about earlier. I can just envisioned the beautiful melody that was coming from the lips of men and women from every language, culture, nation under heaven. In worship, there is a “call and a response” which tells us there were, Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and base.

Keeping in mind the twenty four Elders had instruments in their hands, which indicates music while the vocalist were singing.

They were singing as loud as they can: “***Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” [11] All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [12] saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”***

In this atmosphere, no unclean spirit was able to be present, which means no sickness could be there, no more death. In one of the later chapters, John wrote, *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. [4] 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes.* ***There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” [5] He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*** *Revelations 21:3-5*

 It is then we will see the fulfillment of what the Lord said to Moses to say to those he delivered from Egypt. ***Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, [26] and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span. Exodus 23:25-26.***

In this atmosphere, the very Angels; the Elders along with the four living creatures fell prostrate before the Lord. The sight was so powerful, no one was able to stand before the one on the throne and the Lamb.

The scriptures said that, *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, [10] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil.2:9-11.* Even those who refuse to acknowledge Him as Lord, will be force to do so.

 ***7:13-14.***

***Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes---who are they, and where did they come from?” [14] I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***

John continues to share his vision of what he was seeing as the sixth seal was opened. This part of the vision had to do with this foreign group of people, who did not look like the ones that were being numbered.

He was being questioned by one of the Elders, who are these in white robes? Of course John had no clue. He was not in a position to answer that question. They looked different from the Angels, and had the resemblance of human, but John could not tell who they were or where they came from.

The Elder said, ***These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***

The word rendered “**tribulation**” - meaning “affliction,” though perhaps there is here an allusion to persecution. The sense, however, would be better expressed by the phrase great trials, the Elder here seem to be referring to those who by their sufferings had been sanctified and prepared for heaven, in order to encourage those who might be yet called to suffer.

The writer to the Hebrews said this as he is addressing those who were part of the roll call of faith. ***And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, [33] who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. [35] Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. [36] Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. [37] They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--- [38] the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. Hebrews 11:32-28.***

These are the ones Jesus spoke about, *“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:9-13.*

Simply because of the increase of wickedness, we will see an increase of attacks against those who are members of the body of Christ. Once we take a stand against the sin of this world, we should be prepared for what is coming.

The three Hebrew boys in the days of Daniel had to decide what they would do, especially after being threatened by the leaders of the country.

 ***Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. [17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. [18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. ” Daniel 3:16-18.***

I believe the time has come for believers to decide who they will serve. Elijah told the people, how log will they halt between two opinions? “If God be God, the serve Him”. Christian’s have been hiding for too long causing the devil to have the upper hand.

The disciples prayed when they were being threatened by the leadership. ***Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. [30] Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” Acts 4:29-30.***

Yes my brothers and sisters, serious persecution will come upon those of us who decide, for God I live and for God I die. The Lord gave us the assurance that he will never leave us nor forsake us even during those times.

***There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. [12] “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. [13] And so you will bear testimony to me. [14] But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. [15] For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. [16] You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. [17] Everyone will hate you because of me. [18] But not a hair of your head will perish. [19] Stand firm, and you will win life. Luke 21:11-19.***

 ***7:15-17.***

***Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. [16] 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. [17] For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' ”***

These are very encouraging words for those of us who are left behind as we go through the various trials in.

There was an old song that we sang back in the Islands, it says, “we shall have a grand time, up in heaven, we shall have a grand time, walking with the angels, singing in Hallelujah, we shall have a grand time up in heaven”. This is false hope, because as we study the scriptures, there is no such thing.

Those of us who will be in the presence of God will have responsibilities. The scriptures said, we will be serving the Lord Day and night. The word “serve” is really worship, and worship is to serve.

Here on earth, we have so many distractions, that cause believers to make choices, we decide what is priority, and for some, the things of the kingdom is not on our priority list, although the scriptures said, “seek ye first the kingdom of Gd and his righteousness”. To some, that means if we have the time. The things of the kingdom are only a priority when the doctor calls and give us some bad news, it is then we begin to make promises to God.

The scriptures said, ***Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them”--- [2] before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; [3] when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; [4] when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when people rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; [5] when people are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags itself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then people go to their eternal home and mourners go about the streets. [6] Remember him---before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well, [7] and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Eccl.12:1-7.***

These are great and precious promises the Lord have made to those who remain faithful to him. To spend eternity with the one who is called the ancient of Days. The psalmist said, *Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. [11] For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. Psalm 84:10-11.*

Jesus warned us, *“Watch out that no one deceives you. [5] For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. Matthew 24:4-5.*

Again John is reminding us that there will be a time when God ***“will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” [5] He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Revelations 21:4-5.***

It may look like the church is defeated, and the Devil is winning, but be encourage saints, because the devil is trying desperately to intimidate believers by causing them to believe he is in charge, but Jesus said, *But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. [8] When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: [9] about sin, because people do not believe in me; [10] about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; [11] and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. John 16:7-11.*

**Chapter 8**

***8:1-5. “Seventh Seal”***

***When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. [2] And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. [3] Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. [4] The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand. [5] Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.***

The opening of the seventh seal initiates the seven trumpets of judgements. These are partial judgements of God on the earth. (Chp.8-9;11:15-19) while the judgements of the seven bowls (Chp. 16) are more severe. The seven trumpet judgement will announce the seven bowls of judgment. (Chp. 16:1-21).

As this last seal was being broken open, there seem to be a pause, as though when one takes a deep breath to observe what was being done thus far, before releasing his final judgments. During that time, there was total silence in heaven. One could hear a pin dropped. It has been said there is always a calm before the storm.

**Seven Angels:** perhaps these are the same angels John saw earlier in chapter one. (Rev.1:4), which are the seven spirits he wrote about who stood before the throne. It is most likely that the one who presented the trumpets to these angels was the one who sat on the throne. We must remember that angels are called ministering spirits, or messengers. ***Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? Heb.1:14***

Currently there are angels that are standing before the throne awaiting their orders to bring judgment on this earth. Such judgment will be so severe that mankind will not be able to bear what is coming, simply because man failure to repent of their sin.

***8:3.***

***Another angel, who had a golden censer, came, and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne***

Much discussion was not given about what kind of angel this angel was, but what he was about to do.The golden sensor he carried contained the prayers of the saints. This tells us that all prayers are being taken into account, even those from the smallest child to the oldest person.

Perhaps it is the reason why James the apostle wrote, (… the prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective) James 5:16b. The old English poet William Cowper said, the devil trembles when the weakest saint is on their knees.

If prayer was not important, then Jesus would not have spent so much time doing it. He recognized it would have been impossible for him to complete his father’s assignment without the help of the father.

We must keep in mind what his assignment was, he came to destroy the **works** of the Devil. (John 3:8). He did not come to destroy the Devil, only the works of the Devil. The works of the devil are being described in John 10:10.

Jesus did not only come to destroy the works of the devil, but also he came to reconcile man back to God. *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: [19] that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 2Cor.5:18-19.*

When Jesus was about to face his greatest challenge in his earthly life, he was seen going to the place of prayer, crying out to his father, *“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” [40] Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. [41] “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26:39-41.*

This prayer he offered up is also in that golden sensor being mixed with incense. Whether it is an individual of a group, in times of impending danger, people tend to cry out to God, even if they don’t usually pray of go to church.

In spite of what the news are broadcasting, and our politicians are saying and are putting laws in place to create fear in people, mankind will still find ways to seek God for help in time of trouble, and because of the love God has for man, he always come to their rescue.

The psalmist declared, *some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. [18] They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. [19] Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. [20] He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. [21] Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. [22] Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy. Psalm 107:17-22.*

This angel standing before the throne with this golden censor contained the prayers of the saints of God. Those who cried out to him day and night like the widow who Jesus described in the gospel. She sought justice against her adversary, *And* ***will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? [8] I tell you; he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:7-8.***

The scripture said much incense was given to the angel to be mixed with the prayers of the saints. This creates billows of smoke which rises before the throne of God. For that level of smoke to take place, there must be fire somewhere, for without fire, there is no smoke. If there is ever a building being burned, one can see from a distance smoke raising to the sky even before the see the fire.

This angel took fire from the altar, mixed it with what was in the bowl and hurled it toward the earth. This creates major turmoil in the atmosphere, it seems to disrupt the normal operation of how things are being done. John described it as *peals of thunder; rumblings; flashing of lighting and an earthquake.*

I recalled sitting on my deck once with some friends, and suddenly the clouds became very dark. Then suddenly there was such a very bright lighting that flashes across the sky which caused the phone wires connected to my house sparked. That was followed by such a violent loud thunder. I am not usually fearful of such things, but that day, everyone ran inside to take shelter.

I imagine what John saw was much worse than what happened on that day at my home. John was not describing something he happen to see in some community, but this disruption will take place all over the world. Sometimes we will see some of this in one part of the country, while other parts are having a good time, but this will not be so when that angel empty his censor out upon the earth.

This agony will cause people to behave abnormal, and instead of running to God for refuge, their hearts will cause men to seek refuge in other places, but where can one find safety if it is not in God.

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. [2] Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, [3] though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.* *Psalm 46:1-3 NIV*

***8:6-7***

***Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. [7] The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.***

As these angels prepare to sound the trumpets, time for intercession for the land is over. Remember the words of Ezekiel as he prophesied. *“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. [31] So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord.” Ezekiel 22:30-31.*

This is where the mercies and patience of God seem to come to an end, man have played around with the mercies of God for such a long time, while he has been patient with men. The scriptures said, *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”. 2 Peter 3:8-9.*

We can see how patient God is toward man even while we behave in such a sinful manner, his arms are outstretched toward us, calling us to come to him so we can escape the wrath that will be doing upon man if they fail to repent. The lord said to the church in Thyatira, *I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. Rev.2:21.*

Due to the unwillingness of man to take advantage of this time and search for the Lord, man have played around with religion, make fun of God’s word and his church, believing they have all the time in the world, but time does not belong to man.

*From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. [27] God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. Acts 17:26-27.*

This judgment God was about to unleash upon the earth was never intended for mankind. He loved man so much that he will do everything in his power to save man from experiencing his wrath. I can imagine how painful it is for God to see one of his prize possessions, whom he allowed his son go go through what he did to rescue man, and to see man reject his mercies during their lifetime, and leave this world without taking advantage of the wonderful love he offers.

The sound of the trumpet from the first angel, added to the pain man already were experience in from all that went on in the past. Hail and fire mixed with blood falling upon all those who rejected his mercies. I would not wish this upon even my enemies. The pain and suffering will be unbearable.

In the parable Jesus gave about the rich man in the gospel. He cried out to Abraham.***'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*** *[25] “But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. [26] And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' [27] “He answered,* ***'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, [28] for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'*** *[29] “Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' [30] “‘No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' [31] “He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’” Luke 16:24-31.*

As early as the time of Job hail was understood to be an emblem of the divine displeasure, and an instrument in inflicting punishment upon mankind.

***8:8-10.***

***The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, [9] a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.***

Whenever a star falls, and especially if it falls into the sea, it causes major problems for the sea environment, not only it affects the marine lifestyle, but there are times when it erupts the sea causing tsunamis causing the death of many people, and responsible to destroying many communities.

Perhaps what we saw the Lord did in Egypt, using the ten plagues was just a sign of part of his judgments against sin.

***Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt---on people and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.” [23] When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So, the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt; [24] hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. [25] Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields---both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. [26] The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were. Exo.9:22-26***

What the Lord did to Sodom and it surrounded cities tells what He is capable of doing when he decides to bring judgment upon man.

The Lord told Lothe was unable to bring judgment upon those cities while Lot was still living among them***,*** and Lot begged to send him to a nearby city where he could be spared. ***“Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. [22] But flee there quickly because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (That is why the town was called Zoar.) [23] By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. [24] Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah---from the Lord out of the heavens. [25] Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities---and also the vegetation in the land.*** ***Genesis 19:21-25 NIV***

We can see from the scriptures that God will not bring his wrath upon the earth while the church is still here. The church must be removed first. Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonia.

*And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. [7] For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, [10] and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie [12] and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 2Thess.2:6-12*

As long as the church is here, God will not unleash his full wrath upon man, but there is coming a time. When he will remove his church, and at that time the angels who have been standing ready will release their full wrath upon the earth. The earth has never experience anything as such and will never again witness such wrath.

One third of earth population will suffer. The last study of earth’s population being done in 2020 claim earth population is approximately 7,753,000,000 billion people, which one third of it is 2,584,333,333,333. That is a lot of people who will die from the judgment of the second angel.

**World Population by Year:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **World Population** |
| 2020 | 7,794,798,739 |
| 2019 | 7,713,468,100 |
| 2018 | 7,631,091,040 |

***8:10- 11.***

***The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water--- [11] the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.***

John seems to describe what he was seeing as ball of fire, blazing like a torch. When it landed on the waters of the earth, everything became bitter. As the children of Israel were traveling, they came upon a pond, but the water was bitter. They were not able to drink because they would have died. They named that place “Mara” which means bitter. God told Moses to take a branch and put it into the water, and the water was transformed from bitter to sweet, allowing the people to continue their journey.

One of the messianic names of Jesus is the “branch”. He is the only one who can take the bitter experience some have gone through and make something beautiful from it.

John said the name of the star was called “wormwood” *(state or source of bitterness or grief).* From the lesson we learnt from the children of Israel when they came to the pond, it is obvious when people are in the state of being bitter, the possibility of them hurting others and themselves are great. The people were angry with Moses, that they accused him of bringing the to this place to destroy them. Exodus. 15.

Those people suffered from shortness of memory. They forget the wonderful things God did for them, even while the rest of Egypt suffered under the wrath of God, simply because they had a wicked ruler. The children of Israel were kept safe from any of the plagues that the lord sent upon the Egyptians.

***8:12-13.***

***The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night. [13] As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!”***

**Chapter 9**

Before we begin this chapter, let us explore this question being asked by the Disciples of Jesus, after he told them about the destruction of the temple. They asked him to tell them, *when will this happen; what will be the sign of your coming, when shall be the end of the age?*

These three questions have always been a concern down through the years, as some have even predicted the answers to these three questions, even though Jesus gave them clues to the answers, they still could not understand, that they further asked him after his resurrection, *Lord are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom of Israel? Acts 1:6.*

Their ability to understand what his mission was blocked from them. They were able to see before their very eyes was. Jesus was not concerned about setting up another worldly kingdom, he was about another kind of kingdom.

*Once, on being asked by the Pharisees* ***when the Kingdom of God would come,*** *Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, [21] nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst.” [22] Then he said to his disciples, “The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. [23] People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. [24] For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. [25] But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. [26] “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. [27] People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. [28] “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. [29] But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. Luke 17:20-30 NIV.*

In the entire chapter of Matthew 24, Jesus took the time to share with us what to expect, and we see him going even further throughout the book of Revelations to further share with us what will happen and when it will happen.

Although it seems as though it is taking a long time for what we have read about to take place, it will surely come to pass not in our time but in His time.

The religious leaders in his day asked him to show them a sign, *He replied, “When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' [3] and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. [4] A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away. Matthew 16:2-4.*

The apostle Peter said, *“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them---bringing swift destruction on themselves. [2] Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. [3] In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping”. 2 Peter 2:1-3.*

The revelation of Jesus could not have come at a better time, for those of us who are behind to read and understand, so we can escape all that is to come. The scriptures said, “*Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. Revelations 1:3.*

 ***9:1-11***

***The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. [2] When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.***

***[3] And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. [4] They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. [5] They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes.***

***[6] During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. [8] Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9] They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. [10] They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails, they had power to torment people for five months.***

***[11] They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).***

There was such a difference when the fourth Angel sounded his trumpet. The announcement he made was frightening as he proclaimed three “woe’s”. The wrath of God that was about to be released upon mankind was unbearable.

Mankind has never experienced any such disaster during any of the generations in the past. John said, *As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!” Revelation 8:13*

As the fifth Angel sounded his trumpet, the earth was about to witness the effect of the first woe. What John saw had the appearance of a star, but I am sure it was not a part of the heavenly bodies. This had to be one of the fallen angels, to his was given a key to the abyss.

**Abyss:** *(bottomless" or "bottomless pit"). It describes an immeasurable depth, the underworld, the lower regions, the abyss of Sheol. In Romans 10:7, quoted from Deuteronomy 30:13, the abyss (the abode of the lost dead) is substituted for the sea.*

This place is not where those who sleep in the Lord are. This is where those who refused to accept the gift of God are and there is no hope of redemption for anyone who goes there.

As the angel opened the abyss, smoke began to rise so much that it had the appearance like an erupted volcano. The entire sky seemed to be covered with smoke. The scripture said, it is like a gigantic furnace was opened.

People from places where there are volcanos, are constantly being warned to pay attention to any sign of rumblings sounds from the equators. Few years ago, the island of St Vincent was covered with the ash from the volcano, that people had to evacuate from their homes fleeing for safety.

The smoke that rose from the abyss was so thick, it was very scary to be in it, also from the smoke, scorpion looking objects were being released to attack mankind. These frightful looking demonic insects were moving as though they were on an assignment, with a leader giving them instructions.

As they moved along the earth, they were not just attacking anyone, they were looking for certain people who did not have the seal of God upon them. I recalled my wife had a vision where she saw the nations, and everything looked fine. Then something happened; she saw military solders moving quickly among the nations looking for certain people.

These demonic objects were instructed not to harm the vegetation of the land, but only those without the “seal of God.”

**“Seal of God”.** The Holy Spirit is the seal of God as mentioned in the scriptures, ***And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*** *Ephesians**4:30.*

*In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, [12] in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. [13] And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.* ***When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession---to the praise of his glory.*** *Ephesians 1:11-14 NIV*

*But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. [11] And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Romans 8:10-11.*

As the billows of smoke rise from the Abyss, the smoke that rise block the sunlight. I have seen buildings on fire before and the smoke could be seen for miles, it can be seen long before you even get close to where the fire was.

I have heard of the last volcano eruption in St. Vincent, the ashes were so thick, if the people did not remove it quickly, and it rained, it would have become as hard as a rock, making it difficult to move. People had to be evacuated to spare their lives.

This was no ordinary smoke, because from within the smoke, there were these horrible looking things. John described them as locusts. ***The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. [8] Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9] They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. [10] They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails, they had power to torment people for five months.***

 As these locusts moved throughout the earth, they were given authority to torment those who did not have the seal of God for five months. This is the time man would wish death can take them, but death flee from man during that time. This is the first time where man will see death running from them, seeking shelter, nothing like this have ever happened since the beginning of creation.

These horrible looking things were instructed not to kill, only to torment men. There are some who are going through difficulty in their health, and they wish they could die.

The torment from these things was beyond the wildest imagination, even though we are reading though this, we are unable to comprehend the intensity of the pain these things will inflict upon mankind. With all the warnings God has given, man refusal to believe God will do such things to those he sent His Son to die for.

*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:8-9.*

Jesus warned us to “be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”. The scriptures also give us a clear picture of the condition of the world before Jesus returns, it said, “*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”* It is becoming increasingly obvious that, to understand what the world was like in the days of Noah, we only need to take a look at the events of this day, and we will get a sense of how close we are to the coming of the return of our Lord.

***9:12-21.***

***The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.***

***The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. [14] It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”***

***[15] And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. [16] The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.***

***[17] The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur.***

***[18] A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. [19] The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.***

***[20] The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood---idols that cannot see or hear or walk. [21] Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.***

The intensity of the wrath of God continues upon those who refused to accept God’s gift of salvation. As these plagues continue to torment mankind. One would think the hearts of men would be willing to turn to God for forgiveness for their rebellion, but men still refuse to repent, instead of turning to God, the only one who could save them, they sought relief from other sources, so that they can continue in their sinful lifestyle.

King Solomon wrote, “*When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong. [12] Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. Eccl. 8:11-12*

We have lived long enough to witness the wrath of God upon those who do wrong, and instead of them repenting, they prefer to continue in sin. They find it very difficult to bring themselves to the place where they can cry out to God for his mercy.

Hence, the warning from the writer to the Hebrews, “*See to it brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. [13] But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. [14] We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. [15] As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.” [16] Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? [17] And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? [18] And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? [19] So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.* *Hebrews 3:12-19 NIV.*

The scriptures tell us there is a sin that cannot be forgiven, *“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. [32] Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come”. Matthew 12:31-32.*

This wrath of this second woe, was even worse than that of the first. It appears the Lord was angrier because of men’s failure to seek his mercy, they continue to rebel against him, therefore, he commanded the four Angels who was assigned to hold the river Euphrates to release it.

**Euphrates River**: - (*Fruitfulness; break forth; Rushing)*

*The river, mentioned by name twenty-one times in the KJV Bible, is one of the four rivers that parted from the main waterway that nourished the Garden of Eden. Starting at the Persian Gulf, it runs northwest through the ancient areas of Chaldea, Babylonia, and Mesopotamia.*

*God considered the Euphrates the northernmost boundary of the land he promised Abraham and which he gave to the children of Israel as an inheritance (Genesis 15:18, Exodus 23:31, Joshua 1:4, etc.).*

When the river was release, an army that was decided by John as so deadly, that they were given authority the destroy one third of earth’s population using fire, smoke, and sulfur.

Fire and smoke can do severe damage to people, that when there is a fire, the authorities recommend the occupants to leave the building. This is not just one building, it is the entire earth population will be affected. Every nation will be affected by it.

The scripture said, “***The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood---idols that cannot see or hear or walk. [21] Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality, or their thefts”.***

People were still enjoying their sinful ways and continue in the ways because of their unbelief and the heart’s desire to enjoy the pleasures of sin. They refuse to repent, and just as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the end.

*“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. [27] People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. Luke 17:26-27.*

*“It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying, and selling, planting and building. [29] But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. Luke 17:28-29*

The scripture said, *Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, [2] for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [3] While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. [4] But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. [5] You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. [6] So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. [7] For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 1 Thess. 5:1-7.*

**Chapter 10**

***Revelation 10:1-11 NIV***

***Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. [2] He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, [3] and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.***

***[4] And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.” [5] Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. [6] And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “There will be no more delay!***

 ***[7] But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.***

***[8] Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: “Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” [9] So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.’” [10] I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. [11] Then I was told, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.”***

This Angel appeared to be quite different from the others who were given the trumpets of judgements, for he is being described as “**mighty**”, this symbolized he was unique in his appearance, and his character, even mission was quite different from the others.

When we would travel, especially during the daytime, as the aircraft sour above the clouds, it gives the appearance as though the aircraft is just sailing with the clouds holding the aircraft up, with the clouds beneath.

in John’s vision, this Angel appeared to be clothed with the clouds, with a rainbow over his head. The sign of the rainbow was a sign of the covenant God made, he promised himself never to destroy the earth by water again after he saw the destruction the water did during the days of Noah.

*And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: [13] I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. [14] Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, [15] I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. [16] Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” Genesis 9:12-16.*

Today we have those from a certain community who uses the sign of the rainbow as their sign, which is nothing but an insult to the covenant God made with the earth. This Angel had the sign of the rainbow above his head, with his face had the radiance of the sun.

Not only was the appearance of this Angel magnificent, but his strength was amazing. John said he was a mighty Angel, for he had the ability to put one of his feet on the earth and the other on the sea.

This is the sign of one who has the authority as a conqueror. He is caused his enemies to submit to his authority, whether they are on land or in the sea. There was no fear in him, because of the one who sent him was with him.

**A little scroll.**

This scroll in his hand was opened, which says he was about to say some unpleasant things that may not be too pleasant for the ears of man. John said he gave a shout that sounded like the roar of a lion.

Those of us who are familiar with National Geographic, are quite familiar with the roar of a hungry lion. The sound is different from when lions are just playing. What John heard seem to have awaken the voices of seven thunders.

**Seven thunders:** these signify certain aspects of God’s coming wrath and judgement. The scriptures said, *Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. Rev.8:5.*

Also, John wrote in a later chapter. *Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a severe hailstorm. Revelations 11:19*

John was not permitted to record the things that were being disclosed from the sound of the seven thunders. This tells us there are some judgements that will come upon men that John was not permitted to tell us, therefore, although there are many prophets today, no one can fore tell what kind of wrath God will put upon man, even though some were foretold by John, there are some that remain hidden until the time for them to be revealed.

The Angel swore there will be no more delay. The time had come for God’s total judgement to be revealed upon man. This is considered the end of the ages, time stood still. This reminds us of the days of Noah.

***As it was in the days of Noah,*** *so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; [39] and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Matthew 24:37-39.*

*Now, brothers and sisters,* ***about times and dates we do not need to write to you,*** *[2] for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [3]* ***While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly,*** *as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.*

**No More Delay:**

*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. [10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. 2 Peter 3:8-10.*

This Angel currently is awaiting the time for him to fulfill his assignment, when he will announce that time should come to an end. There will be no more opportunities given to man for him to get right with his creator.

Each time that I must officiate at a home-going, I always ask myself the question, I wonder if this person have used any of the time allotted to him, if he ever offered any of his time back to God?

As much as we as pastors love to speak well about the decease, the only one who can give a positive answer to that question is the Lord himself.

The writer to the Hebrews said, *So, as the Holy Spirit says: “****Today, if you hear his voice, [8] do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,*** *[9] where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. [10] That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' [11] So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.’” Hebrews 3:7-11*

This reminds us of what John saw when the fifth seal was opened. *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. [10] They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” [11] Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been. Revelation 6:9-11.*

***10:7. But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.***

**Mystery of God:** during this period following the sound of the seventh trumpet, all the prophesies God had revealed through his prophets about the final days of man on earth will come to pass.

Today, there are so many who claimed to be prophets who are prophesying about the end times. The danger here is unless we stay close to the Lord, we could be easily deceived by them.

The scriptures said, *“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. [23] At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. [24] For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [25] See, I have told you ahead of time. Matthew 24:22-25.*

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae, “*My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding,* ***in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,*** *[3] in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col.2:2-3.*

**10: *8-10***

***Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: “Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” [9] So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.’” [10] I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.***

The scroll is the word of God. For whenever one receives the word, it brings an enlightenment to the person.

The psalmist said, *“The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. [8] The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. [9] The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. [10] They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. [11] By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:7-11 NIV*

The writer to the Hebrews said, *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. [13] Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account”. Hebrews 4:12-13.*

It is the word of God that helps us to live with clean hands and a pure heart. Clean hands have to do with our dealings with each other; Pure heart has to do with our relationship with the Lord God.

It is the word the prepares us to meet with our God, it is not by our works of righteousness, even as some may think, but it is all because of the mercies of our God. *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith---and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph 2:8-9*

***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it---not forgetting what they have heard but doing it---they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:22-25.***

**Chapter 11**

***Revelation 11:1-6 NIV***

***I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. [2] But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.***

The prophet Ezekiel also had a similar vision. *The man said to me, "Son of man, look and listen carefully. Pay close attention to everything I'm going to show you. That's why you've been brought here. And then tell Israel everything you see." [5]* ***First I saw a wall around the outside of the Temple complex. The measuring stick in the man's hand was about ten feet long. He measured the thickness of the wall: about ten feet. The height was also about ten feet. Ezekiel 40:4-5 MSG***

The measuring reed was given to John in the vision, and he was commanded to measure the “Temple of God”

The prophet Zechariah said, *I looked up and was surprised to see a man holding a tape measure in his hand. I said, "What are you up to?" "I'm on my way," he said, "to survey Jerusalem, to measure its width and length." Just then the Messenger-Angel on his way out met another angel coming in and said, "Run! Tell the Surveyor, 'Jerusalem will burst its walls- bursting with people, bursting with animals. And I'll be right there with her'-GOD's Decree-'a wall of fire around unwalled Jerusalem and a radiant presence within.'" Zech.2:1-5. MSG.*

The measuring of the Temple and the altar signify God’s measuring of the spiritual condition of his people. {Ezekiel. 40; Zech.2)

That which is being used to measure the spiritual condition of the land is not what law of the land described as what they considered as spirituality. The world cannot determine what should be the spiritual condition of the church, even as there are some who claim they are the spiritual one, for example the pope of the Catholic Church says, or even some religious organization said.

It is the word of God that will be used to measure the spiritual condition of the people. The word of God is also called the “Plum line”;

It is that which is the rule and measure of doctrine and faith; and by it all doctrine is to be tried and measured, and whatsoever is not agreeably to it is not of God, nor to be accepted, but it is to be rejected; and it is the rule and measure of all discipline, worship, and practice; it lays down the plan of a Gospel church, which should be gathered out of the world, and separated from it;

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, [17] so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*

***11:3-6.***

***And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” [4] They are “the two olive trees” and the two lamp-stands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.” [5] If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. [6] They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.***

There are some who interpret these witnesses as two system, or two or the major prophets, but the language here as John describes it sounds like they are Elijah and Moses. My reason for this is because God used Moses to turn the water into blood.

**Moses: -** *The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt---over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs---and they will turn to blood.' Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone.” Exo.7:19.*

**Elijah: -**  *Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.” 1 Kings 17:1.*

It is possible that these two men might not be the ones John is referring to, when he spoke about the two witnesses, perhaps the Lord meant two others, but what we do know about these witnesses is that authority will be given to them to prophesy for 42 months.

*They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. Revelation 11:6.*

These two witnesses seem to be untouchables. They were fearless and very bold in the prophetic words they were sharing. Considering how fearless Elijah was when he challenged the prophets of Baal who belonged to Jezebel.

*So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. [21] Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing. 1Kings 18:20-21*

John did not reveal the words of the prophecy from these witnesses, but those who oppose and challenged them suffered at their hands.

 ***11:7***

***Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them and overpower and kill them.***

*When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. [3] And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. [7] The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. [8] Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9] They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. [10] They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails, they had power to torment people for five months. [11]* ***They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).*** *Revelation 9:2-3,7-11.*

The Beast may refer to one of two beasts described by John. 13:1-10 speaks of the first beast being described as the ([Antichrist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antichrist)). He rises "out of the sea" and is given authority and power by [the dragon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpents_in_the_Bible).

This first beast is initially described in verse 7, as emerging from the [abyss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abyss_%28religion%29). His appearance is described in detail in [Revelation 13](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revelation_13):1–10, and some of the mystery surrounding it is revealed in [Revelation 17](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revelation_17):7–18.

In Revelation 13:11–18, the second beast, later known as [the false prophet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_prophet#The_false_prophet_of_Revelation), comes "out of the Abyss" and forces everyone on earth to worship the first beast.

In their fight against God, the two beasts join forces with the dragon. They will persecute the "saints" and those who do not "worship the image of the beast and influence the kings of the earth through three unclean spirits to gather for the battle of [Armageddon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armageddon).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beast_%28Revelation%29#cite_note-1) The two beasts are defeated by Christ and are thrown into the [lake of fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_of_Fire) Being mentioned in [Revelation 19](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revelation_19):18–20.

The death of these two witnesses will be celebrated by all who live on the earth, for they will refuse to bury them. They wanted everyone to see what will happen to all those who refuse to follow the wicked ways of the men on earth.

 ***11:11-12.***

***But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. [12] Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.***

The dead coming back to life was really a shock, not only to the ones responsible for slaying them, but for the entire world. Men were celebrating their death, to the point they declared that day to be a public holiday. The miracle of all this was when life returned to these men, they did not stay on earth, but were transported to heaven.

This experience is really encouraging for those of us who put our trust in the Lord. *“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. [14] For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. [15] According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever”. 1 Thess. 4:13-17*

For those of us that put our trust in the Lord, even for those who died or were martyred for the gospel sake, the grave is not the end, it is just the beginning of the new life that the Lord promised to those who love him.

 ***11:13-14.***

***At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. [14] The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.***

The scriptures refer to many earthquakes that will take place as part of the judgement of God. One would think that because of these series of earthquakes, the hearts of men will become humble and turn to God for pardon for their sinful lifestyle, but that is far from the truth.

During our generation, there have been so many earthquakes, yet we see men continue in their wicked behavior.

Tuesday Jan. 12th 2010, the country of Haiti was hit with such a devastating earthquake with a magnitude of 7.9. It was estimated that 316 thousand lives were lost. Although I have never visited that country, but the crime and corruption in that country have continued even to this very day.

This was the worst earthquake i have ever heard of that hit a country during my lifetime. From that time there were earthquakes at various places taking the lives of thousands of people, but the hearts of men remained hardened toward the Lord.

Feb. 27, 2010: A magnitude 8.8 quake shakes Chile, generating a tsunami and killing 524 people.

Jan. 12, 2010: In Haiti, a staggering 316,000 people are killed by a magnitude 7.0 quake, according to government estimates. Sept. 30, 2009:

More than 1,100 people die when a magnitude 7.5 quake hits southern Sumatra, Indonesia.

John said, as these two witnesses were caught up at that very hour, there was an earthquake, that destroyed 1/10 of the city taking over 7000 lives. It caused such a fear upon the city that those who escaped death gave glory to God.

After the hurricane that strike my Island when I was a boy, the people thought the world was coming to an end. People were running to the church like i have never seen, they were expecting the Lord to rescue them from what they had no clue of, but as soon as the fear is past, people went back to their same lifestyle. One could nearly see any effect it had on the lives of the people.

This is the wrath of God that the second woe that has being passed upon men by the flying Angel John saw. Let us reflect on these trumpets again.

*The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.*

*[8] The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, [9] a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

*[10] The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water--- [11] the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.*

*[12] The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and a third of the night. [13] As I watched****, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!” Revelation 8:7-13 NIV***

That word “Woe” really means Woe*means “grief, anguish, affliction, wretchedness, calamity, or trouble.”.* What the Angel saw that was about to befall mankind when the last three woes were said, he could not help but cried “woe; woe; woe”.

It is just as the older saints would say, “if you knew what is good for you, you would stop from doing what you are doing”. Some of us believe that will never happen to me, but little do we know, we are no different from those who gone on ahead of us.

***11:15-19.***

***The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.” [16] And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, [17] saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. [18] The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small---and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” [19] Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a severe hailstorm.***

**Kingdom of the world: -** “**Daniel’s vision” “the four beasts”**

*'The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. [18] But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever---yes, for ever and ever.' [19] “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws---the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. [20] I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell---the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. [21] As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, [22] until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. [23] “He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. [24] The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. [25] He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. [26] “‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. [27] Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' Daniel 7:17-27.*

In Daniel’s vision, he described the beasts as that of a Lion; Bear; Leopard; he was. not able to describe the forth beast, except by its appearance. *“After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast---****terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.*** *Daniel 7:7*

These beasts that Daniel saw arise from the stormy sea, which tells us of the various troubles our world will be in, and what is seen in the current war between Russia vs Ukraine cannot be compared with what’s coming.

They all have the appearance of something that is monstrous looking, which tells us what their intentions are. None of these rulers will be well liked, they are all brutal in their leadership, what we see Russia is doing in the Ukraine will be kids’ stuff comparing what these leaders will be doing.

**The lion with its eagles’ wings,** represents Babylon with its swift conquests. (Statues of winged lions have been recovered from the Babylonians ruins)

**The bear that ravaged the lion** is Medo-Persia . The three ribs in his mouth represents the conquest of three major enemies.

**The Leopard is Greece: -** Its wings speak of the swiftness of Alexander the Great campaign as he conquered much of the civil world. The leopard four heads are the four divisions of the Greek empire after Alexander’s death.

**The fourth beast points top both Rome and the end times.** Bible scholars believe the horns correspond to the ten kings who will reign shortly before the Lord sets up his everlasting kingdom.

This vision of Daniel reveals that the Messiah will become the ruler of another kingdom which is spiritual, and this kingdom will overpower all the other kingdoms and they will also submit to its ruler ship.

***And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, [17] saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. [18] The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small---and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” Rev.11:16-18.***

These are the same elders John wrote about earlier that are constantly before the throne of God. John said, *“Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. Rev.4:4.*

Worship was a regular practice of these elders. As mortals we get bored easily, after a while we want to experience change. Someone said Variety is the “spice of life”, but when it has to do with the Lord, it really does not matter how many times we tell him thanks, he never gets tired of hearing us say thanks.

The psalmist encourages us to “*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. [2] Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. [3] Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. [4] Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. [5] For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations”. Psalm 100:1-5.*

These elders have been worshipping God from the very beginning, and because he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, these elders’ worship from one generation to another.

The song they sang, *“****We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. [18] The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small---and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” Rev.11:17-18.***

 ***11:19***

***Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a severe hailstorm.***

**Ark of the Covenant: -** This was a sacred chest built by the Israelites, under exact specifications given to them by God. It included a pledge by God that he would dwell among his people and give them guidance from the mercy seat on the top of the Ark. The Ark was an important foreshadowing of Jesus Christ as the sole place of atonement for sins.

*Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. [2] A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. [3] Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, [4] which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. [5] Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now. [6] When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. [7] But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. [8] The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. [9] This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. [10] They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings---external regulations applying until the time of the new order. Hebrews 9:1-10.*

This was a photo type of what the real tabernacle was like. The scripture said, “the temple was opened”. Mankind now can see why Moses was commanded to be sure to build it the way he was instructed, because it represent the one in heaven.

As soon as it was opened, there was a sudden change in the atmosphere, the earth began to tremble, for it knew something disastrous was about to happen. It is just like when the boss call you into his office, at once fear grab hod of our heart wondering “what did I do wrong”.

What was about to take place on the earth caused it to trembles; the scriptures said, “flashes of lightening, rumblings; peals of thunder; an earthquake; and a great hailstorm. This is just a lot for mankind to experience at one time. Those who monitors the weather are already complaining about the change in the weather pattern. They have no control over what is happening, they tried to comfort the hearts of the people by coming up with some reasons, but God is the one who decides what to do and when it must be done.

*Colossians 1:16-17 NIV*

*[16] For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. [17] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

 **The words of Job. (*Job 26:2-14)***

*“How you have helped the powerless! How you have saved the arm that is feeble! [3] What advice you have offered to one without wisdom! And what great insight you have displayed! [4] Who has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth? [5] “The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them. [6] The realm of the dead is naked before God; Destruction lies uncovered. [7] He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. [8] He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. [9] He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. [10] He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness. [11] The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke. [12] By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. [13] By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent. [14] And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?”*

*For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. [8] But God found fault with the people and said: “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. [9] It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. [10] This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. [11] No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. [12] For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” [13] By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear. Hebrews 8:7-13 NIV*

**Chapter 12**

***12:1-6***

 ***A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. [2] She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. [3] Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. [4] Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. [5] She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. [6] The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.***

The vision seem to be shifted from what was shown to him before. The opening of the temple that brought serious disaster upon mankind, there seem to be a calm. This great sign John was looking at caused great concern.

The woman speaks of Israel, and she was pregnant and her baby is the birth of the church and the red dragon represent the enemy who is desperate about destroying the baby who is the church.

***But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. [27] For it is written: “Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” Gal. 4:26-27***

From the very beginning when the shepherds saw the star, and visited Herod to find out where is the king who the prophets wrote long ago was supposed to be born.

***“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Micah 5:2.***

The prophet Isaiah prophesied, *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [7] Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this”. Isa.9:6-7*

This woman was clothed with the sun, which means she will restore hope from heaven to man who reside on the earth. This was not good for the dragon, the birth of this child meant problem form the kingdom of darkness.

***Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. [4] In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:3-5.***

The word was already out there, that a savior who will redeem his people will come, therefore, the dragon had information about this one who is about to come to rescue mankind. This was going to become a treat to the dragon’s plan.

***12:3-4***

***Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. [4] Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.***

The second sign with the Red dragon with the seven heads appeared. His description of this beast was without any confusion. His clear description was also given.

**Great Dragon:-** *Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. [8] But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. [9] The great dragon was hurled down---that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Rev.12:7-9.*

The red color symbolizes his murderous character. He has nothing good about him. *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies”. John 8:44.*

 **The vision of the ten horns.**

*Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. [4] “The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. [5] “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' [6] “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. [7] “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast---terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. Daniel 7:3-7.*

**The interpretation regarding the beasts.**

*'The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. [18] But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever---yes, for ever and ever.' [19] “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws---the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. [20] I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell---the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. [21] As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, [22] until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. [23] “He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. [24] The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. [25] He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. [26] “ 'But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. [27] Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' Daniel 7:17-27 NIV*

This dragon with its seven heads; ten horns with crowns represents Satan’s power and the kingdoms of the worlds which he rules over. These are the nations with their authorities that are being controlled by Satan himself.

***Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.***

The stars that are those to the earth are most likely the angels who were cast out from heaven when Satan rebelled against the authority of the Lord, which the scriptures said the amount were one third of the Angels followed the Dragon.

These spirits are free to roam the earth and caused all kinds of problems for mankind, the even have the authority to possess the human spirit, if permission were giving.

For an unclean spirit to enter someone, permission must be giving to them, because the souls of all men belongs to God. Jesus purchased the souls of all men.

***For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. [15] And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.*** Therefore, the only one with all rights to the souls of the man is the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the woman was ready to deliver the baby, the dragon was waiting to destroy the child. This speaks of the violent battle which this child must deal with as he tries to fulfill his mission o earth. From the very time of the birth of Jesus, the dragon was on an assignment to devour him.

***12:6.***

***The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.***

There are times when God’s people must flee to safety to escape the enemy. We see the Jews leaving Egypt to escape Pharaoh’s wrath; Elijah fleeing from Jezebel and hid by the Brook Cherish, and was cared for by the ravens. 1Kings 17:2; Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath.

The days of her being in a place of refuge was 1260 days, (3 1/2 years). This is the length of time that the dragon is allowed to exercised authority and the city of Jerusalem will be trampled upon. (Rev.11:3)

***12:7-9***

***Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. [8] But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. [9] The great dragon was hurled down---that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.***

This is one place one would think would be impossible for war to take place, but it appears as one of the last push by the Devil to reclaim his position he had before he lost his position in heaven.

When the Lord asked Satan where had he been?  *Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” [8] Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” [9] “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. [10] “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. [11] But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” [12] The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Job 1:7-12 NIV*

*But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Jude 1:9 NIV*

He replied, he was roaming the earth, from east to west, from north to south. He was not just roaming the earth, for sight seeing, but he was looking for those who were vulnerable to attack them.

The scriptures said, *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. [9] Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings”. 1 Peter 5:8-9.*

Satan mission is not just to torment us, but his desire is to steal; kill and destroy as many as he can. (John 10:10) he is out on a vendetta against God for what he did to him. He is out to destroy all of God’s creation using whatever he need to do to make sure his plan succeed, therefore, we who are part of the church must be vigilant in our stand against him. We are commanded to “resist him” “standing firm in the faith”

In our own strength, we are no match for him, we desperately need the help of the Holy Spirit to resist him.

The scriptures said, *“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. [12] For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”. Eph.6:11-12.*

The battle against this enemy by our Lord Jesus, helped us understand what we are up against, whether we believe it or not, it really does not matter, because this enemy really don’t care about anyone.

Jesus recognized the need of the Holy Spirit for this what he was up against. The scriptures said, *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, [2] where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. Luke 4:1-2.*

As Satan have being given the rights to roam the earth, and no one have the authority to bind Satan and send him to hell. It really does not matter if one can pray like Elijah, God did not give that authority to man. There is coming a time when his end will come. At that time, his privileges will be revoked and at that time evil will be no more.

He will ceased from his attack on mankind. The prophet Isaiah prophesied. *“Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, [17] the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” Isaiah 14:16-17.*

Satan lost his position in heaven, and on earth, he also lost his position against those who are part of the body of Christ. It the reason why he is being described as as “roaring lion”, but for God’s people he has no authority over them.

Since he lost his position in heaven, he also lost his position on earth among the people of God, for Jesus defeated him here on earth. Jesus gave his followers authority over all the works of the devil. Jesus said, *I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. Luke 10:19.*

The institution of the church is the only institution on earth that the devil is afraid of. He hates the church, and especially those who give themselves to remain in the secret place.

***And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; [18] they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” Mark 16:17-18.***

Jesus did not leave the church helpless, as he was triumphant on earth, he wants the church also to function with the same authority. He said, *“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father”. John 14:12.*

It is evident that Satan recognized his time is shorter than he thinks, therefore, in his final push, he is causing havoc within the body of Christ, by sowing confusion among the brethren, causing believers to forget who they are and what they are called to do. We are to fight against the devil, not against our brothers and sisters.

***12:10-12.***

***Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.***

All of creation would be in a time of rejoicing because the tormentor is gone forever, there will be no more incentive bloodshed; the blood of the innocent who were killed will get justice; those who robbed the fatherless and exploited the widows will get justice.

The Salvation we have been hearing and singing and praying about will come in full power. We will see what it is to live in a world where all there is are good news, no more bad news; no more mass murders; no more depression; no more sickness and diseases; we will experience total freedom and never again to be afraid.

Satan lost once for and for all times. Never again will he have the freedom to roam the earth. What he inflicted upon men, he will have a taste of his own medicine, eternal punishment, he and the one third of the Angels who assisted him, along with those who refused to accept the gift of God, will also suffer along with him.

 ***Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. [2] I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. [4] 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” [5] He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Revelation 21:1-5.***

***12:11***

***They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.***

These are the believers who stood firm in their faith, and did not compromise with their faith, even though they were threatened by those who wanted to bring them harm.

The writer to the Hebrews said, *“Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. [36] Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. [37] They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--- [38] the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground”. Hebrews 11:35-38.*

In the answer Jesus gave to the disciples regarding when shall these things be? what shall be the sign of your coming? When shall the end come? He said *“… you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:9-13.*

All the signs Jesus spoke about are clearly seen unfolding right before our very eyes. The kingdom of God continue to be a treat to so many, even to those in the political arena. Some nations are making it very difficult for people to enjoy the freedom of religion. Many churches are operating underground for fear of their lives and the lives of their family.

Even in Africa, believers are being killed, and their families are being persecuted regularly for practicing their religion. The local government are having difficulty in granting protection for their citizens, because of those who believe being a christian are a treat to them.

Here in the USA, we still have the freedom to practice our faith, but those privileges are slowly being challenged by the authorities, and there are various groups that are pushing for their voice to be heard by the court system, thereby challenging the religious freedom of the church

Georgia; Indiana; Louisiana; Mississippi; Oklahoma; Tennessee; and So. Dakota are among the states with laws allowing the official display of the Ten Commandments. Also here in the USA, there are 24 states that have banned the murdering of the unborn, although there are some who are challenging that ban.

The scripture declared the ***righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Pro. 14:34.***

There are some who refused to accept the fact that God is still in control of the affairs in this life, but because of his love for man, he is giving man time to repent, for it is not his will for any to perish, but that all can have the opportunity to accept the gift of salvation. 2 Peter 3:3-9.

**When Daniel was challenged by someSo hopefully I'm right there I'm not thereThank you JesusThis did notOK too farThank you JesusThe day other onesOK12/11OKI love these devicesOne of these days I'm gonna make my own device that would respond to meLike you know grandson back there and he knows all this stuffAnd they are the ones who refuse to accept the fact these are the ones who refused to accept what the enemy is trying to say to them let me take off thing here becau leaders in his day. *Daniel 6:10-24 NIV***

*Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. [11] Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. [12] So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?” The king answered, “The decree stands---in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” [13] Then they said to the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.” [14] When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. [15] Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, “Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.” [16] So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!” [17] A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. [18] Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. [19] At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. [20] When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?” [21] Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! [22] My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.” [23] The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. [24] At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.*

***12:12***

***Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”***

Finally the earth can find rest, mankind can become what made us for, man can once agin experience peace, joy, good health, no more death, no more sorrow; no more pain; no hospitals; no more surgery; no more mass shootings;

The prophet Isaiah said, *“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. [18] But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. [19] I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. [20] “Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. [21] They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. [22] No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. [23] They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them. [24] Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. [25] The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the Lord. Isaiah 65:17-25*

***12:13-17***

***When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. [14] The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. [15] Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. [16] But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. [17] Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring---those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.***

The woman who gave birth, is not Mary, even as some may think, but it is Israel, for Israel is the mother who gave birth to the male child, and the dragon was waiting for the delivery of the child, and because he was unable to destroy the mother, he went after the child, which is the church.

The flood water that the dragon spewed out of his mouth is all the evil that he is releasing in the earth. The influence of social media that is to assist us in doing thing better, he has destroyed that which was meant to help mankind, and made it work against us, promoting that which is evil an very destructive.

Social media is filled with all kinds of moral filth and violence, and when our children get hold of it, and there is no restraint, they are wide open to all the bad influence Satan is pushing on them.

Once Jesus asked his disciples, *“Who do you say I am?” [16] Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” [17] Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. [18]* ***And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*** *[19****] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*** *Matthew 16:15-19 NIV*

The dragon have since been trying desperately to destroy the effectiveness of the church, by even causing some of us who represent of the church to bring shame upon the body, thereby causing the world to lose confidence in the church.

The scripture said, *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. [13] For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. [14] And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. [15] Whoever has ears, let them hear. Matthew 11:12-15*

The dragon is the enemy of God and he will always be his enemy. His intent is to totally destroy the church and anyone who is a part of the church. Remember the words of Jesus, *he comes to steal, kill and destroy. John 10:10.* This has always been his goal.

Society refuse to believe the devil is real, and lately more and more people fail to believe he is bad. Many years ago, someone wrote a poem about the Devil.

Men don't believe in a devil now,

As their fathers used to do;

They've forced the door of the broadest creed

To let his majesty through;

There isn't a print of his cloven foot

Or a fiery dart from his bow

To be found in earth and air today,

For the world has voted so.

But who is mixing the fatal draught

That palsies heart and brain,

And loads the earth of each passing year

With ten hundred thousand slain?

Who blights the bloom of the land today

With the fiery breath of hell?

If the devil isn't and never was

Won't somebody rise and tell?

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith,

And make his bow and show

How the frauds and the crimes of the day spring up?

For surely we want to know.

The devil was fairly voted out,

And of course the devil is gone;

But simple people would like to know

Who carries his business on?

For the thousands of people who refuse the devil is just a figment of imagination, they are in for a rude awakening. It is only a matter of time before mankind see how evil the dragon really is.

The prophet Isaiah said, *How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! [13] You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. [14] I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” [15] But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. [16] Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, [17] the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” Isa. 14:12-17*

**Chapter 13**

***13:1-4***

***The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. [2] The beast I saw resembled a leopard but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. [3] One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. [4] People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”***

As the vision of the end time is unfolding before John’s eyes, he sees the dragon standing on the seashore. The fact that he was not sitting or playing in the water means, his posture indicates he was about to take action that would shock the world.

 As John was watching, what appeared to be a strange beast raising out of the water. It was like thing he had ever seen. It had seven heads and ten horns. One of the horns appeared to have been wounded and was healed.

This chapter speaks of two beasts. One rising from the sea, and the other from the earth. Which represents the Antichrist and the false prophets.

The horns represent authority. Authority was given to them by the dragon. This authority was to force mankind to worship the image of the beast that was set up, and those who refused to worship it will be killed.

We must remember one of the temptations Jesus faced as he squared off against the Devil was to worship him.

*Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. [9] “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” [10] Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” Matthew 4:8-10 NIV*

Satan desires man to worship him, and if he cannot get man to worship him, then he will do everything in his power to keep man from worshipping God. Many have been deceived because they truly don’t understand worship, of what it means to worship. Perhaps what we call worship is just satisfying the flesh.

Once Jesus had a conversation with a woman regarding worship, and she told him, “*Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” [21] “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” John 4:20-24.*

Satan knows it is the thing God desires ore than anything from man. The psalmist said, *“Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. [15] Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. [16] You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. [17] My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. Psalm 51;14-17.*

When God delivered the Israelites by the hand of Moses, it was one of the first command he gave them. *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. [3] “You shall have no other gods before me. [4] “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. [5] You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:2-6 NIV.*

God knew when he placed man on earth, he is a natural worshipper, he loves to worship. As long as he worships the Lord God, he will live in peace, but if he chose to worship anything else, he will face the consequence of the wrath of God. If man fail to worship the Lord, he will be drawn to find something else to worship, and that is why God gave the people those instructions.

The very thing he warned them not to do, it was the very thing they did. The people began to worship the gods of the nations he delivered them from, and this is what brought the judgement of God upon the people and their children till this very day.

The beast from the sea is the one controls the economy. For goods and services are being transported by the sea, and the beast that rise from the earth, is the one who will enforce his authority over the human race.

***Revelation 13:7-8 NIV***

***[7] It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. [8] All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast---all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.***

This authority is for the control of the economy of the world, which means people will be forced to be part of a system that that they are against. They will be forced to make a decision, either take the mark of the beast or suffer and die.

Members of the body need to seek wisdom from God now as to how to prepare for what is about to come.

The psalmist prayed, *how long, Lord, will the wicked, how long will the wicked be jubilant? [4] They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers are full of boasting. [5] They crush your people, Lord; they oppress your inheritance. [6] They slay the widow and the foreigner; they murder the fatherless. [7] They say, “The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob takes no notice.” Psalm 94:3-7*

***13:9-10.***

***Whoever has ears, let them hear. [10] “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.***

The dragon knows when hunger hits people, they will do anything for food, especially when it comes to feeding their family, therefore, if he can control the systems of that which the world depends upon, then people will be forced to worship the image if they want to survive.

Those who put their trust in God will never need to fear, because the God who we served will never disappoint us. He will take care of his children. The psalmist said, *“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. [8] Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. [9] Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing. [10] The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Psalm 34:7-10.*

Perhaps it is the reason why one of the temptations Jesus was faced with was to turn stones into bread. The Devil remember it was what got Adam and Eve in trouble. They allowed the flesh to enticed them to do what God told them not to do.

Remember saints, the goal of the beasts, whether it is from the land of the sea, is for man to give worship to the Devil, therefore, we must pay attention to what we are doing when we are worshipping, and remember the only worship God accepts, are those who do so in Spirit and in Truth.

Once we have an understanding of how to truly worship God, then we can guard against false worship which is being introduced by the Devil to the church causing the church to believe they are worshipping God when it is nothing but satisfying the flesh and glorifying the Devil.

**13:*10***

***“If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.***

From this statement, it appears Satan still have access to enter the presence of God. *“One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. [7] The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” [8] Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” [9] “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. [10] “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. [11] But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” [12] The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man, himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord”. Job1:6-12.*

It is obvious that he is constantly bringing accusation against us to God. This helps us to be careful how we live. ***Be very careful, then, how you live---not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:15-16.***

We want to make sure we do not give the enemy a foothold, to used it against us. The scripture said, ***Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8.***

The writer to the Hebrews said, “***Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. [37] They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--- [38] the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. [39] These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, [40] since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect”. Hebrews 11:36-40.***

***13:11-14. (*Second Best)**

***Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. [12] It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. [13] And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. [14] Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.***

These two beasts John saw seem to have different purposes. First John said, he saw the dragon standing on the shore, next he saw a beast coming up from the sea, next he saw another beast coming up from the earth. This last beast has the appearance to deceive, using its powers to perform miraculous signs and wonders, this will cause many to believe in him. This is clearly the spirit of the anti-Christ.

The scripture tells us, *“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [22] “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. [23] At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. [24] For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [25] See, I have told you ahead of time. Matthew 24:9-13,22-25.*

The Holy Spirit used the apostle Paul to re-assure us of the events of the last days. He said, *don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. [4] He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. [5] Don't you remember that when I was with you, I used to tell you these things? [6] And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. [7] For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, [10] and all the way that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie [12] and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12.*

There is such instability in our world today, such as we have never seen in our lifetime, this has caused us to wonder if we are living out what the apostle John saw. Here we are in the very beginning of this new year, and the authority have released the statistics of the mass killing. It has said the are over fifteen of them since the year began, someone said hell has belch out al, its demons to attack mankind; our politicians are searching for answers everywhere but upward; their suggestions are to look toward medical science, all who have no clue as to why there is such a surge of violence. People seem to be living on edge, peace have gone from the hearts of men.

This beast that comes up from the earth will bring false hope to mankind, by blaming the church for all the troubles facing our world. People will be forced to comply with its rules and regulations, he will use the authorities to enforce his rule to worship no other god but the one he said to worship.

We can see the desire of the evil one is to get men to worship him. He tried to get Jesus to worship him, but he failed, now he is going after the children of the kingdom to get them to worship him.

***Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. [9] “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Matthew 4:8-9.***

The enforce his rule, he will make it difficult for those who refuse to give worship to him, they will neither be able to buy or sell if they refuse to accept him. This is no difference as it was in the days of Daniel.

***At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. [9] They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever! [10] Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, [11] and that whoever does not fall down, and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. [12] But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon---Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego---who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.” [13] Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So, these men were brought before the king, [14] and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? [15] Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. [17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. [18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” Daniel 3:8-18.***

The same spirit that was in operation in Daniel days, are still pushing their agenda today, because behind it all is the Dragon himself who is out for revenge against God for what he did to him.

Observe what the scriptures said, *the second beast was* ***given power to give breath to the image of the first beast,*** *so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. [16] It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, [17] so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name. Rev. 13:15-17*

Those who have made the decision not to take the mark, and worship the beast, must be prepared to face the outcome of their decision. *“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:9-13*

**Chapter 14**

***14:1-5***

***Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. [2] And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. [3] And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. [4] These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as first-fruits to God and the Lamb. [5] No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.***

While the beasts from the sea and the land continue their attack against the church, and against almighty God, and it appeared as though they had full control over all mankind by causing man to worship the Dragon by using these beasts, God was getting ready to bring his final judgement, therefore, the vision seem to shift to something different.

The Lamb John saw was not an actual animal, but the Lord Jesus who was slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev.13:8). ***All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast---all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.***

The scriptures said when John saw Jesus at the river Jordan, he said, *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29.*

Even the prophet Isaiah prophesy, “*Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. [11] After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities”. Isaiah 53:10-11.*

**Mount Zion:** - *Scripture shows a rich heritage of God’s redemptive work even before the name Zion surfaced. There, Abraham agreed to do the unthinkable; he bound his only son and prepared to sacrifice him, having*[*faith*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-for-faith-in-hard-times/)*that God would instead, “provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (*[*Genesis 22:1-24*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/genesis/passage/?q=genesis+22:1-24)*). On this mountain, Jacob had his dream that allowed him to climb to Heaven (*[*Genesis 28:11-1*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/genesis/passage/?q=genesis+28:11-1)*). David purchased the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite and sacrificed oxen to atone for his sin on this mountain (*[*1 Chronicles 21:14-18*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-chronicles/passage/?q=1%20chronicles+21:14-18)*). And it’s there that Solomon built the magnificent temple of the Lord (*[*2 Chron 3:1*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/2-chronicles/3-1.html)).

Mount Zion is where those who are part of his kingdom resides, although it is not a physical place, but even as the writer to the Hebrews said, concerning the command of God to Moses.

*They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” [6] But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. Hebrews 8:5-6.*

The scriptures also said, “***Walk*** *about Zion,* ***go*** *around her,* ***count*** *her towers, consider well her ramparts,* ***view*** *her citadels, that you may* ***tell*** *of them to the next generation.” Psalm 48:12-13.*

The **144,000** people who had (His) name and his father’s name written on them. This group were the ones who refused to accept the mark of the beast, despite the persecution they faced, they were determine not to take this mark.

The writer to the Hebrews said, ***so do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. [36] You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. [37] For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.” [38] And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” [39] But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved. Hebrews 10:35-39 NIV***

Someone sent me an article that said China was the first to make a “android woman”. It had all the appearance of a female and had the ability to do all the chores one would have. The interviewer questioned it, and it said, the only thing it did not have was a (Soul).

We can barely find a cashier when we go to the store, this shows us how rapid our world is moving in preparation for the arrival of the beast. The scripture said, the dragon will give his throne, his power, and his great authority to the beast to enforce mankind to worship him. The war that will take place is for the purpose of getting mankind to worship the beast.

It really does not matter whether we believe this will happen or not, the fact remains, if God said this will take place, you can be assured it will happen, either during our lifetime of our children.

There are some who believes they are the ones who the scripture made reference to, when it speaks of the 144,000. I am not sure how they came to that conclusion, but it is apparent That the evil one has blinded their minds to believe they are the ones the scriptures make reference to.

The scriptures said, ***But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. [2] People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, [4] treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--- [5] having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. [6] They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, [7] always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:1-7 NIV***

John saw this lamb **Standing**. Which means he was preparing to take action against the Dragon, and his beasts and against all those who receive the mark of the beast. His judgement was not for those who had the name of the Lamb on them, but for those who refused to accept him as their king.

These 144.000 were all worshippers, they spent their days and nights in worshipping the God who made the heavens, the earth and everything there is. What we are doing here on earth is just a rehearsal. We get tired after we sing a song or two or spent a few hours in seeking the help of God, or if we are offended, we get upset with God and allow the flesh to get the best of us. But this is not so with these brethren.

This group were able to sing a song that those who were not part of this group were able to sing, because it was a new and different kind of song. John said ***And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. [3] And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.***

Jesus in his conversation with the woman at the well said, *“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” John 4:22-24.*

John said, *These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as first-fruits to God and the Lamb. [5] No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. Revelation 14:4-5.*

The scripture said, *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. [2] Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. [3] They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. [4] For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, [5] because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:1-5 NIV*

The ones who forbid marriage is clearly not what Paul was speaking about, for Jesus himself had brothers and sisters. Once when Jesus concluded his teaching, the people were asking, *“Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? [56] Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” Matthew 13:55-56.*

God never forbids marriage, for it was he who implemented the institution of marriage. The scriptures said, *“that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' [5] and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? [6] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” Matthew 19:4-6. Also, The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Gen. 2:18.*

Those who did not defile themselves with women, speaks of those who did not participate in sexual immorality. They kept the arrived bed pure. *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Hebrews 13:4.*

Throughout the world, we find more and more a push for people to become sexual immoral, even this push can be found within the elementary schools, almost every organization, people are being brought to court to be tried because of sexual immorality, and yet people fail to see this is behavior is not normal, for we are not animals.

The scriptures said, they “followed the Lamb” wherever he went. Jesus said, “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.” John 10:27-29.*

***14:6-7***

***Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth---to every nation, tribe, language, and people. [7] He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.”***

This angel was on a mission, to make one final push to get men to believe in God. This remind me of the words of Peter who said, *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9]* ***The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*** *2 Peter 3:8-9.*

There are some who preaches that God loves mankind too much to punish them that long, but I beg to differ, for it is obvious God is doing everything he can to save man from experiencing his judgement. Some believe that after his judgement, things will get better and we can go one with our lives as before, but that is not what the scriptures is saying.

The rich man out in agony*, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, [28] for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' [29] “Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' [30] “‘No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' [31] “He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’” Luke 16:27-31.*

Men have tried for generations to destroy this gospel, but have always being unsuccessful. The gospel is indestructible, no man or devil is able to rend this gospel ineffective.

This angel pleads with mankind to worship the only one who can save them. It was like he was begging man to do whatever they can to do to give their creator the worship he deserves, but unfortunately, man continue to reject the gift God provided for them.

***14:8***

***A second angel followed and said, “‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,' which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”***

Some theologians suggested that Babylon the Great is a figurative allusion to the great powers of ancient Rome. Others argue that Babylon the Great is used as a figure of speech regarding evil nations in general. Another interpretation of Babylon the Great is the evil world system of this world, with headquarters in Babylon (possibly referring to Rome) and is being controlled by the [Antichrist](https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-antichrist.html).

The angel who speaks to John identifies Babylon the Great as “the great city that rules over the kings of the earth” ( [17:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.18)). He also provides some detail of the events leading up to the fall of Babylon the Great ([17:1–5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.1%E2%80%935)). These we will explore later when we get to those chapters.

***14:9-11.***

***A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, [10] they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. [11] And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”***

This third Angel brought a different message to warn mankind of the judgement that awaits anyone who reject the truth and believe the lie. The scriptures said, “*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, [10] and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie [12] and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” 2 Thess.2:9-12*

The punishment for those who received the mark of the beast will be eternal torment, tasting the full wrath of God. There will be no one who can mediate for them, the time for them to repent had passed.

The rich man in the gospel of St. Luke cried out in torment, *“Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' Luke 16:24*

The enemy have really deceived man to believe God love man too much to punish him for that long. There are preachers who have preach to thousands, that because God is merciful, he most likely will punish man for a little while, then he will take them out of that punishment. The question i have for those who believe that lie is, how doo we interpret Hebrews 9:27. “***Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment”,***

Also, ***And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”*** Some have even put a time limit on what “forever and ever” truly means.

The answer Jesus gave his followers could not have come at a better time. *“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [14] And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:9-14.*

This persecution Jesus spoke about will take place upon those who made the decision not to take the mark of the beast.

***14:12-13.***

***This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. [13] Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”***

The scripture said, “*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,” 2 Timothy 3:12.*

**Patient endurance:** *Patient endurance is bearing up under the weight of intense pressure for longer than you think you can stand it. It is persevering on a course, a way of life, a set of values, a set of beliefs in spite of the presence of opposing values, beliefs and worldviews.*

The scriptures said, “*So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.” [36] You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. [37] For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.” [38] And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” [39] But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved. Hebrews 10:35-39.*

*Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. [8] You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. James 5:7-8 NIV*

***14:14-16.***

***I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. [15] Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, “Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” [16] So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.***

This is an image of the judgement of God. This is an indication of the separation of the sheep from the goats, the faithful from the unfaithful, it is just like harvest time, where the farmer harvest his crops. This is a joyous tie for those believers who were persecuted or even killed for the sake of Christ. Finally, they will receive their reward.

Jesus said, *Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, [23] that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. [24] “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. [25] Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. John 5:22-25.*

God is giving man time to repent because he does not want anyone to perish. *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:8-9 NIV*

As we look at the book of Jonah, we will observe although the Lord was angry with the people from Ninevah, he wanted to give them an opportunity to repent, just as it was in the days of JonahHe sent his servant Jonah to warn them of the impending judgement that was about to come upon them, if they decided not to change.

The scriptures said. *These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 1 Corinthians 10:11.*

***14:17-20.***

***Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. [18] Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar, and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe.” [19] The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. [20] They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.***

Not only the one who sat o the clouds had a sickle in his hand, but this Angel that came out of the temple in Heaven also had a sickle, which indicates the harvest was ripe.

The word s of Jesus, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.* *Luke 10:2-3.*

This is really the end for mankind. This is judgement day for the human race. Man had reached the point of no return in their sinful ways, and the church had gone silent with the gospel, that which should bring hope to man, had seemingly lost it purpose.

We may remember during the days of Abraham. God sent his messenger to throw in the sickle in Sodom and Gomorrah. The judgement of God could not come while there was still a remnant in that place. he had to remove the remnant first, then bring his judgement.

***Far be it from you to do such a thing---to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*** ***Genesis 18:25.***

**Chapter 15**

***15:1-2***

***I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues---last, because with them God's wrath is completed. [2] And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God.***

The vision seems to have shifted from the fierce persecution from the beast regarding persecution against those who refused to accept the mark of the beast, to what seem to be that which consist of the final seven judgements of God upon those who accepted the mark.

The consequence of receiving the mark is eternal punishment, which no one have any concept of the magnitude of such punishment. The only knowledge we have of some type of punishment is when the law sentences someone to prison for life with no possibility of parole, and punishment ends at death, but because there will be no death, it means eternal punishment.

The number 7 is very significant in the book of Revelation. 7 spirits, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 vials, etc. The number 7 is used 53 times in Revelation.

These seven Angels with the last plagues may be the same seven Angels we read about in the earlier chapters 8-11.

The mission of these Angels was to complete the judgement of Almighty God upon men. God’s judgement that was about to come from these Angels will be worse than the other judgements passed in the earlier chapters.

The judgement of God that comes from these seven are called the “last”, because of after these, nothing will be left to be destroyed, hopefully, the people who remained will be wise enough to repent and hope that the mercies of God will be extended toward them.

There is a gospel that’s being preach today that God will not punish men like that because of his love for men. They claimed he may punish them for a little while, but them forgive them and take them to be with them, but that is not what the scripture teaches.

Man will not be given a second chance to repent. The scriptures said, ***So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3:7-8.***

Everyday we spend on this earth, it is God who is extending his mercies toward us, giving men an opportunity to set their houses in order. The scriptures said, the goodness of God leads us to repentance. (Rom.2:4). Let us make the most of this opportunity because we do not know when we our time will end, and there is no repentance in the grave.

The reward for those who refused to accept the mark of the beast, of the image he set up, is they will have the opportunity to stand before the amazing sight of “beholding the sea of glass glowing with fire, with harps in their hands.

This is a clear picture of what this choir will look like, for the harps in their hands were a sign of preparing for worship. We must remember this great battle we are facing is for who should mankind worship`? The Lord God or the dragon.

The challenge between the prophets of Baal and Elijah on Mt Carmel, was to see who really deserve to be worship. ***Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing. 1 Kings 18:21.***

***15:3-4***

***and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. [4] Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”***

This song was taught to the people after Moses delivered the people from the land of Egypt. We are encouraged by the psalmist to make a “Joyful” noise to the Lord, come before him with singing”. Psalm 100.

We could never give God enough thanks for the gift of his salvation, because of this salvation, we have escaped the many of the evils of the enemy, therefore, when we prepare to worship, we must remember how he is to be worshipped. He sets the standard for worship. Jesus said, *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”* *John 4:24.*

***“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. [3] “You shall have no other gods before me. [4] “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. [5] You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:2-6.***

***15:5-8***

***After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple---that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law---and it was opened. [6] Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. [7] Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. [8] And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.***

 The Tabernacle has reference to that which Moses was instructed to build, according to the specifications given by the lord, because it represented to true tabernacle in heaven. It was so called the tabernacle of the covenant law, because it was presented to Moses and none other.

Jesus went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle – one that was not made by human hands and not a part of this creation. The one he entered is the Most Holy Place of this heavenly tabernacle to offer his blood as an atoning sacrifice. [Hebrews 9:11-12](https://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/passage/?q=hebrews+9:11-12).

As the door of the tabernacle stood opened, John saw “seven angels”. The way they were dressed, shows these angels were special messengers sent from God on a special mission to bring the seven last plagues upon mankind.

Each of the Angels received a golden bowl filled with the wrath of God to be poured it upon those who received the mark of the beast, and upon those who worship the beast and its image.

Although the door of the temple was opened, no one was permitted to enter until the last angel poured out his bowl of wrath.

Although this speaks of a future even, i want to remind you that we have many opportunities to enter the temple now, for the scriptures said, ***Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*** ***Revelation 3:20.***

Also, ***yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--- [13] children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13.***

I want to encourage every listener to enter in while we still have the opportunity to do so before it is too late. Even as I mentioned before “today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart”.

**Chapter 16**

***16:1-2***

***Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.” [2] The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.***

In the previous chapter, the seven angels were preparing to discharge their duties, as they received their orders from the one seated on the throne. Now we will begin our study on these last plagues they prepare to unleash the judgement of God upon mankind for their wickedness,

 **First Angel.**

As the first angel received his orders to pour out his bowl that was filled with all kinds of disease. The kind that not even medical science was able to a find cure.

We saw how desperate mankind have become during COVID-19. Millions of dollars were spent by nations trying to find some kind of relief for man, only to see the massive death that resulted from that plague.

According to the report given by the WHO, COVID-19 was responsible for at least 3.3 million deaths. During my lifetime, I have never seen such a disaster that was responsible for the death of so many people.

As this first Angel emptied his bowl, ugly and painful sores broke out on the human body. I believe some would wish they could die, because the pain was son unbearable, but death flee from man at that time.

 **Second Angel.**

 ***16:3***

***The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.***

The news from Texas confirmed that there were thousands of fish washed up on a certain beach, that caused the authorities to have great concern.

Thousands of dead fish were found laying on beaches in Quintana Beach County Park early Friday, leaving beachgoers alarmed and wondering what happened. Within a few hours, Texas Parks and Wildlife officials determined low dissolved oxygen caused the massive number of fish deaths.

They concluded the death of these fish was due to a lack of oxygen in the water. We need to wonder how is that possible, because the environment fish lived in is always filled with what they need to survive. The God who made this world placed in their environment what those creatures need to live, and from the beginning of time, they have always survived in their environment.

As this angel poured out his bowl upon the sea, it changed the entire environment that caused every living creature to die. Once we notice there is a shortage of fish, we will see the price of fish increase, and this brings us to what John saw regarding the black horse with its rider who had the pair of scales in his hand.

*When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. [6] Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”* *Revelation 6:5-6.*

 **Third Angel**

***16:4-7***

***The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. [5] Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: “You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were; [6] for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.” [7] And I heard the altar respond: “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.”***

We may recall in an earlier chapter, in the corresponding chapter, a third part of the rivers and fountains of water were made bitter, because of the great burning star.

The writer to the Hebrews wrote, “*Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. [37] They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--- [38] the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. [39] These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, [40] since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Hebrews 11:36-40.*

*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. [10] They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Revelation 6:9-10.*

**Fourth Angel (*16:8-9)***

***The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. [9] They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.***

When this Angel poured out his judgements on the sun, I don’t think it will make the sun get any hotter, but I believe the barrier that is keeping the sun from scorching us will be remove exposing man to the intensity of the heat, making it seem hotter that it is currently.

***The third sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water--- [11] the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter. Revelation 8:10-11.***

Every year there seem to be an increase of these natural disasters that are taking place not only here in this country, but around the world. The raging fire in Lahaina, which the count is up to 100, which includes adults and children, is being considered as the worst fire in the USA. What the people of Sodom felt, will be in no comparison to what this Angel will release upon those who received the mark of the beast.

One would think because of the trouble that coming, the heart of man will move to repent, but instead, John said they refused to repent. I believe because it is not the will of God for any of us to perish, he is still merciful hoping somehow, the trouble that man will experience will drive them to repent, but instead, we see them cursing the almighty God name.

The scriptures said, *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”. 2 Peter 3:8-9.*

The Lord God will do anything he could do to keep men from experiencing that type of punishment, but he cannot force man to run from it, he could only warn men about all the troubles that will come, and man must decide to run to him for cover.

***“Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone---an image made by human design and skill. [30] In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. [31] For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” Acts 17:29-31.***

**Fifth Angel. (***16:10-11)*

***The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony [11] and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.***

The beast will be surprised as to what is in store for him. Because of the authority and power that was given to him by the dragon, he thinks he was invincible, but when the fifth Angel poured out his judgement upon his throne, all the authority and power he had will be ineffective in trying to save himself from the wrath of God. All that the beast had control over will be plunge into darkness.

The young man who had an experience with death, saw himself being hurled into darkness, he said he felt as though he was falling into a hole with no bottom. He felt himself screaming to the top of his voice, but no one was able to hear him, and because there were many who were screaming to the top of their voices, and no one was able to help them. He described it as the most frightful experience he had.

The rich man in St. Luke 16, had almost the same experience. He cried out to Abraham to send Lazarus to put a little water on his tongue, because the torment was unbearable. Because there was no way out from where he was, he was not able to get any help from Abraham.

This darkness sound like the place described by John in one of the earlier chapters.  *The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. [2] When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. [3] And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. [4] They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. [5] They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. [6] During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. [7] The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. [8] Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9] They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. [10] They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. [11] They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).* *Revelation 9:1-11.*

**Sixth Angel. (***16:12-16)*

***The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. [13] Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. [14] They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. [15] “Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.” [16] Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.***

In one of the earlier chapters, John also wrote about the earlier judgements of God. What he described in chapter nine, is similar to what he saw with this sixth Angel.

*The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. [14] It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” [15] And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. [16] The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. [17] The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. [18] A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. [19] The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury. [20] The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood---idols that cannot see or hear or walk. [21] Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts. Revelation 9:13-21.*

**Seventh Angel (***16:17-21*

*The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” [18] Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. [19] The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. [20] Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. [21] From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people.* ***And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.***

Let us look at what John saw in chapter 11. “*The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.” [16] And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, [17] saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. [18] The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small---and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” [19]* ***Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant.******And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm. Revelation 11:15-19.***

This judgement was release into the air, which tells us many will suffer from respiratory problems. The virus will be airborne, which will affect every living thing. This seventh judgement will conclude all of the judgements of God upon man, nothing will be able to survive, this will be the end of time as we know it to be, from the virus that is airborne to the massive earthquake being described that john said, nothing living have ever witness such a massive destruction.

I mentioned before in my lifetime, the worst earthquake that happened in my lifetime, was the one that took place in Haiti in 2010. It killed over three hundred thousand lives, even to this very day that country has never recovered from such disaster. We would think after such massive destruction, a revival would break out in that country, but we see the total opposite. That country is being plagued with so much violence that many countries are warning visitors to stay away. The leadership seem helpless in bringing some sort of stability in that nation.

We can clearly see in the time of disaster, men will run to the church seeking help from God, but not too long after, men return to their wicked ways all over again. Here we see the judgement of God upon man, and instead of seeking refuge from God, we see them cursing the only one who is able to save them, being abused by them.

To this very day, some believe the devil is not as bad as the church teaches, he just influences people to do bad things. He takes advantage of our weakness and pushes us to do wrong.

The scriptures tell us ***“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”.***

 ***–James 4:7***

**Chapter 17**

***17:1-2.***

***One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters.***

***[2] With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”***

**Great prostitute: -** *The image of the great prostitute sitting on many waters immediately indicates for us what the great prostitute represents. The harlot/prostitute image is used of wicked cities by the Old Testament prophets. Ninevah (Nahum 3:4), Tyre (Isaiah 23:16-17), and Jerusalem (Ezekiel 16:15) are a few cities that are called harlots because of their great immoralities.*

*This great harlot is described as****“sitting on many waters.”****this image means.****“The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.”****The great harlot is the city that is ruling over the peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages of the earth.*

The woman in verse 4 is dressed like a prostitute. **And you, O desolate one, what do you mean that you dress in scarlet, that you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, that you enlarge your eyes with paint? In vain you beautify yourself. Your lovers despise you; they seek your life. (Jeremiah 4:30 ESV)**

The same language used of Babylon of ancient times is applied to Rome. Notice the language that Jeremiah used of Babylon back in his day. **Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD’s hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad. Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! (Jeremiah 51:7–8.**

**Wine:- its immoral influences that has influence every system of the world.**

We have notice that throughout this study that sexual immorality is a symbol for the idolatry that is being committed (Hosea 4:11-12; Ezekiel 6:9; Ezekiel 16:15-17; Revelation 2:14,20). Notice that Revelation 17:2 is the same description that was given in Revelation 14:8. **“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality” (Revelation 14:8 ESV)**. We have noted throughout this study that sexual immorality is a symbol for the idolatry that is being committed (Hosea 4:11-12; Ezekiel 6:9; Ezekiel 16:15-17; Revelation 2:14,20). Notice that Revelation 17:2 is the same description that was given in Revelation 14:8. **“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality” (Revelation 14:8 ESV)**.

***17:3-5.***

***Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. [4] The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. [5] The name written on her forehead was a mystery: babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.***

The fall of Rome was due to her sexual immoralities. This was the reason for the destruction of many nations fallen in the condition of apostasy. Hosea said, *“They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not flourish, because they have deserted the Lord to give themselves [11] to prostitution; old wine and new wine take away their understanding.* *Hosea 4:10-11.*

This is the same wine that the nations of today are still drinking. We have not yet learned from the mistakes of others, although we have seen their destruction, we believe we are invincible, those things will never happen to us.

In the olden days, this was used here to denote the unclean and illicit relationships between the capital of the empire and all the other nations. Today, this is the perfect example of the worship of the beast by receiving its mark. As it was then, so it is now. Merchants are making big profit from their economic performance.

The descriptions here emphasizes the great immorality generated from this city. It is appropriate to describe Rome with similar language because of its great immoralities and idolatries. The name of the great prostitute is, “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.” The word “mystery” in front of this description shows that this name is a symbol for a worldly, wicked city. The great prostitute is drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. This is the same description given in Revelation 16:6 and this is the reason for the judgment against Babylon the great, that is, Rome and her empire.

***17:7-8.***

***Then the angel said to me: “Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. [8] The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.***

John was bewildered by what he saw, that caused the Angel to question him, because the explanation to what he saw was about to be explain to him in detail, this information was not intended to be hidden or kept as a secret, it was intended to be revealed so that the generations following can be aware of the plan of God for the future.

The way the woman was dressed symbolizes one who is in authority as a queen, just as what we are knowledgeable of the present day kingdom in England, where Queen Elizabeth had authority. History said, Queen Elizabeth II served from 1952 to 2022 as reigning monarch of the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and numerous other realms and territories, as well as head of the Commonwealth, the group of 53 sovereign nations that includes many former British territories. Extremely popular for nearly one of all of her long reign, the queen was known for taking a serious interest in government and political affairs, apart from her ceremonial duties, and was credited with modernizing many aspects of the monarchy.

This gives somewhat a picture of what this woman represented rulership over many people. Only when someone from the family dies, we get to hear of all the unclean things that happen with their kingdom, and to some, it is astonishing, while others were not surprised.

The scriptures said ***She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.*** The prophet Jeremiah said, *“Babylon was a gold cup in the Lord's hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad”. Jeremiah 51:7.*

The golden cup most likely represent the splendor of the worship of the church of Rome, by which many have been drawn into a compliance with it, which is filled with many abominable, filthy, and idolatrous practices: and some may regard this to be the golden chalice, in which, it is pretended, is the very blood of Christ, which the priests take as such, and worship and adore, and is no other than an abominable and filthy piece of idolatry; and such are the persons that partake of it.

This beast is to be understood as the devil, who "was" the god of this world” (2Cor.4:4) "is not", being cast out by Christ, and yet is in being; for he, the dragon, is distinguished from this beast, and indeed from him the beast has his seat, power, and authority, ( [Revelation 13:1](https://www.biblestudytools.com/revelation/13-1.html)-2) as that it was in the hands of the Romans originally, and long continued with them, but now "is not", "and yet is" in being, Rome being the metropolis of it: it was a very powerful and flourishing empire, "and is not", being destroyed, "and yet is" a large empire under the jurisdiction of antichrist; it was an idolatrous empire, which encouraged the worshipping of Heathen gods, "and is not" guilty of the same idolatrous practices.

***The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.***

The prophet Isaiah said, *“Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, [17] the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” Isaiah 14:16-17.*

***17:9-11.***

***“This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. [10] They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while. [11] The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.***

The seven heads are seven mountains of which the woman sit’s. They signify seven mountains, or are symbolical representations of them; just as the seven good cows, and seven good ears, in Pharaoh’s dream, signified seven years of plenty, and seven thin cows, and seven empty ears, seven years of famine,

***The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. [27] The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine. Genesis 41:26-27.***

As the woman is a city, these seven mountains, on which she sits, must be so many mountains on which the city is built; and what city can this be but Rome, which is been being built on seven hills.

The fact there were seven kings, could either mean those who will rule or govern. We can see during our time the nations came together at the G20b summit to discuss the many of the challenges facing our world. It gives the appearance that our world leaders can sense there is coming come kind of disaster, and they are trying to prepare themselves for the unknown.

The (G20) group is a collection of twenty of the world’s largest economies formed in 1999, was conceived as a bloc that would bring together the most important industrialized and developing economies to discuss international economic and financial stability.

This is Kairos moment for the church, the church should not be afraid or walking in fear, but this is the time when the children of God have to be bold with the gospel, for it is the only thing that will bring hope.

In Daniel Chp. 7. The word king” speaks of a “dynasty,” or a “form of rule.” The notion of ruling, or of authority. In the Greek, (basileuō) means “to rule,” but the word may be applied to anything in which sovereignty resides. Therefore, it is safe to say, some rulers will emerge to take control. The ten horns are ten kings who will rise from this kingdom. After them another king, different from the earlier ones, will rise and subdue three kings.[**Daniel 7:24**](https://biblehub.com/daniel/7-24.htm)

 **Five are fallen** – These leaders may have passed away or have disappeared. The language here seem to indicate they have died, or who had been dethroned; or to dynasties or forms of government that had ceased to be.

In the fulfillment of this, it would be necessary to find five such successive kings or rulers who had died, and who pertained to one sovereignty or nation; or five such dynasties or forms of administrations that had successively existed, but which had ceased.

**And one is** - That is, there is one - a sixth - that now reigns. The proper interpretation of this would be, that this existed in the time of John, according to the view taken of the time of the writing of the Apocalypse, or at the close of the first century.

And the other is not yet come - The sixth one is to be succeeded by another in the same line, or occupying the same dominion.

**When he come** - When that form of rulership is set up. We were not told when the timeline of such will take place, but it is sure to come.

**He must continue a short space** – meaning his leadership will be of short duration. It is observable that this characteristic is stated as applicable only to this one of the seven; and that the time would be short as compared with the the other six, and as compared with the one that followed - the eighth - into which it was to be merged. It is possible, this person could be one of his children who will take over leadership.

And the beast that was, and is not - That is, the one government that was mighty; that died away and yet “still is,” or has a prolonged existence. It is evident that the “beast” represents someone power, dominion, empire, or rule, whose essential identity is preserved through all these changes, and to which it is proper to give the same name. It finds its termination, or its last form, in what is here called the “eighth”; a power which, it is observed, sustains such a special relation to the seven.

That the seven kings here refer to the succession of Roman emperors, yet with some variation as to the manner of reckoning. The “five that are fallen” are Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius. Nero, who, as he supposes, was the reigning prince at the time when the book was written, he is regarded as the sixth. Galba, who succeeded him, was the seventh.

***17:12-14.***

***“The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. [13] They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. [14] They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings---and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”***

The ten kings were not in existence when John wrote. It is implied, that during a certain period, they would arise, and would become connected, with the power here represented by the “beast.”

Daniel had a vision similar to what John saw. ***As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, [22] until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. [23] “He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. [24] The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. [25] He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. [26] “ 'But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. [27] Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' [28] “This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.” Daniel 7:21-28.***

Although the scripture claimed this king will reign for one hour, this cannot be taken literally, because one day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day. (2Peter 3:8) God sees time quite different from us. For us, one hour is sixty minutes, but that is not how the Lord calculate time.

**One purpose: -** *That is, they are united in the promotion of the same goal. Though they differ from each other, yet they may be regarded as one, in fact, as to promote the same ultimate end.*

**They shall give their power and authority unto the beast** – the interpretation seems as most of the people out of whom these kingdoms are, they are mostly religious people, they really do not have a relationship with the Lord. Many believe this beast is none other than the pope or the papal as some have called him. What we do know is that he is called the false prophet, because of the authority he has, many religious leaders will support him and what he endorses, they will endorse, and for those who refuse to agree with him, and take their stand for the Lord Jesus, great persecution will break out against them.

**The Lamb shall overcome them** – The Lord shall surely gain the victory over them. *The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. Exodus 15:3.* Those who are the enemies of the church will be defeated, they would not be able to destroy the church. In spite of all their opposition and persecution. Jesus said, ***from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:12. KJV***

The battle against the kingdom of God has seemingly intensifies lately, even from the entertainment industry, the world seems to make the church a laughingstock, which is such a mockery. Even among church leaders, the spirit of division is what is making the body of Christ so weak, but the Lord has said,  ***I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. [19] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:18-19.***

**For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings** - He has supreme power over all the earth, and all kings and princes are subject to his control. ***The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16] For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. [17] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. [19] For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:15-20.***

***17:15-18.***

***Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. [16] The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. [17] For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to hand over to the beast their royal authority, until God's words are fulfilled. [18] The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”***

The prophet Isaiah identifies the waters also as people.  *Woe to the many nations that rage---they rage like the raging sea! Woe to the peoples who roar---they roar like the roaring of great waters! [13] Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters, when he rebukes them they flee far away, driven before the wind like chaff on the hills, like tumbleweed before a gale. Isaiah 17:12-13*

**Chapter 18**

***After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. [2] With a mighty voice he shouted: “ 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!' She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.***

This vision seems to be a continuation of one of the earlier chapters where John spoke about the three Angels and the message they brought. *Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth---to every nation, tribe, language and people. [7] He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”* ***[8] A second angel followed and said, “ 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,' which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” [9] A*** *third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, Revelation 14:6-9.*

As the vision continue to be unfolded, John, still being astonished by what he is seeing. This Angel seems to be quite different from the others he had seen in the past. This one seems to have great authority; the radiance of his presence was so bright that it brought some illumination to the earth.

When we think of Angels, we must remember their purpose. The scriptures said, “*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” Hebrews 1:14.* Angels have been assigned by God to assist us, for our Heavenly Father knows how vulnerable we are, and can become easily blinded by the god of this world.

***The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2Cor.4:4.***

The presence of this mighty Angel is what the Lord used to open the eyes of those who were blinded by the god of this world. Praise the Lord for using his messenger to open our eyes, allowing us to turn from darkness to light, so that we could be delivered from the bondage of Satan, to live a life pleasing to God.

It is very clear the mission of this angel was quite different from all the others. His message was to remind mankind of the judgement of God upon Babylon, the great prostitute. His announcement of the end of the Babylonian influence upon the nations of the world. The spirit of immorality that influence all mankind, not just the average person, but even those in authority.

***There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs. Luke 12:2-3.***

Those in authority who have been influence by this spirit, thought they were invincible, and they were above the law, but we have seen during this generation, God’s judgement upon them, bringing them down in a short period of time, which causes many of us to wonder.

 This announcement is truly good news for those who are members of the church, who are sick and tired of what the spirit has caused this world to become. There is so much confusion, that mankind are not sure about anything anymore, for that which was wrong before, has now become right.

A member of the Supreme Court was asked by a child for the definition of a woman, and as I listened to the answer she gave, she left this child confused. She told him she could not give him the definition. This is very clear the influence of Babylon has affected even those who our country have put in charge over us.

***Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight. Isa. 5:20-21***

The Lord said to the church in Thyatira, ***“****I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.* ***[20] Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. [21] I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. [22] So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. [23] I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.*** ***Revelation 2:19-23.***

God’s judgement against Babylon and its proud heart, ***'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!' She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.*** His influence upon world leaders has come to an end, It has now become the place where no one wants to associate with, become a place where no one wants to be anymore, because it is a place where horror exists. We can see the close association with the halloween event.

Right here in our neighborhood is the city of Salem, where annually, people travel from all parts of the world to attend a special festival called “halloween”. This gathering is known all over the world as the place where those who are part of the kingdom of darkness look forward to attend.

It is said that on October 31st, of each year, witches and warlock come together to increase the evil powers, because they connect with the dead. When we hear about Babylon, we must remember, there is nothing good about that city, therefore, to have an announcement that it was destroyed was good news.

The scripture condemns all the immoral activities of that city. The scriptures said, *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial ? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” [18] And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 2Cor.6:14-18.*

The place that’s being described by John is not a place where one would even like to visit, because it is like being in a place of torment where all that is there, is only that which produce fear. The movies do not do justice to such a place, because what the movies do, is that they caused us to become desensitize to what is real. To the entertainment world, everything they do is to promote mockery. They would make movies of the most violent crimes to promote the evil one.

***18:3***

***For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”***

This maddening wine has been drunk by not only the USA, but all over the world, the effect of this wine has is seen through all the systems of of this world, from medical science, to academia, to political, judicial, there is no place where the very smell of this wine is absent.

The power of wine affects the ability of man to make sober decisions, it impaired their ability, thereby causing them to behave foolishly. The scriptures have much to say about being deceived by wine. *“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit”, Ephesians 5:18.*

***Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? [30] Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. [31] Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! [32] In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. [33] Your eyes will see strange sights, and your mind will imagine confusing things. [34] You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. [35] “They hit me,” you will say, “but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?” Proverbs 23:29-35.***

***As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. [3] For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do---living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. 1 Peter 4:2-3.***

Even though we know John is not speaking about beverage that has the ability to intoxicate, but he is referring to the strong unclean demonic influences what Babylon has released throughout the entire world, some of us were influence by it until the Lord open our eyes to come out from among them.

Our country sent the vice president to Africa to promote what our nation called democratic freedom and made a treat if they refused to comply with this proposal, we would declare Economic Sanctions against them.

This is not just the behavior of the USA, but the spirit of Babylon is taking over the entire world. The world leaders are spending billions of dollars to promote this agenda, and because commerce is a major part of our survival, every nation depends on commerce for their survival, and with the USA being one of the leading nations in the world, the other nations are looking to see the direction America is going so they can follow. America at one time was considered the strongest nation in the world, everyone wanted to come to America, but we can see America power is slowly losing its status.

I am not saying that America is the great Babylon, but all the signs is showing where history is lining up with the scriptures. One thing we can be sure of is God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked.

*Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it****? Far be it from you to do such a thing —to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” Genesis 18:20-25.***

As long as the church is still here, there is hope for mankind to get in before God unleash his judgement upon the earth. It is not in his heart to see any perish.

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:9-13*

***Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “'Come out of her, my people,' so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; [5] for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.***

This reminds us of the words of the Angels who spoke to Abraham concerning the vision of destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. As Abraham began to intercede on behalf of the country, they decided to share with Abraham the mission they were on.

His mercies is also seen in the way he dwelt with the people of Nineveh. ***But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I'm so angry I wish I were dead.” [10] But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. [11] And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left---and also many animals?” Jonah 4:9-11.***

Although God may be angry with sin, but this does not prevent him from loving mankind. The scriptures said, *“****No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, [39] neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”****. Romans 8:37-39.*

***18: 4-5Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “‘Come out of her, my people,’ so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.***

Although the time came when God wanted to judge Sodom for their sin, His hands were tied, because of Lot living among those people. ***The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the cit y? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing —to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*** Growing impatient, they had to take Lot and his family, and drag them out of town, for them to complete their assignment.

This is the same call the apostle Paul gave to the saints in Corinth. *Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 2Cor.6:17-18.*

There must be a difference between the people of God and those who are of the world, although lately, there seem to be no difference, for the people of the church behave just like the people of the world. We forget who are are and the kingdom that we are part of.

Lot lived among those ungodly people, but he maintained his integrity. Like Moses, he refused to identify himself as the son of Pharoah's daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God. The scriptures said, ***By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. Hebrews 11:24-26.***

John heard the same call from the Angel,  ***“Come out of her, my people,' so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues,*** which tells us that God will remove his church before he release his wrath upon the earth, therefore, for those who are part of his body, we should never be fearful, because the God we are serving will definitely cause us to escape his wrath.

***For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.***

There are some who are preaching a different gospel that says, because of the great love God has for mankind, he will not punish man for all eternity, that is not what the scriptures teaches. Jesus said, *“… they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. ” Matthew 25:45-46.*

How the Lord dealt with Sodom and its surrounding cities was just a warning of what He is capable of doing to teach those of us who are coming behind to pay attention to how we are living. One day his patience will not be available because the sin has reached the place where its evils have reach heaven, and God says it is enough, that is the time when the church will be removed or taken out.

***18:6-8.***

***Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Pour her a double portion from her own cup. [7] Give her as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit enthroned as queen. I am not a widow; I will never mourn.' [8] Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.***

For a long period of time many believed “Rome” was considered as the Babylon, but after a while, they changed their belief. Many began to see Babylon as the evil and wicked system in our world, and it seems that the influence of evil today is getting stronger and stronger, and as knowledge increases, men are slowly losing the hope in God.

Jesus said, *At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matt.24:10-13.*

Remembering what John heard from an Angel earlier. *“Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. [6] And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “****There will be no more delay”****! Revelation 10:5-6.*

The time had come for the enemies of God to receive double for the trouble they were responsible for what they did to his creation. This is what I call “pay day for Babylon, she was about to begin her sentence for her crimes. Her disappointment will be because she thought she would never be punished, she thought she was invincible, no one could touch her, because she has ruled for so long.

There are some who preaches there is no God, if God exists, then why isn’t he doing something about all the problem our world is experiencing? Because He is the God of love, he cannot go against himself. The will he gave mankind have allowed man to make decisions, and God cannot violate the will of man. From the very beginning, the decision man made to disobey the command of God is what put us in this mess we are currently in.

Hie love for his creation would not allow him to sit back and do nothing, he had to help us, he decided to come down on earth himself to show mankind the love he has for them, all he is asking for, is for man to obey his command. From one generation to another, he has sent men and angels to turn back to him, but man continue to live a disobedient lifestyle, therefore, our disobedience to his command is what caused us to be in this condition, but there is hope, because the scripture said, whosoever call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:10.

This is the same with those who commit crime today. After the crime is committed, they will never stick around for the authorities to apprehend them, they will seek a place where they can hide from the authorities, but there is no place where one can hide from the one who gave us life, and because of this guilt, some have committed suicide like Judas did after he betrayed Jesus.

There is no attorney who we can petition to appeal our case before God. He is the judge and juror. When he decides to sentence a person, that decision could never be overturned. His verdict is final, and because of that, we all have some time now to make the decision to turn from doing wrong.

The scriptures said, ***So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3:7-8.***

After the verdict is passed upon Babylon, his influence upon mankind will be totally eliminated, never again will mankind have to deal with his deception and his influence. The scripture said, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

***Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. [2] I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Revelation 21:1-2.***

***18:9-10.***

***“When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: “ 'Woe! Woe to you, great city, you mighty city of Babylon! In one hour, your doom has come!'***

All the nations who were part of her influence that drank from her wine, and enriched themselves with all the monetary gain will be disappointed, because they realized their source of income will be collapsed.

This will be a terrible time for the economy not only locally, but also globally. Some of us have already began feeling a little of financial challenges facing our society. Our monetary values seem to have shrunk, which means we spend more and get less.

The leaders who one trusted in the systems of this world will be so disappointed that will cause them to turn against the very thing they once stood for.

***18:21-24.***

***Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. [22] The music of harpists and musicians, pipers and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No worker of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. [23] The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's important people. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. [24] In her was found the blood of prophets and of God's holy people, of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”***

The force which the Angel used to throw the rock into the sea, caused it to shatter, and that it was impossible to put it back together, and this was a symbol of what will happen to Babylon. It will so devastated that those who see it will wonder in amazement at how such a powerful system have come to such ruin. The writer to proverbs said, *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people. Proverbs 14:34.*

**Milestone: -** its purpose is to grind grain making it useful for baking bread. When the process is completed, the grain becomes like powder. Only then is the grain useful for making bread. It consists of two very heavy round stones which rub against each other. If the grain don’t go through this process, it is useless for making bread. The process of grinding is what make it useful.

This is how the Lord will dispose of Babylon, it will never be able to return to its original condition, for it will be completely destroyed, not only will it be destroyed, but the Angels said, with such violent force the city will be destroyed.

The days of fun and happiness will no longer be heard in Babylon, it will not be a place where visitors will want to visit. I am not too sure the USA is any different today than what John saw. Many will do anything to come to this land of opportunity to make their lives better, to be able to send their children to school for them to have an opportunity to do something with their lives.

Long gone are those days when our fore parents came to this country. There were so many opportunities for people to choose from, that people were able to choose what career they wanted to pursue. Today, with the USA having a national debt of 13 trillion dollars, it has become necessary to eliminate many of the programs that was instrumental in helping the people.

The scriptures said, “righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” Proverbs 14:34.

**Chapter 19**

***19:1-5.***

***After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” And again, they shouted: “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: “Amen, Hallelujah!” Then a voice came from the throne, saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!”***

The fall of Babylon was the reason for such great rejoicing in heaven and on earth. This rejoicing was because the influence of Babylon had come all over the world had come to an end. Time had come for God’s judgement upon the evil one.

Some may wonder why it took God so long to judge Babylon. This is because of the love God has for man, he took the time in order that man can get an opportunity to repent. John’s message to the church in Thyatira shows how patient God is with man. ***Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. Rev. 2:20-21.***

God’s patience is also seen in his dealing with the people of Nineveh in Jonah’s days. ***But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.” But the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?” Jonah 4:9-11.***

For God to send his only son into this world to die for a people who do not care about him or his covenant, there is nothing more for him to do.

***You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans. 5:6-8.***

Once Babylon is destroyed to the place where it could never be restored, this brought great news to the creator. For sine the beginning when the evil one deceived man, man has been held in bondage for generations. It had all the appearance of the evil one was in charge of this world.

He has caused so much trouble for man, that it was impossible for man to help himself. If the Lord had not step in to help, all of creation world have been destroyed, but God could not sit back and let the Devil destroy his precious prize, which is man.

The scriptures said, “***In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.”Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:10-17.***

In the song that was sang by the angels and mankind, are the words that shows who is in charge of this world. It is God and not the evil one. The dethroning of the evil one brought great joy to all mankind, and especially for those who were martyred for Christ.

The prophet Isaiah said, *those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth, and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” Isa. 14:16-17.*

***The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: “Amen, Hallelujah!” Then a voice came from the throne, saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!” Rev.19:4-5.***

**19:6-8.**

***Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)***

John is trying to describe the sound he heard coming from heaven. I would guess, the sound would surpass the sound that comes from the “Niagara Falls” waterfall.for those who have visited that site, knows how peaceful and at the same time beautiful it is. Just to stand there and see such a handiwork is truly amazing.

That combined with “peals of thunder”, my human mind cannot even imagine what such combination would sound like, but John is trying to help us understand what will happen because of the fall of Babylon.

This is what the church has been waiting for since Jesus came to earth. We have been looking for the great reunion between Christ and his church. The example Jesus gave in the gospel concerning the wedding, clearly remind us not to grow careless, but to always be ready, because the groom may not come when we expect him.

***At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’***

***“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ “Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. Matthew 25:1-13***

There are many who believe that because of the signs that are unfolding before our eyes, the coming of the Lord is sooner than we can imagine. Perhaps they are right, I do not know, but I would encourage you to be on your watch, do not let that day comes and you are not ready.

**Fine linen will be given: -** these linens are the all the righteous acts those who love God has done. The word the angel brought to Corneilus shows that God documents everything we do, and especially when it is been done for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

***One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Acts 10:3-4. In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!” Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.***

***Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Acts 9:36-42.***

The scriptures said, *God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. Hebrews 6:10-12.*

***Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. Col.3:23-24.***

**19:9-10**

***Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.”***

John was awe struck by what he was witnessing, the very presence of the one speaking caused John to want to reverence him, but the one speaking understood, no one can take God’s glory, therefore, he immediately rebuked John for what he was doing.

The prophet Isaiah prophesy, *“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. Isa.42:8.*

***Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king’s country for their food supply. On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. Acts 12:19-23.***

**Spirit of prophesy: -** the testimony of Jesus is really the spirit of prophesy. The term *revelation* refers to a revealing or the making known of something that was previously unknown. Revelation is like pulling back a veil to show what’s behind it or unwrapping a present to see what’s inside.

Prophecy is communication from God to mankind. Prophets were utilized as God’s mouthpiece —they listened to God and then conveyed God’s message to people. Some examples of prophets are Elijah, Isaiah, Moses, and Jonah.

Peter in his epistle said, “***For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.***

***We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 1Peter 1:16-21.***

**10:11-16.**

***I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

What John is seeing at this time was the second return of Jesus Christ. This is the hope of every believer. *According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thess.4:15-18.*

The fact remains that on the head of the rider, he had many crowns, which indicates he is not just a king, but he rules as “King of kings”. He is coming to take back his reign from the evil one and to pass judgement of all those who did not like him.

His name was the “word of God”. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3.*

***For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Heb.4:12-13.***

Jesus said, ***“If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. John 12:47-48.***

The armies who were following behind, are those who are part of his church. These are the ones whom he made reference to regarding the works they did for the kingdom of God. They were with him to judge the world.

The scriptures said, **“*do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!” 1Cor.6:2-4.***

**19:17-18.**

***And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small.”***

God’s judgement always come in three forms, either in the form of a plague: or sword or famine. Throughout the OT, we see how God dealt with people who chose to live wickedly, and although they mankind knows God has no tolerance for sin, men continue to indulge in sinful lifestyle.

The news just declared the war between Israel and Hamas claimed over 24, 000 lives already, and the war is not over. Israel says they will not stop until they destroy Hamas completely. This angel standing in the sun represent intense heat, such as the earth has never felt. There will be many fires that the fire department will not be able to control.

2023, scientists have said the earth has never experience such intense heat, and some are believing that the ozone layer is rapidly burning away. Brethren, man is trying desperately to come up with answers to ease the fears of what is ahead.

Our only hope to escape the wrath of God is Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can stand between man and God. The scriptures said, *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 1Tim.2:5.*

***19:19-21***

***Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.***

The time has come for the final judgement to come upon the ones who is responsible for causing so much trouble for the people of God. Although they knew they lost their position of authority, they were determined to fight to the very end.

***Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” Isa.14:16-17.***

Those only ones who will escape this intense wrath, will be those who did not take the mark of the beast, but they stood up against the negative influence of the beast and the false prophet.

**Chapter 20**

**20:1-3**

***And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.***

**Key: -** represents delegated authority. It allows one to enter and exit, with keys, we have authority to bind and lose. If one has no keys, they are not authorized to enter, for them to enter, they will need to break in, and to do so, he shall be trespassing, which is punishable by law.

This special messenger was sent with a special assignment to take care once and for all this arch enemy of God. While Jesus was here on earth, he was not given the authority to destroy the devil before the time set by the father. You may recall, when Jesus met the man who was possessed by Legion. Those spirits challenge him.

***When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. “What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?” Matthew 8:28:29.***

The evil spirits also know there is a special time in the future when they will be judge permanently, and they wanted to be sure Jesus would not send them to that place before the time designated for them to go there.

**Abyss: -** The word *abyss* simply means “a deep hole”—so deep that it seems bottomless or immeasurable. The word is often used in reference to the sea, because it appears to be bottomless. Sometimes it is pictured as a deep hole in the earth. In the Bible, the Abyss is described as a place of confinement for evil spirits:

John spoke about such a place in one of the earlier chapters. *The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. . . . They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).”* [*Revelation 9:1–3*](https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/9/Revelation-9-1.html)*,*[*11*](https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/9/Revelation-9-11.html)*.*

It may appear that evil spirits are unbeatable, but the judge over the earth still have ultimate power over them. The scriptures said, ***Therefore God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil.2:9-11. (The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. Romans 16:20.***

 Although some demons have been consigned to the Abyss and are being held captive there, while others seem to be able to move more freely upon the earth. In the end of their time, all of them will be thrown into the lake of fire, along with all who refused to accept God’s gift which is His son, Jesus Christ. [Rev. 20:10–15](https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/20/Revelation-20-10.html).

Finally, mankind will have some peace, something that was missing from the earth since the beginning of the fall. God drove men from his presence and men became a wanderer, ever since he is trying to find a way back to his creator.

The false prophet who introduce religion to man, that has caused man to believe there is some good in him, and because of this God will consider it and not punish us, but the scriptures said, ***All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. Isa. 64:6.***

Getting rid of the troublemaker, even for a short period of time which will be a thousand years, will be such a blessing to mankind. There is a strong possibility that during that time, man will be given another opportunity to repent of their sin and receive God’s pardon. It should not be difficult at that time, because men will not have to fight against the influence of the dragon.

We have no answer why the Lord will release Satan again for a short period of time. I know the scriptures said, ***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isa.55:8-9.***

We may not understand the reason why God would release him, knowing the damage he is capable of doing, but we do know, God loves man, and he will do whatever he can to give man the opportunity to enter his kingdom.

The scriptures said, “*but do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”. 2Peter 3:8-9.*

One thing we can be sure of, is that Satan can never repent. For the Bible said, Satan only goal is to constantly attack God and his people. The scripture clearly said, his goal is to steal kill and destroy. John 10:10.

***For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his father, and he will be my son”? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” Hebrews 1:5-6.***

I am sure the Lord has a reason for releasing the Devil for 1000 years, for him to roam the earth, although I am ignorant of the reason, but I am sure that the Beast, the dragon and the false prophet are being sentence to the Abyss for rest of eternity.

**20:4-6.**

***I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.***

The army who followed the rider on the white horse, are those who were be-headedbecause of their testimony about Jesus and the gospel.

1. **Because of the Testimony of Jesus: -** *A Martyr is one who has being killed because of their testimony of Jesus or because of their faith in Jesus.*

*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been. Rev. 6:9-11*

***“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. Matt.10:32-33.***

Jesus said, ***Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matt.24:9-13.***

1. **Because of the word of God.**

These are they ones who choose to obey God’s word, rather than obeying what man has set in place that they called “law”.

***Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. ”***

***Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Daniel.3:16-23***

The commitment these three made because of their faith caused them to defy the kings command even if it means risking their lives. The apostles were also threatened by the authorities. ***The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead —whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. Acts 5:21-33.***

Throughout the scriptures we are commanded to “**stand firm**”. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved." Phil. 4:1.*

***Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1Cor.15:58.***

***Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love. 1Cor.16:13.***

Jesus also said, “***Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved”. Matthew 24:12-13.***

The beast and false prophet will force people to worship the dragon, by preventing those who refuse to receive the mark to buy goods and service. This will be terrible for all mankind but even as Jesus said, ***How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. Matthew 24:19-21.***

We had a little taste of this during the peak of the pandemic, when many companies required all of their employees to be vaccinated for them to remain employed. Some have even lost the jobs because of this enforcement, even restaurants refuse to have their customers eat inside their dinning room if they were not vaccinated. Some were faced with the decision either to quit their jobs or take the vaccination. Parishioners questioned me as to, should they take it or not, I refuse to answer that question, because I do not know where people faith is.

As a pastor, my job is to provide you with the word of God, it is up to people to either accept it or reject it. The church is not a cult, therefore, it is not the responsibility of the pastors to force people to do what they don’t want to do.

***The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name. Rev.13:15-17.***

There are some who will refuse to adhere to the law when it clashes with their belief ion God, and because of their faith, they will become martyrs for Christ.

***They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.***

From this text, it is obvious there will be more than one resurrection, the first resurrection is the one Paul wrote to the church in Thessaloniki. ***Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thess.4:13-17.***

The second resurrection will be, ***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2Cor.5:10.***

**20:11-16**

***Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged*** accor, ding ***to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.***

There is a doctrine that is out there today that says, they cannot see how a loving God who sent his son to die for man, after all the treatment he got, that he would put men into a place that burn for-ever and ever.

***Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth —to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Rev.14:6-7.***

The fact that this Angel was flying indicates he was in a hurry, because of the shortness of time. This tells us that the end is nearer than we think. Many of the credible prophets are speaking the same thing lately. I recently even heard the prophesy from Cindy Jacobs, who is urging parishioners to “come up higher”. The lord is calling for his children to move from the place of complacency to the place where he can have our undivided attention.

The apostle Paul warned the church in Galatia, ***you were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. Gal.5:7-10.***

We are being encouraged to know that those who were martyred for Christ will be reigning with the Lord for a thousand years, while the dragon and the beast will be bound. This can only be because God is giving mankind more time to see how many can be saved.

The scriptures said, ***but do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.2Peter 3:8-13.***

The scriptures said, ***He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32.*** The thousand years will be a time for man to get one more opportunity to make it in, all because of his love for mankind, and yet he cannot force man to accept his gift of spending eternity with him. This is a choice man must make without being force or coheres, he has to freely accept this gift.

This last effort to get man into the place Jesus gone to prepare for those who love him, according to John 14:1.

***Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” John 14:1-3.***

* **The Judgement.**

To see those who reject the offer of God must have pained the heart of God, to see all that he did so that man can escape his wrath. He even paid the price for man’s sin, by sending his only son to the cross, and watch him being abused by the same ones he sent him to die for.

Although the death of Christ was the penalty for all of man’s sin, yet when man will be called to give an account, he would not be judge for his sin, because his sin was already being paid for, but he will be judge for failing to accept the gift God gave, which was his son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible said, ***For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23.***

Everything Jesus did and say was to show us the heart of God for mankind, his most precious possession. As mentioned before, Christ did not die for angels, but for us.

Therefore, for any man to go to the lake of fire for all eternity, is a choice he made while being alive.

Following that thousand years, the Bible said the dragon will once again be released to test mankind, the mindset of God is far beyond our wildest imagination. Seeing all the mess the Devil did on earth, and continue to do, it is beyond my imagination to see the reason behind God releasing him for any period of time.

The scriptures said, ***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isa. 55:8-11***

I may not fully understand the rationale behind letting him go for any amount of time, but whatever God Does, he does it well.

**Chapter 21**

**21:1-8**

***Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.***

***But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars —they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”***

The Lord said to John in this vision, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” Rev.4:1.

John is attempting to describe to us what he is seeing in his vision. A “new heaven and new earth”, it is new, because it is something he has never seen, or even heard about. For those in this generation who are considered “boomers”, we have seen over the years, how systems have changed to the place that some have called it, the “new world order”, and that may be true, but that is not what John saw in this vision. it is not a new world order. It is a brand-new heaven and earth.

Peter also describes what the Lord showed him concerning the new heaven and the new earth. *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. 2Peter 3:10-13*

This is what the bride / church is looking toward, when the time has come for the evil one will no longer carry on his evil practice. All of creation will rejoice, for once again the kingdoms of the earth will become the kingdom of our God. There will not be anyone who can temper with God’s creation.

The apostle Peter said, ***But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.***

***Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. 2Peter 3:10-13.***

The reason why there is a need for funeral parlors; doctors; pharmacy; police offices; military personnel; is because we are living in a fallen world where sin and unrighteousness is prevalent. The is is the reason why God had to destroy the old world by water, because ***The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them. Genesis 6:5-7.***

The fact that the Lord said, he is making everything new, which tells us, it will be something we have never seen before, this will be like it was intended from the very beginning when God made the garden of Eden, everything was perfect until the evil one mess it up.

**Alpha and Omega: -** these are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These represents the total comprehensiveness of God. It does not matter how many universes they are, God encompasses them all.

***The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col.1:15-20.***

This promise to give water to the thirsty was also promise to the woman in John chapter four. ***but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:14.***

***“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without cost. Isa.55:1.*** The water Jesus Is referring to, is not what quenches the physical thirst, but what satisfy the the thirst of the soul.

The scriptures said, ***for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Psalm 107:9.*** Religion cannot satisfy the soul of a person; it caused the person to feel more trapped with all the do’s and don’t’s; rules and regulations. The scriptures clearly said, ***Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2.***

Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. ***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but, on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Matt.23:27-28.***

The Lord also spoke about the ones who will experience the second death. ***But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars —they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”***

The word “death” here is not referring to physical demise, such as what we experience here on earth, it has reference to separation from the eternal life with Christ. Those who falls into that category that John mentioned, will spend eternity totally separated from God, and because they cannot die, they will experience torment forever in the place that was prepared for the angels that rebelled against God.

God did not prepare such a place for man, but because of man’s rebellion against him, and their choice not to believe, they will go to that place that the Bible described as “fiery lake of burning sulfur”.

There is a doctrine that some are preaching that this loving God will not punish men in such a cruel place. They believe God will punish man for a brief season, then have them spend eternity in heaven because of the love he has for his creation.

After the Lord destroyed the earth by water, he placed in the sky a rainbow, and vowed never to do that again. ***And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” Gen.9:12-16.***

He said the next time he reigns judgement upon the earth, it will be by fire. He gave a little example of what he meant when he rains fire upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorra.

***Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. Jude 1:5-7.***

***The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 2Thessalonians 2:9-12.***

***21:9-14.***

***One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues (15:1;6;7) came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.***

**Holy city: -** this is the place that some refers to as “Paradise”. We can be assured that what John saw was not what is know today as the “Jerusalem” that exists is the Middle East. The closet resemblance to it will be “the garden of Eden”, where there was total perfection from the east to the west, from the north to the south. In this place the evil one has no control over the affairs that govern this city.

The description John saw was like a “bride” dress for her wedding. Wedding is mostly about the bride, then the groom. The beauty is all about the bride dress, how she looked, etc. no one really pays attention to the groom, except perhaps how he did on the first dance. The church is called the bride of Christ, and even though it may have the appearance of many flaws in it, because the Devil is giving the church a bad name, but Jesus said, ***And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Matt.16:18.***

Thank God he did not left the building of his church to Peter or to anyone else, but he took on that responsibility of the building of his church, therefore, with all that we are seeing or hearing about the church, nothing can stop the construction. The church is still very powerful, and it is aggressively moving forward.

Those who belong to His church will only have the best interest of the church at heart, even though the evil one may attempt to slow down the process, just like Nehemiah experience when he went back to secure the people of God from their enemies. The opposition he faced came from within and without, but he remains steadfast and unmoved by the treats of the troublemakers.

***Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Rev.2:7.*** This gives us another indicator that the “tree of life” is in Paradise just as it was in Eden.

***Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Rev.22:1-3.***

There are some who teaches that this earth will be the place where those who love the Lord will spend eternity, but I beg to differ, because the scripture clearly states that, this holy city (New Jerusalem) will come from down from heaven.

***And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Rev.21:3-4.***

This is the moment the church was waiting for from the time Christ came. You may recall the question the disciples asked Jesus before his accession, they asked him, ***Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:7.***

They were looking for Jesus to set up a kingdom like that which the Roman Empire had, but that was far from what Jesus came on earth for. For him to do that, it would mean what was predicted had to take place, this earth and the heavens had to be destroyed. There would be no more USA, it would be the end of what we know as this world and its systems.

This Jerusalem is call “new”, because nothing of the old will be part of it. This what is known as our world, and how it functions will not be part of it. This world systems is driven by money, from the government, to the bigger on the street, the cry of the hearts of people, is they want more money. Money will not be part of his kingdom, for there will be no banks, no credit cards, no stock market, etc. This is the reason

**21:15-22.**

***The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.***

***The angel who talked to me held in his hand a gold measuring stick to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16When he measured it, he found it was a square, as wide as it was long. In fact, its length and width and height were each 1,400 miles. 17Then he measured the walls and found them to be 216 feet thick (according to the human standard used by the angel). 18The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, as clear as glass. 19The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve precious stones: the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. Rev. 21:15-20 NLT.***

In one of the earlier chapters, we saw where in the vision, john received a measuring rod to measure the temple of God, the Altar and the count the worshippers, but here we see an Angel was given another measuring rod that made of gold, to measure the city, its gates and its walls.

The lord Jesus said, *My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14:2-3.*

***And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. Rev.21:10-13.***

**12 tribes:-** *Ruben, Simeon, Ephraim, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Manasseh, Benjamin.*

**12 apostles: -** *Peter, James, John, Judas Iscariot, Nathaniel, Matthew, Thomas, Phillip, Andrew, Bartholomew, Simon the zealot, Judas Thaddeus.*

Since Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and committed suicide, perhaps his name may not be included as part of the twelve apostles. For the scriptures said ***So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. Acts 1:23-26.***

**Human measurement: -***Anthropometry, (from the Greek word, Anthropos: human, and metron measure) refers to systematic collection and correlation of measurements of human individuals, including the systematic measurement of the physical characteristics of the human body, primarily body weight, body size and shape.*

**Stadia: -***Ancient Greek unit of length, consisting of 600 Ancient Greek feet.*

**Cubit: -** *the cubit is an ancient unit of length based on the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger.*

***21:22-27***

***I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.***

In his vision, he expected to see a temple in the city, for that is what we are familiar with, especially fot those who are children of God, even while Jesus was here in the flesh, he would visit the temple from time to time where he would minister to the people.

The psalmist himself wrote, ***I rejoiced with those who said to me,“Let us go to the house of the LORD.” Psalm 122:1.*** People of God look forward of coming together from time to time where they can fellowship and worship together. The woman Jesus met on his way to Jerusalem, ***Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”***

***“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” John 4:19-24.***

It is not unusual for John to expect to see a temple in the city, but there was no temple. For the Lord himself and the Lamb are the temple. I believe this is what the Jesus was referring to when he said, when he spoke to that woman, because although she was looking for a geographical place where she can physically go to worship God, the Lord was looking not for a physical place but for those who will be that place where his presence is.

There are. Some who believe unless they are in a building, they cannot truly worship, but that is false, because the worshippers are the building where Jesus is the corner stone.

***Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph.2:19-22.***

This what John saw was truly astonishing to him, because there was no sun or moon, which mankind has always seen from the very beginning, when God spoke this world into being, there has always been the sun and the moon, and from him not seeing that which was normal to him must have truly caught his attention. Although, the sun and moon were absent, there was no darkness anywhere, for the glory of the Lord lit up the entire city.

I visited Las Vegas once, and it was truly amazing to see how well lighted that city was, I cannot imagine how people sleep in a city that seem to have action all the time, from corner to corner, you can find some kind of activity going on, but there can be no comparison when it come to this city John saw.

Steve Green wrote the lyrics for the song, “looking for a city”.

 *I'm looking for the city with a true foundation
A home in the heavens not made by hands
Its designer and builder is the Lord of the ages
He prepared it for me before the world began

Since the moment of new birth
I've been a stranger on this earth
An exile of promise living in this world
But with my new eyes of faith
I'm looking for the day
When I'll be gone from this house.*

The scripture said, “***nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*** My brethren, that is the hope of every child of God, not only to see that city, but to live in that place for all eternity. Never again will there be all the filth that we see in this world, never again will there be hospitals, doctors, funeral parlors, crime, rape police officers, accidents, never again. It will be the perfect place where only the true worshippers will be.

The word of Jesus truly is a source of encouragement to the people of God. ***Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” John 14:1-4.***

***Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2Cor.5:6-10.***

**Chapter 22**

***22:1-5***

***Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.***

The prophet Zechariah also prophesies, ***On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter. Zech.14:8.***

God also gave Ezekiel the same prophesy, “***The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.***

***As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river Ezek.47:1-6***

**The reward for the faithful:**

This was the very intent of God from the very beginning when he made the garden of Eden. What we are currently experiencing here on earth was never his plan for this garden or for man. What is seen before the fall of mankind was what God delighted in.

The scriptures said, ***A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.***

***The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” Gen.3:10-17***

The man is God highest form of his creation. He ***wanted*** to really have a part of this creation to fully belong to him, although he knew that because he gave man his free will, he had to make allowance just in case the man mess things up.

He saw what took place with some of the angels he made while they were in Heaven, how they rebelled against his authority, and these were perfect in their creation. They were influence by the evil one to violate God’s authority. The Bible said, ***the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. Jude 1:6***

Therefore, God already made provision to rescue man from the fall, by providing a lamb as the perfect sacrifice for man sin. The devil thought he was able to take revenge for what God did to him, but he was wrong, because the God who made his is wiser and stronger than him.

God will still have his river of life flowing through this city, and the beauty of it is the leaves from the trees will be for the healing for the nations. Oh, glory to God. My brethren, the word cancer will never be heard of again, death will never be a part of the human society. It is still the job of the evil one to continue to to put unbelief in the heart of man that will cause him to rebel against God’s authority.

***Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars —they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” Rev.21:7-8.***

***22:6-7***

***The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”***

The lord has used his prophets to encourage mankind to be watchful and not fall asleep, because he will come at a time when we least expect him.

(“***Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) Rev.16:15 ESV.***

***But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Matt.24:43.***

***But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 1Thess.5:2.***

**22:8-11**

***I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!” Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”***

John was awestruck by what he saw that he was moved to revere the one who showed him, but he was stopped immediately, because worship belongs to God alone. ***“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. “You shall have no other gods before me. “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exo.20:1-6.***

The Lord did not want to keep people in ignorance, he wanted man to know what was coming that man can have no excuse. The scriptures said, ***“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenants, Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net”. Psalm 25:14-15. NKJV.***

Jesus was asked, why was he speaking to the people in parables. ***The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. Matthew 13:10-12.***

Jesus said, ***To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32.*** It is the will of God for his children to know his heart, and what his plans are. This is the reason why when the disciples questioned him about the end times events, he took the time to explain to them, as to what to look for as recorded on Mathew chapter twenty-four.

**22:12-16**

***“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.***

***Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”***

It was not too long that my wife had a vision of the Lord saying that “he is coming soon”, and I have heard from many prophets saying the very same thing, where some have even said the saw what Stephen saw as he was preaching to the group.

***When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” Acts 4:54-56.***

***Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 2Peter 3:3-7.***

**Soon: -** *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 2Peter 3:8.* God does not operate in time like us, because he functions only in eternity. He only sees eternity.

The psalmist declared, “*A thousand years in your sight, are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. Psalm 90:4.*

The only one who was given that authority is Jesus, for even while he was on earth in the flesh, he warned those who followed him, that he was going to leave, but he will return.

***“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” John 14:1-4.***

 For he is the one the prophet Isaiah prophesy about, “***See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being, and his form marred beyond human likeness —so, he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. or what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand”. Isa. 52:13-15.***

For those who are debating on whether Jesus is the one and only way to God, or who are the true Jews, and are fighting with each other regarding if Jesus was blaspheme when he said, “the son of man” has power on earth to forgive sins.

***When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Mrk 2:6-10***

The Lord God has entrusted all authority in heaven and on earth to the Lord Jesus. ***Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Matt.28:19.*** As great and powerful some of the prophets were, none of them could have said what Jesus, therefore, there are no confusion about who Jesus is.Paul writing to the church in Thessalonians, reminded them about being prepared for the return of the Lord.

***Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.***

***But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 1Thess.5:1-9.***

When he return, it will not be like the first time when he came on earth. He came as a human being, he was also known as the son of man, but when he returns, he is coming as the judge, and will reward those who have been faithful to the end.

***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2Cor.5:10.*** Seeing there is no way around it, it is wisdom for us to live lives that pleases Him. ***So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 2Cor.5:9.***

John saw in his vision, that as judgement began, there was two destinations. One was where those who had their robes washed will go, while the other destination, is for those who never receive the gift of life Christ offered. It is unfortunate that all those who will be on the outside, their sins have already been paid for, but they failed to receive their pardon.

We that are still alive have the opportunity to make a decision as to where we want to spend eternity. There are some who believe, we can make that decision after we died, but that is a lie. The scriptures said, “It is appointed for a man to die once, but after that then comes the judgement”. Hebrews 9:27.

The scripture also said, ***So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3:7-8.***

John saw earlier in his vision where the Lord spoke to the Laodicean church, ***Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. Rev.3:20.***

***As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. 2Cor.6:1-2.***

***Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”***

**Dogs: -** *such persons who are comparable to dogs for their filthiness, impudence, and voraciousness, as are persecutors, heretics, and apostates, ( Philippians 3:2 ) ( 2 Peter 2:22 ) .*

***Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. Matt.7:6***

**22:17-21**

***The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.***

As the vision is about to come to a close, the one word that resonates is”Come”. Throughout the scriptures we will notice the Lord is always inviting man to come, the one place be see the word “Go”, is in his command to make disciples.

***go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20.***

In spite of all our rebelliousness and lawlessness, God seem to always come running after us, and the more, he calls, it is the more the man keeps running from him. From the very beginning, it was the Lord who came looking for the man at the same place he usually meets with him, therefore, when the man was not there, he is the one who keep calling for them.

The man responded that he was hiding. It was the first time the man hid from God; it was when he did something the Lord told him not to do. From that time to this very day, it is still the Lord who is calling for the man to return to him.

***Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.”For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isa.1:18-20.***

Jesus coming to earth at the time when he did, was all God’s intention to bring men back to him. For him to allow his only son to go through what he went through for us, this showed us the awesome love he has for man.

***All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor.5:18-21.***

It will be very sad for those who refuse to accept God’s gift, and for them to spend the rest of eternity apart from the Lord. ***Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Matthew 7:21-23.***

***I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 7:11-12.***