

The Days
of the
Seventh
Angel

Volume 1: The Seven Churches

**Study Notes
on the**

Book of Revelation

By

Steven E. Behrmann

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Sunnyside Edition

Volume 1 (of seven volumes)

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The reason for the use of an older version is two-fold: The first reason for the author, at least; is lifetime familiarity. The second is that the *King James Version* is very “literal,” and therefore seems to honor more consistently than some, word uniqueness, something especially important in the study of the *Apocalypse*. But any version can be used for profit.

This first edition contains many imperfections and typographical slips. The author indulges the reader’s mercy and patience while the editing process continues.

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Table of Contents

Why This Book?	5
Hermeneutical Principles Used in This Study	14
The Broad Curriculum of the Apocalypse.....	24
The General Organization of the Book	30
Salutation and Purpose.....	33
Introduction and Prologue	37
The Lord's Day	42
The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse.....	51
The Opening Vision	61
The Seven Stars	66
The Seven Spirits.....	73
The Seven Angels' Messages	78
Bi-Sectional Parallels	80
Eastern U. S. Cities as Illustrative Counterparts of the Seven Churches	86
Ephesus	87
Smyrna	93
The Rewards of the Faithful	98
Pergamos	100
Thyatira.....	114
The Morning Star.....	123
Sardis.....	140
Philadelphia	149
The Key of David.....	161
Laodicea	169
The Historical/Prophetic Application of the Seven Churches ..	178
Appendix A	182
Appendix B	184
Appendix C	185
Study Guide	188

Why This Book?

Introduction

Not a few have attempted to explain the mysteries of the great and final book of the Bible, "The Revelation of St. John." In some respects, this book may be among the most difficult to understand. As a result the door has been opened to countless diversities of thought, ingenious speculations, and multiplied controversies. All this has summarily resulted in a veritable "Babylon" of confusion.

To add my humble and nearly inaudible voice to the din seems even to the author of these words a fruitless venture. It is expected that the voice might never be heard at all. Yet the same urgency which called that faithful apostle John to "write" calls another and more common disciple to write, owing to the lateness of the hour, the shortness of the time for this fated orb we call earth.

I am convinced that despite the multitudinous works compiled on the *Apocalypse*, the reality remains that in many cases they have generated more heat than light. There therefore remains for the serious student a plethora of unsolved mysteries, matters of supreme importance for our time, things not yet understood. These lessons must quickly be exposed and absorbed, so that the purpose for which they were written may be fulfilled¹.

¹ "When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival." E.G. White. *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923,1944,1962), p. 113.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

To this end I have felt convicted that I should urgently seek a better understanding of these things for myself. And as a result I have been richly rewarded. Should nothing further ever come of these pages, I can say without reserve that there already has been blessing enough for me in this study, and it has been in every sense worth the endeavor.

It's Relevance and Meaning is Misunderstood

Opinions vary today as in the past as to the relevancy and value of studying the *Revelation*. Some would prefer it not be studied at all, calling it a strange and ludicrous document. This would not be surprising if it came only from secular humanists, but it comes also from professing Christians who find its message troublesome. I cannot resist noting the opinion even of Martin Luther², the very one, who said it was not worthy of scripture and should be excluded from the canon. Neither is Luther alone in this derogatory view³. Luther's disparaging opinion of the book of Revelation is shared today by many Christians and non-Christians as well⁴.

Another but similar attitude is offered us in the works of more recent "theologians." Many of these have been baptized so thoroughly in the historical-critical method that their dissecting instruments and bigoted hermeneutics rob them of most of the blessing promised in the book, save perhaps the "delight" of shredding, torturing, and humanizing it. When

² See *Appendix A*. Luther regarded the book as unedifying and inferior. He did not see Christ in it and felt it did not measure up to the other canonical books.

³ In the words of Zwingli: "With the *Apocalypse* we have no concern, for it is not a biblical book.... The *Apocalypse* has no savour of the mouth or the mind of John. I can, if I so will, reject its testimonies." William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 2.

⁴ ---The playwright G. B. Shaw supposedly once called it "a curious record of a drug addict's visions."

Why This Book?

one looks at the monumental work of R. H. Charles⁵, a brilliant student of the languages and of the text of Revelation, painstakingly formulated over a period of at least twenty-five years and certainly written over the heads of most of us, we like John find ourselves marveling. But again, at the same time, like John the Revelator, even after seeing these things and hearing them, we are still lost in a marvelous mystery. Even after digesting ponderous commentaries and other verbose, explanatory works, we tragically still don't understand the message of Revelation and need an angel to explain it to us.

I do not believe that even Charles understood the final and basic meaning of the book any more than the attentive and simple disciple who finds an interest in this book and prays for the blessing it can bring. Charles, for example, is kinder to the book's divine credentials than many of his fellow commentators. He at least makes the case that it has basically one author. But he still degrades its incredibly ingenious arrangement by informing us that "John died when he had completed 1-20 of his work, and that the materials for its completion, which were for the most part ready in a series of independent documents, were put together by a faithful but unintelligent disciple in the order he thought right (Vol. 1, p.50)⁶." He then spends most of his exhaustive work, (2 large volumes), trans-locating sentences here and there, substituting "better" expressions, and in his own auspicious judgment putting them in the order *he* thinks right. This constitutes nothing other than a "low" view of such a masterpiece (not to mention a pathetic waste of time). However, the opinion of R.H. Charles is not the

⁵ R.H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh; Scotland: T.T. & Clark, Last Impression, 1985), Vol. 1, pp. xxii., xxiii.

⁶ R. H. Charles believed that the book of Revelation was originally strictly chronological and that it was tampered hopelessly with by a later editor. Of this person who supposedly re-arranged the order of the book he says: "The culprit was a 'shallow-brained fanatic and celibate' who took unwarranted liberties with the text" (Vol. I, p. lv.) .

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

basest opinion given for the book (e.g: "a crazy man's hallucinations," etc.). But we have no need to allow further digression on that subject.

But generally, there remain those who to a large extent appreciate the book. If it were not for such enthusiasts we would no longer be in possession of this treasure. But even these often place hazards before us as well. Frightful to a great degree are the constructions of the book promoted in popular evangelical and charismatic theology. Many of their interpretations impose modern doctrines of total invention onto the text and carelessly teach cheap and irresponsible views of the Sacred Scripture.

More is Yet to be Understood

Another dangerous and misleading view of the book is the scenario "Hollywood theologians" give the *Apocalypse*. But again, even this is not the most dangerous view. **The most dangerous view---is the view that because so much has been preached and written concerning the book of Revelation, that it is now essentially understood; and that we need not study it and find ourselves accountable for understanding it.**⁷ This

⁷ *"There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. "Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." But Jesus says to these self-complacent ones, Thou "knowest not that thou art*

Why This Book?

is the most fearful of all results, for if followed always removes the blessing promised for all who read, hear, and keep the things written in this vision. In addition, such an attitude does not consider the directives which give us reason to believe that more is yet to be discovered and understood, and in some cases revised, as pertains to this book.

The Timely Value and Importance of the Book

There is a safer and better perspective one can take in preference to the ones mentioned so far. This perspective is the position taken by the writer Ellen White, for one; the author of the following words concerning the very book under discussion, and the words that legitimized my own personal quest for knowledge and understanding for this endeavor. Says the writer:

"The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God's people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention⁸."

If this statement is taken as authoritative, several things should then be considered. First, not only are the teachings of Revelation then supremely

wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." E.G. White, "Review and Herald," 12-20-1892.

"Let none think, because they cannot explain the meaning of every symbol in the Revelation, that it is useless for them to search this book in an effort to know the meaning of the truth it contains. The One who revealed these mysteries to John will give to the diligent searcher for truth a foretaste of heavenly things. Those whose hearts are open to the reception of truth will be enabled to understand its teachings, and will be granted the blessing promised to those who "hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein..."

⁸ E.G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), Vol. 8, p. 302.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

canonical and important; not only do they have an order of their own; but they are significant enough that *nothing else is to occupy our attention*. This is a bold assertion. This, of course, does not mean that the rest of the Bible should not be considered important or relevant, but it does mean that the understanding of these words are paramount, as serious as life and death, and ought to be the principle focus of every last day, "remnant" Christian. For indeed, all Bible books do find their end and glory in this marvelous prophetic utterance. This is an infinitely higher view of the book. The subject matter of the book of Revelation is to be regarded as not only profitable, but in every way *essential*.

It is a fact that certain passages of the book of Revelation are quite adequately understood; but then there are others that simply are not. It has become my inner conviction that this book in its entirety will be soon be understood, and that God intends that *every phrase is meant to be understood* to a certain degree. Why would God send a message that cannot be fully understood? When certain passages are not understood, it is the responsibility of Christian scholars to study and pray over it, until God supplies an answer that can be certain and generally accepted.

However, in looking at the writers and commentators on the book, one finds quickly that many pages and many words does not mean many answers. Commentators tend to embellish what even the ordinary reader already understands. But the "hard sayings" are either ignored or given secular or vague explanations that simply do not satisfy. This has greatly frustrated me.

Not a Verse-by-Verse Commentary

Therefore the purpose of this writing is not to be a commentary on every passage in the book of Revelation. Many have done this, much better than some of us could dream of doing. Rather, the focus of these study notes is to clarify, elucidate, and supply greater understanding especially to those things that I feel other writers ignore or misapply. Granted, some commentary is necessary to provide a flow of ideas, and some traditional

Why This Book?

citations are so excellent that they are included in the text. But the purpose is not to catalogue and reference exhaustively and extensively, but to rather, by the simplest means possible, go *straight to the meaning* and interpretation of text. Unlike some commentaries, I am not aiming to offer a choice, but rather to argue for the certainty of a particular interpretation.

Further, this is not a “sit-down, read through” type of book. Of course, anyone is more than welcome to do so. But it is really intended for reference, or to accompany live presentations focused on the book of Revelation. It is intended to help students in their study of the book rather than promote personal or popular views.

Therefore on this wise there are found in this study things old and new, but many things which are not found in other sources to the author's knowledge. Necessarily then, there may be at times few footnotes. I do not pretend in any way to claim infallibility for these conclusions and interpretations. But they simply represent the leanings and convictions of decades of prayer, attention, and study. Learning is always subject to edition and change.

These things are not presented in perfect literary form. At times idea paths are broken down in an attempt to visually lead the reader. These are indeed notes. No attempt is made to create on these pages a literary masterpiece or a scholarly treatise. Accept my apologies for the crude forms of presentation that may appear. Being visual myself, I wish the entire book could be more *diagrammatic* rather than simply successive paragraphs; but there are limits to all forms of communication.

The Audience

This book is not aimed at the general public. It's hope and purpose is to stir and revive interest in the messages given to God's last day church, and to urge forward those who wish to delve deeper into the important truths for our time. I'm writing for Seventh-day Adventists who need to sink their roots deeper into the message of the *Apocalypse*. But the message of

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Revelation is for every Christian, and I would be glad for anyone to read these pages; better yet, to study prayerfully the book of *Revelation* itself.

The True Position of the Book

It is the settled opinion of this humble writer that the book of *Revelation* is a unified document coming from one author, John the apostle. The book bears the credentials of divine inspiration. It is difficult to take the position that the book could have been written without divine aid, for there are such incredible underlying themes and intricate literary relationships. These could hardly be produced by human thought and also be accurate prophetically. I feel it is no exaggeration to say that the *Apocalypse* is the grandest and most magnificent document ever written through a human penman⁹. It is a worthy capstone¹⁰ to the Scriptures,¹¹ the crown and

⁹ More accurate is the assessment of Phillip Carrington: "In the case of the Revelation we are dealing with an artist greater than Stevenson or Coleridge or Bach. St. John has a better sense of right word than Stevenson; he has a greater command of unearthly and supernatural loveliness than Coleridge; he has a richer sense of melody and rhythm and composition than Bach. . . . It is the only masterpiece of pure art in the New Testament....Its fullness and richness and harmonic variety place it far above Greek tragedy." William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), Vol. 1, p. 2.

¹⁰ JEROME [*Epistle to Paulinus*] includes in the canon the Apocalypse, adding, "It has as many mysteries as words, or rather mysteries in every word. All praise falls short of its merits. In each of its words lie hid manifold senses." *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, second series, vol. 6, *St. Jerome; Letters and Select Works* (Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893).

¹¹ A Greek divine, quoted in ALLATIUS, calls Revelation "the seal of the whole Bible." *Revelation: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, Introduction: RELATION OF THE APOCALYPSE TO THE REST OF THE CANON.

Why This Book?

garland upon all of Holy Writ. It is from Jesus Christ, and Christ is seen everywhere within it.

Nor can there be a more timely book for this hour in human history, for the “days of the voice of the seventh angel” (Rev. 10:7) are upon us. The book of Revelation is more relevant than it ever has been---today. Therefore, let all eyes turn toward this wonderful vision.

Here then is presented a humble and very imperfect attempt to look at what is perfect and divine. For I feel that all should so view this unveiling, as sacred and awesome; a divine revelation; one that has order and symmetry; one that is timely and inspirational; and one that is most worthy of our consideration.¹²

¹²

"To John were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. He saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. He records the closing messages which are to ripen the harvest of the earth, either as sheaves for the heavenly garner or as fagots for the fires of destruction. Subjects of vast importance were revealed to him, especially for the last church, that those who should turn from error to truth might be instructed concerning the perils and conflicts before them. None need be in darkness in regard to what is coming upon the earth." (GC 341)

Hermeneutical Principles Used in This Study

1. The *Direct* Use of Symbols

- A. The book of Revelation is almost entirely made up of symbols. Therefore, in correctly understanding these symbols lies the key to understanding the book. *Symbols are abbreviated code objects or expressions that represent realities beyond themselves.* However, there can be no ultimate agreement on what these symbols stand for without establishing rules for symbolic application as well as knowing how to properly apply corroborative evidence from other interpretive data.
- B. Apocalyptic symbols, I feel, should be understood on the basis of what one might call the principle of “direct association.” That is, they are not as some suppose, elusive and ambiguous generalities with merely a “spiritual” or “philosophical” application. They are instead definite indications of real powers, temporal or heavenly objects, beings, or systems. They do have valid spiritual or secondary applications, of course. But enough reality should remain present to ensure that the prescribed truth is not spiritualized away into nothingness.

The principle might be further defined as the “once-removed” principle. The prophetic purposes, as it were, are pictured in a symbolic fashion that is *one* step away from the reality they represent; yet at the same time they are in actuality symbols that stand for *real* beings, events, governments and so forth.

Hermeneutical Principles

- For example; prophetic "Babylon," should not be seen as *literal* Babylon, which is the *same* and veritable entity, and therefore not a symbol at all. Co-identity is *too* direct. This is the *first* dimension.

Babylon, then is a code name or symbol for something else beyond this. So to apply the "direct principle" as stated above, the symbol "Babylon" indicates a *real, religio-political* empire, such as, the historical Roman Empire. This application is only one step removed, a second dimension, and makes the symbol "Babylon" a guise or appellation for the "Roman Empire," or whatever particular reality the other hermeneutical indicators determine it to be. But to say that Babylon is symbolic "only," or that it is *exclusively* a fictitious designation for "evil," "spiritual corruption," or "false religion," relegates it to the third dimension and renders it quite general and indefinite. It becomes very ambiguous, and not very informative or useful.

By moving away from directness of application, such a large aperture of understanding opens that almost any interpretation is accommodated. This is where most commentators leave us. The abuse of the principle of *direct association* is why opinions vary so much over interpretation of the Revelation. The importance of honoring this principle then cannot be over-stated. Even the writer of the book of Revelation informs us that it is written in "sign language"¹³ (chap. 1:2). Blurring the realities to which the symbols point compromises the meaning and purpose for the message sent in the book. Most commentators in the interest of being objective, and afraid of the trap of "literalism," greatly violate this principle and render the book almost entirely meaningless and only darkly relevant.

Symbols come in many forms. Numbers are also symbols, and their symbolic value is usually more important than their mathematical value. All this must be understood while working an interpretation. (Cf. *Appendix C, The Symbolic Use of Numbers*)

¹³ From σήμειον, i.e. the derivative σημειον, "sign." Therefore "symbolic language."

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

2. The Use of Cycles and Parallel Structures

The book of Revelation is organized in cycles similar to the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. In fact Daniel and Revelation must be studied together. They are parallel prophecies. The obvious sequential arrangement of such sub-sections as the churches, seals, trumpets, and plagues indicate a cyclical arrangement. Though there is a general movement from the historical sections in the first of the book to the eschatological sections in the latter part of the book, the use of these cycles should restrain those who would conclude that the book is to be exclusively interpreted only as "continuous" or "straight-line" from beginning to end. Recognition of unique patterns, repetition, mirroring, and recapitulation are then very important in the scheme of interpretation.

3. The Law of Heavenly Counterparts

The principle of heavenly counterparts is the principle used throughout the book of Revelation that demonstrates that for nearly every heavenly figure there is often found a corresponding earthly figure. It is an extension of the "symbolic" culture of the entire book.

- For example, in Revelation, chapter 14, angels are seen flying through the sky, loudly proclaiming a message. We do not expect that this is *literally* the way the eternal gospel is to be given. Instead, human beings used by God; appointed earthly agents, are those who actually "proclaim" the everlasting gospel. Therefore, in place of the heavenly angels; actors in the vision, are found the human (Gr. angels=messengers) counterparts who in fact are intentionally featured as giving the warning message. Several more examples could be given here. In fact, many will be given in the following studies.

When this principle is realized, greater understanding is awarded to many passages. Recognition of this principle is also essential to interpretational success.

Hermeneutical Principles

4. The Use of Synonymic Parallels

The systematic recognition of “synonymic parallels” this author considers to be for the most part an original contribution to the study of the book of Revelation. Through their agency many interpretational windows are opened. In many instances they become a key to understanding the use of symbols and provide one of the reasons that certain prophetic images are expressed in the way they are. *Synonymic parallels* also prove to a certain extent the literary unity of the book and show that it is a harmonious work and not a collection of dislocated documents arranged by a careless editor. They prove the general organization of the book.

“Synonymic parallels” are basically symbols and ideas that are thematically related. In effect they are “word-cousins,” that recur and repeat throughout the book. This author does not insist that these parallels as catalogued in the following pages are all correctly understood in every detail; because to initially uncover them can be painstaking and difficult. Editions have occurred at regular intervals as passage after passage opened to greater understanding. But the presence of these parallels are too numerous and too symmetrical to be accidental.

Breaking the book into sections one can find these parallels present in every section. *The exact same word or object is not used particularly*, but a **synonym** or similar object is used. Synonymic parallels are “word-sisters” that unify the document and tighten the range of interpretation.

- For instance, a dual, two-dimensional object shows up in each section, or in each half of a given section. In the first half of the first section (the Churches) we find mentioned a “two-edged” sword. In the second half, we do not find a two-edged sword, but we do find a town expressed as a “double” town; *Sardeis (plural)*, meaning “two sards,” indicating the upper and lower town. This pattern goes through out the book. After this appears a yoke or balance, a horse with two riders, a right foot with a left foot, two candle stands, two wings, two horns, etc. etc. Often when these parallels are tallied at the end they number 7, 14, or some multiple of seven.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

- The symbol or word is usually is so well chosen that it has multiple nuances that contribute to an additional thread or theme of thought. To illustrate, one can take the same two-edged sword noted above. Not only is this sword a symbol denoting duality, but we know that a sword is made of iron. Likewise in every section is found something made of iron. The complimenting half of the churches section mentions a "rod of iron," and so forth through the book.
- The same symbol (a sword) is used again for something sharp, or with a sharp point. Consequently we find later in the book other things, strategically placed, having sharp points. Thus we find sickles, horns, scorpion stingers, machetes, reeds, lion's teeth, etc.

Amazingly, one can easily find between 100-200 such parallel ideas that relate directly to other sections in the book, all within the space of a few verses each time! These parallels largely explain the appearance of many strange figures; such as a woman clothed with the sun and having a crown of twelve stars, being with child, etc. For interest a more complete scheme of parallels and synonyms are thus provided in the later volumes. In these volumes several thought lines are identified. Any student is welcome to take them further. I have found that by searching for an apparently missing symbol in one section often brings about a clearer understanding of an already ambiguous or enigmatic expression in that place or another. These parallels are always in a state of addition and edition. I have often felt my heart strangely warmed as I have traced these in my meditation and memorization of the marvelous Apocalypse. A grasp of biblical Greek and Hebrew has been an enormous and rewarding tool in this endeavor.

Appearing also in this study is what are called "bi-sectional" parallels. These are really the same as synonymic parallels but are limited to demonstrating these parallels in the opposing halves of a given section. These isolate the comparison to a specific subsection such as the Churches, Seals, etc. The pattern is found to be only roughly chiasmic, but as sure as the sun is in the sky, a corresponding parallel appears in each section. I feel that recognition of these parallels is an absolute must for responsible interpretation of the book of Revelation.

Hermeneutical Principles

5. The Control of Prophetic Testimony

The author takes more seriously than some the control on interpretation given through the biblical prophets and by the ministry of Ellen G. White. Many wish to point out that “dependence” upon such writings as Ellen White's is forbidden, and that her writings are not to be openly used in biblical exegesis. The claim is made that the recommendation of Ellen White herself was to largely ignore her writings when studying the Bible in a technical fashion. Indeed it was the admonition of Ellen White to depend on the Bible and the Bible only, and not to depend on her. However, to take this position at face value is not the complete picture. Therefore, I, to a degree, dissent this general view, and feel such expositors in taking such a position make a strategic interpretational mistake.

Some insistently point out that Ellen White herself referred to herself as a “lesser light,” and that we should not lean on her for understanding for many of the theological problems presented in the *Revelation* and other Bible books. To them the term “lesser light” seems to mean some form of degraded inspiration. They are anxious to make observations relative to Mrs. White's humanity, her limited understanding, her supposed borrowing of ideas and terms, or the liberal editing of her writings by those in charge of them. A favorite observation by such expositors is that Ellen White is “devotional” writer, and not a “theologian.”

Some of these typical observations all seem credible and reasonable to the hearer and reader at first. But this author, after examination of such reasoning, finds such a general position untenable and inaccurate, if not dangerous.¹⁴ The assertions contain a degree of truth. But taken at face value, I feel they still represent some puzzling and inconsistent thinking.

¹⁴ E.G. White, 9 MR, pp. 198, 199:

The Danger of Undermining Confidence in the Testimonies –“The enemy has made his masterly efforts to unsettle the faith of our own people in the testimonies, and when these errors come in they **claim to prove all the positions by the Bible**, but they misinterpret the Scriptures. They make bold assertions, as did Elder Canright, and **misapply the prophecies** and the Scriptures to prove falsehood. And, after men have done their work in weakening the confidence of our churches in the testimonies, they have torn away the barrier, that unbelief in the truth shall become widespread, and there is no voice to be lifted up to stay the

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Now the author does not believe that Ellen G. White knew all there was to know on these subjects, or that she never made human errors, or that she didn't grow and change in her understanding over the years of her ministry. But he does believe that her comprehensive "written" testimony is significant enough, that it cannot be totally ignored when doing interpretation. In fact, in many cases the answer that has been particularly elusive to the searcher is often miraculously provided by what is called even in the Revelation, the "Spirit of prophecy," as if it were fortuitously known that help would be needed for that particular difficulty. It is a tenable biblical position that a later prophet can by God's design be instrumental in unlocking a sealed prophecy that was given in the past. Numerous cases of this could be cited. It is therefore entirely right and necessary that the searcher for truth seek for understanding through a *legitimate* modern prophetic voice.

On the opposite hand there are also some, though, who claim to take a conservative view of the prophetic gift, yet who still take preposterous positions or foster new interpretations that on closer examination directly contradict the testimony of inspiration. In this they go way beyond the prophetic control. This I believe is equally dangerous ground, and generally leads to the same erroneous conclusions anyway.

The consistent position, I believe, is to regard a prophet or messenger from God as one who has an above average understanding of God (theology),

force of error. This is just as Satan designed it should be, and those who have been preparing the way for the people to pay no heed to the warnings and reproofs of the testimonies of the Spirit of God will see that a tide of errors of all kinds will spring into life. **They will claim Scripture as their evidence**, and deceptions of Satan in every form will prevail."--Letter 109, 1890, p. 5. (To W. C. White and J. E. White and wife, Dec. 6, 1890.)

8MR, p. 320:

"All these truths are immortalized in my writings. The Lord never denies His word. Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, **but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days.**"

Hermeneutical Principles

and whose words carry such a high degree of probability, that even in the face of seeming impossibility, it is unsafe and irresponsible to take certain positions that do not completely harmonize with the prophet's words. Picking at the process of how the prophet's testimony was formed, or at the human condition of the writer, is wholly and almost totally irrelevant. Either, they are a prophet or not. Either they are inspired fully or not. The expositor is free to ignore the testimony or to disbelieve it. But absurdity results when one seems to live on the fence, and take a neutral or half-way position.

It is not unthinking or irrational to take the position that the inspired writings are to be trusted *and utilized*, even as they are, far beyond those of any so called "theologian" or "competent scholar." The author finds it safer to dismiss anything, no matter how attractive or reasonable, if it contradicts the testimony given to the church. Having read hundreds of books and documents on the subject has led me to believe that most commentators really know so little about the actual meaning of Revelation anyway; and it is largely because they have not this control or assistance. So then, I must ask, why should the present student, to any serious degree, appeal to these "*dark prophets*" for genuine answers to Revelation's questions?

6. The Law of Time-Calibrated Fulfillments

This interpretational law is basically the law of *multiple fulfillments*. More about this is addressed in the second volume and beyond. This misunderstood prophetic tool has been too quickly discarded by hundreds of students and commentators. Just as frightful has been the abuse of this method. The author begs the reader to think this through clearly and not dismiss it because of the bias and blindness of many historicists, or because of the license and evasions of futurists. Without an understanding of this principle much of the prophetic book is lost to understanding or particularly its relevance. A proper understanding of this principle then is quite paramount.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

7. The Control of Contextual and Literary Examination

Especially the golden rule of context cannot be over emphasized. In addition, the careful use of lexical, contextual, grammatical analysis is essential. The historical/critical method has its place. But the basic rule of immediate biblical context is most essential in all phases. For example, it can place such a place as "Armageddon," at least typologically and geographically, where it belongs and not where millions have irresponsibly put it. The consideration of immediate context within the book of Revelation itself is generally of more value than the influence of other biblical books or extra-biblical sources. The rule of context means that each passage is first investigated with regard to its *immediate* context and then broadened only if necessary to the rest of the Bible. Only with such restraints does the Bible rightly become its own interpreter.

8. The Use of Biblical Sources and *Redaction* (Where it came from)

It is well established that the book of Revelation is a mosaic of Old Testament passages and allusions to those passages. The proper understanding of each source passage and each allusion is necessary to properly understand the book. The Revelation may apply the Old Testament passage in a different way, but the accurate understanding of the primary text largely elucidates the further meaning. It is also important to realize that the understanding of Revelation is more directly tied to the Old Testament Scriptures than is commonly admitted by the historical-critical school, who try to put too much emphasis on the political and historical situation of the secular Roman world. The understanding of the *Apocalypse* is more clearly based in the Scriptures and in Judaism than in the understanding of Gnosticism, Mysticism, Hellenism, and the literature and times of the New Testament period. These are helpful but not as crucial as at one time thought. Let the Bible be the Bible!

9. The Universal Scope of Unfulfilled Prophecy

Of paramount importance in the interpretation of prophecy is the realization that a New Testament filter is imposed on all prophecy that broadens local places and concepts to *universal* proportions. Those in Christ are the new "spiritual Jewry" and not the racially restricted "Israel"(Gal 2:28,29). Symbols and places must be seen through an

Hermeneutical Principles

enlarged and principled understanding, broadened in scope and application. The violation of this rule has largely created the “dispensational” fiction that has taken over Christianity. It is so important to prophetic understanding to realize this principle that excellent books have been written to restore a correct understanding that respects the clear biblical guidelines. Every honest student of Revelation should read them. Among the best of these I believe is that written by Dr. Hans LaRondelle; “*The Israel of God in Prophecy*.”¹⁵ There are others available works valuable in this regard also (esp. Vol. 4, *SDA Bible Commentary*, “The Role of Israel in Old Testament Prophecy”).

“In applying Israel’s covenant promises to the Christian dispensation and the future age, the New Testament extends them to believers in Christ of all races and enlarges the promised land to the whole earth, thus removing every ethnic and geographic binding, even when Hebrew terminology and Middle East imagery are retained.” ---Hans LaRondelle—(class notes)

10. The Moral Purpose of Prophecy

The purpose of prophecy is “moral” in that it is intended to inform and motivate God’s church on earth. *Therefore secular events are portrayed and considered in prophecy only when they have direct and relevant connection to God’s purpose and involvement in human affairs.*

Everywhere we are met with interpretations that make Hitler the beast, or which take exclusively secular events and tie them to prophetic passages. Monstrous “Bible-code” predictions or fanciful Nostradamus-like oracles are conceived which have no validity because this rule is ignored. The prophecies of the Bible are intended to inform the church and to bring meaning to the pilgrimage of the Christian. All prophecy must be interpreted responsibly in the context of the history of religion and in the encounter between the human and the divine. As a result, the New Testament and the *Revelation* is first “Christo-centric” and not “world-centric.”

¹⁵ Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*. Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion. Vol. 13 (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1983).

The Broad Curriculum of the Apocalypse

Worthy of comment is the universal appeal of the book of Revelation. This comprehensive design is no accident. That so many sciences and disciplines should be represented; that such a variety of media should be introduced; that its images should be presented through audio, visual, and even kinesthetic channels, speaks to the inspired purpose and design of this masterpiece of literature. Every sense is tantalized; designs to cause interest are created, and a broad appeal is perfectly produced in one document. Such interest and care is exhibited for the purpose of calling attention to the most important prophecy of all time. Here are just some of the subject areas addressed in the Apocalypse:

Agriculture

Harvests of wheat, harvest of vineyards, wine and oil making; plant life on the earth; trees, grass, various fruit crops and their husbandry, etc.

Archaeology

The locations of the seven churches, the references to locations in Palestine and other places and their significance; Tyre, Babylon, Patmos, Egypt, etc.

Art

References are made to craftsmen and artisans. But greater than this are the word pictures of Revelation posing an enormous challenge to any artist to recreate, such as the creatures, the holy city, the throne scenes. These scenes have challenged artists for centuries and the art of Revelation is an interesting pursuit of its own. Color is everywhere in the Revelation.

The Broad Curriculum of the Apocalypse

Astronomy

Not only are references made to the heavenly bodies; the sun, moon, and stars, but in addition Rev. 12 alludes to astrological signs in the heavens. The Trumpets seem to describe asteroids and celestial aberrations, and chapter 6 of the Seals refers to a famous historical meteor shower.

Biology and Horticulture

A knowledge of plants, animals, and the process of life are prerequisites for understanding certain passages. Trees, plants, their color and use figure in to the narrative. Myrrh plants, fig trees and their ripe and unripe figs, seeds, leaves, and flowers all appear. Creatures, flora and fauna, are the backdrop of this heavenly drama. The nature of life and death, the issue of creation, the phyla of living things all relate to the theological material given in the book.

Chemistry

Not only are several elements mentioned (gold, silver, brass, iron, sulfur) but the knowledge pertaining to the metallurgical combining of these, the process of refinement, and even the color resulting from such things as "fire and brimstone" are all additional insights that can elucidate the text of Revelation and explain its intended meaning.

Commerce & Economics

Mentioned are the rich and the poor, buying and selling, boycotts, merchants and merchandising, and the economic effects of such upon historical and eschatological events.

Construction & Building

Craftsmen are mentioned. The building of walls, and gates, and foundations are detailed.

Cosmetology

Repeated references are made to perfumes and ointments, of bridal preparation, of jewelry and specific precious stones and pearls. Clothing; fabric; and fashion are all referred to. Various garments of dress relate to circumstances of historical interest.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Drama & Theater

The book is one complete drama, eclipsing all others in importance and scope. Angel "actors," scenes and props, are all featured in a masterpiece of active history. The Revelation is a serious product of divine choreography.

Engineering & Industry

The sound of millstones cease and artisans are stopped. But not before scenes of cargo and merchandise of refined and processed items are given; vessels of marble, gold and silver, descriptions of brass and gold being refined in furnaces, flour being ground at the millstone, the creation of textiles and silk, the recovery of pearls, the crafting of wood, and the making of ships and chariots.

Geography, Surveying and Orienteering

Essential to the understanding of Revelation is the global configuration of sites mentioned; Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, Asia, Patmos, the Euphrates, Jerusalem, the churches of Asia Minor. The sea and the land, particularly the orientation and directions of the earth are considered in the apocalyptic imagery. Measuring of distance and geometric forms is several times mentioned.

History

Secular and sacred history in the book are detailed to the point that even a thorough knowledge of history is hardly adequate for completion of all the events described. Entire volumes, even multiple volumes, have been written on the relationship of the Revelation and history.

Lapidary

The knowledge of various precious stones, their color and importance, their beauty and association is all part of the story of Revelation. The stones mentioned in the Revelation provides a fascinating theme for study and pursuit.

Language

The importance and use of language cannot be underscored too much. The study of the terms, especially Greek and Hebrew ones, but other languages as well, provides the greatest of challenges when the prophecy of Revelation is the subject.

The Broad Curriculum of the Apocalypse

Literature and Journalism

The Apocalypse should be the delight of anyone loving and appreciating literature. Included in the process are literary structures, songs, poetry, and symbols that challenge the imagination. News reports are heralded several times in the Apocalypse. The science of effective, public communication is demonstrated repeatedly.

Mathematics

Numbers and numerology are replete throughout the book requiring further study than has been given to date. The mathematical processes of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing are all used, as is the use of fractions. Geometric calculations and perhaps even Algebraic problems emerge in places.

Medicine

Several healing remedies are referred to, including balms and ointment, wine and oil, water therapy, etc. Medical problems and diseases such as open sores and burns, sickness and infection, are chronicled.

Music

Several "songs" are found throughout the book and the scenes and words of the book have been a fruitful field in the art of music. Several instruments; flutes, harps, and trumpets are mentioned. Compositions such as Handel's *Messiah*, itself one of most sublime of all musical works ever composed, features passages largely from the hymnody of Revelation.

Physics

The laws of energy, mass, volume, and motion found in the universe are featured in several settings. Flying, ascending, falling, and other various motions mystify and interest at times. The apparent reversal of natural law in plagues, earthquakes, alteration of the heavens, or the occurrence of natural disasters relative to the seals, trumpets, and plagues, should interest the physical theorist. Challenging and interesting concepts appear.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Poetry

Several poetic structures and passages are open to the study of any searcher. The meter and structure of these are magnificent.

Politics & Law

The transpiration of human events, the working and counter-working of church and state, the rise and progress and fall of nations and kings are placed in the history of this book. The specific nature of government is several times an issue.

Religion

Revelation is really a book about religion, and religious systems, true and false. Revelation is the preacher's tool and tongue. It is the evangelist's pulpit, banner, and poster.

Society and Culture

A challenging study of customs and near eastern culture awaits any student in the book of Revelation. Many passages simply cannot be understood without it. Sociological issues and cultural aspects appear everywhere in the book. Ethnic issues enter the arena.

Theology

The deepest of the sciences; theology, cannot be exhausted by these descriptions of events and the nature of heaven. The great controversy between good and evil, the temple and throne in heaven, the workings of the enemy are all laid open to the observing eyes of the universe.

Transportation

Locomotion in terms of walking and flying, of sailing, riding horseback or in "chariots" are all described. The physics of motion and the laws of the universe are always in view.

Zoology

Animals and living things, their looks and their habits, are all part of our understanding of this Biblical book. The mouth of a lion, the sound of his roar, the nature of his teeth, the fierceness and wrath of his personality are all part of the picture. And similarly, one must understand

The Broad Curriculum of the Apocalypse

the nature of a lamb, an eagle, the appearance of a leopard, the purpose of a horse, even the number of toes on the foot of a bear.

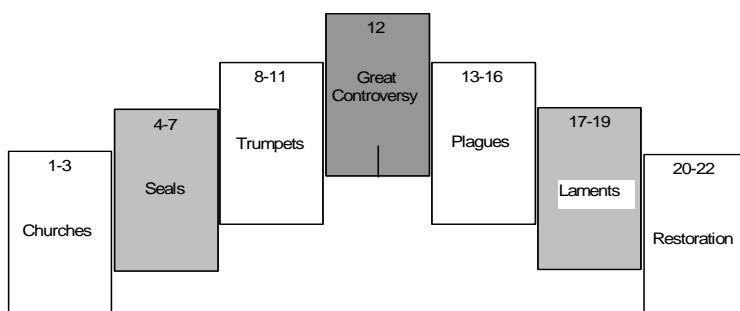
The Design of Inspiration

It deserves mentioning that the comprehensive nature of Revelation's material is quite extraordinary. It is doubtful that many (if any) works of this short a length in either biblical or non-biblical literature could match the broad spectrum suggested above. This plethora of interest material I believe is another indication of the book's inspirational quality.

The General Organization of the Book

The following scheme is presented as one that is to be preferred when considering the thematical cycles of the book, the natural divisions, the most consistent distribution of synonymic parallels, and the physical center and balance of the text:

Revelation in Seven Parts



The physical center of the book is close to Revelation 12:10. Chapter 12 is a center and summary chapter of salvation history covering the period from Genesis to Revelation, specifically from the time of the cross to the battle of Armageddon, or the war with the remnant. Revelation 12 is central to the Christian era, focusing on the Dark Ages and the time when God's church was in the wilderness. It is the watershed of the Christian dispensation, the watershed of Revelation's prophecies, and the watershed of the entire Great Controversy.

Each of the larger sections are nearly equal in size and can be divided chiasmatically and physically in about half (The centers of each section are close to 2:18; 6:7; 10:4; 12:8; 14:18; 18:13; and 21:15). The chiasmus is

The General Organization of the Book

not absolutely symmetrical, but random, with similar ideas entering the narrative in random locations on each side of the centerline. The entire book is chiastic to itself much in the same way.

Some interpreters get so enamored with chiastic structures that they fail to realize that ideas relating to other sections occur in all parts of the book. For instance, let us suppose that all the days of the week were included in each section of the book; Sunday through Saturday. Therefore if one finds Monday in the first section and the last section they will assume a chiastic relationship. However, Monday occurs in every section. There are perhaps striking parallels in the first and last sections (for example the tree of life is mentioned in each). Yet at the same time there are things that occur in the last section, such as the city/bride/woman of the New Jerusalem that relates very directly to its counterpart, the city/harlot/woman of Babylon found in Revelation 17. Yet Revelation 17 is not in chiastic relation to Revelation 21.

The use of synonymic parallels explains the commonality of ideas throughout the book. There is interesting over-arching chiastic structure in the book, but careful analysis reveals also parallel ideas passing entirely through the book, section after section.

The book is in seven sections. Fortunately many others have noticed this even though they note improper places for the divisions. The utilization of a seven-branched *Menorah* (Doukhan¹⁶, LaRondelle), or the recognition of structure built around the Israelite feasts (Stefanovic and others) are valid observations. Any reader is encouraged to sample these concepts in this regard, and since they elucidate these themes it is unnecessary for us to do this here. This in no way should be taken as an attempt to minimize the importance of this discovery, however. Recognizing this relationship is very important to the complete understanding of the book.

¹⁶ Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse Through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), p. 13.

“This book demands close, prayerful study, lest it be interpreted according to the ideas of men and false construction be given to the sacred word of God, which in its symbols and figures means so much to us.”

E. G. White, Letter 16, 1900.

Salutation and Purpose

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (KJV)

Revelation 1:1-3

“A Revelation of Jesus Christ”

A dispute exists over the intended meaning of the opening phrase. The dispute is whether the expression is an:

OBJECTIVE: (genitive): “A revelation **ABOUT** Jesus”

Or. . . .

SUBJECTIVE: (genitive): “A revelation **FROM** Jesus”

Many commentators typically “waffle” by safely accepting both since both seem appropriate:

This is not necessary and clouds the obvious intent. Careful contextual analysis can solve this riddle. . . .

There is inherent in the passage (verses 1:1-3 especially) a **SEVEN-FOLD Communication Chain**:

This chain denotes:

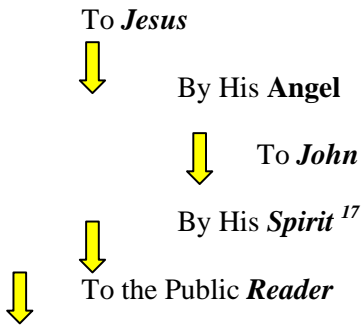
The source, subject, agency

(Who the revelation is from-----NOT WHO ABOUT—therefore it is clearly *subjective*).

GOD gave



Salutation and Purpose



Given to the *Servant* who will hear, heed, and be blessed.

This position is further exonerated in the stated purpose of the book of Revelation:

Purpose of the Revelation:

“To show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.”

- The primary purpose of the apocalypse is to provide a prophetic expose’ from Jesus and not a character description about him;¹⁸ the Gospels were written for that purpose.

¹⁷ *The Revelation of Christ to John is a wonderful, dignified, exalted, solemn message. To present this message with decided emphasis, demands all the talents of capabilities that God has given to men. When John received it, He was worked [upon] by the Holy Spirit, for Christ Himself came from heaven and told him what to write.* E. G. White, Manuscript 139, Oct. 23, 1903, “The Message in Revelation.”

¹⁸ Robert Mounce sees the vision as mediated by Jesus and not so much a revelation of Christ himself. Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*; The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), p. 64.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

- All Scripture has Christ as its center and Jesus is definitely featured in the revelation; but this is not the principle intention of the verse.
- God would not give Jesus a revelation about himself! Where then would be the omniscience of Jesus who is seen in the Revelation as fully divine?

Therefore we would conclude that the primary sense of the opening words is that Jesus is the source of the mystery, or revelation.

Of note is the fact that the real picture before us is the *pulling aside of a veil* (*kalupto*—from hiding). It is obvious by the setting that the veil leads the reader directly into the holy place, or the outer apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. The reader is passing “through a door.” For us to be invited into the holy places (*ta hagia*), the unseen precincts of heaven for men on earth, requires entrance past or through this veil, the veil of Christ’s flesh or earthly appearance. For Jesus to minister “within the veil” does not require that it be in the most holy place only (the holy of holies). The book of Revelation announces in its very title: (“unveiling”) that such an admittance to the entire heavenly work, yet especially here into the first apartment, is thereby being afforded.

Introduction and Prologue

(Chapter 1:1-11)

Rev. 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

A revelation:

apokalupsis, "an unveiling, an opening, " lit., "from hiding"

"Signified"

put in sign language, symbolized. "sign - i - fied."

"his Angel"

Gabriel ¹⁹

Rev. 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Rev. 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Rev. 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

¹⁹ "It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God, who came with the divine message to Daniel. It was Gabriel, 'his angel' whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 234

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

The One **who is and was and is to come** is the Father in heaven, who is *eternal*. We, today, would simply express it in this way, "the one who always has been, who always is, and who always will be."

(The expression "**seven spirits**" is dealt with in a following section)

Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

The faithful (trustworthy) witness---

- In a legal setting, one who consistently testifies TRUTH.
- In a worldly setting one who suffers and dies for the truth ; a martyr.

A genuine witness is one who KNOWS ALL, SEES ALL, TELLS ALL. Jesus fulfills all of the above requirements.

First begotten of the dead---

• Typifying the first and pre-eminent to be resurrected. (Even though Jesus was not technically the first person to be resurrected, without his resurrection and the promise of it, the others would not have been possible). Isaac is referred to as Abraham's "only-begotten son" (Gen. 22:2; modern versions unfortunately do not note; *monogenes* in John 3:16) and yet Ishmael was born before Isaac. Jesus is the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep and because of this resurrection we too have hope and promise of the same. (cf. Col. 1:15)

Washed in his blood---

The best manuscripts have "loosed" or "released."

Rev. 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Introduction and Prologue

Attention given to the source passages lead to increased understanding of this passage and all of Revelation 1.²⁰ The Revelation is a veritable anthology of Old Testament quotes.²¹

Zechariah 12:10

"And they shall look upon me **whom** they have **pierced**, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for **his only son**, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his **firstborn son**."

Jesus side was "pierced." (John 19:34)

* The word for "whom" in Zech. 12:10 is at, Aleph and Tau, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the equivalent of Alpha and Omega (Greek), or "A" and "Z."

To rephrase the verse would be as follows:

"And they shall look upon me, *Alpha and Omega*, (whom) they have pierced."

²⁰ A scriptural chiasmic pattern noticed by Louis Were must be noted: In Revelation 1, eight quotations from the Old Testament are given:

- (1) v. 5 Isaiah 55:4
- (2) v. 7 Daniel 7:13
- (3) v. 7 Zechariah 12:10
 - (4) v. 8. Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12
 - (4) v. 11. Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12
- (3) v. 12. Zech. 4:2
- (2) v. 13-15 Dan. 7:9, 13,22; 10:5,6
- (1) v. 16. Isa. 49:2

(Taken from Louis Were, *The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message*, p. 171.)

²¹ Of the older works on Revelation, Milligan provides a valuable synopsis on how the book of Revelation is a mosaic of Old Testament quotes and ideas. He notes various books and their sources.

Cf. Vincent, *Word Studies*, p. 451. Cf. also Louis F. Were, *Certainty of the Three Angel's Message*.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

There is little doubt that John the disciple and apostle of Christ is the writer of this book. One evidence among many occurs here:

There is but one witness, who as a disciple of Jesus heard the words of Jesus in the judgment hall of Caiphas, the high priest (specifically the ones who *pierced* Jesus):

"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds²² of heaven." (Matthew 26:64)

That witness was John who followed Jesus into the trial. This does not mean that this is the only time Jesus said this to anyone, but it was the only time Jesus would have appropriately said this to his enemies, and it is interesting that John the writer of the Revelation would choose to reference this particular thought. We know from it that John was acquainted by Jesus with a "special" resurrection. (cf. also Dan. 12:2)

²²

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. it is the cloud which surrounds the Savior, and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of Man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above the rainbow of the covenant." E.G.White, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 640.

"For as the lighting cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known; witnessed by the whole world." (GC 625)

Introduction and Prologue

Rev. 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Alpha and Omega:

---KNOWLEDGE: Encyclopedic, from "A" to "Z."

---EXISTENCE: Before all things, eternal, to the end of all things.

Rev. 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John was exiled and condemned to the mines on this island for his Christian activities. This was according to tradition during the reign of Emperor Domitian whose reign ended sometime in A.D. 96. Further comment on the date of the vision follows.

Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Rev. 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The Lord's day has a specific meaning explained as follows in the next section:

The Lord's Day

For centuries discussion has centered around the meaning of the phrase: *the Lord's Day*; popularly the term has been applied to Sunday. This, however, is definitely not the day referred to regardless of how many times it was called such in later centuries by those groups who accepted the human substitution of Sunday for the true Sabbath of the Bible.

The day referred to is not Sunday. This term for Sunday does not appear this early in history. Says Desmond Ford:

"There is still less evidence for the almost universal assumption that . . . Sunday is intended."²³

And to quote certain professor, Milligan:

"Proof is wanting that the first day of the week had yet received the name 'the Lord's Day'.²⁴"

Neither is it as some suggest the "day of the Lord" since this expression is grammatically unique from that expression.

Then what day was it? And why is this singular expression used and what is its significance? Too often this is not investigated in honor to the context, and for this reason much is thereby missed in this regard.

To the noteworthy conclusion that this day is the weekly seventh-day Sabbath²⁵ we will in time return to address²⁶, but first it is necessary to

²³ Desmond Ford, *Crisis*, Vol. 2, (Desmond Ford Publications; Newcastle, CA 95658; 1982), p. (per verse commentary).

²⁴ (Ibid.)

The Lord's Day

examine this term with greater scrutiny and consideration. In so doing we can determine some interesting facts in regard to the use of this term and find that it is more specific than thought heretofore. The term was probably intended to be informative rather than mysterious and ambiguous.

CONTEXT

First of all let us note the context of the statement:

- Especially take note of previous verses, the most pertinent being verses 5,6:

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Note the terms used above and other terms in the general context:

"freed us from our sins in his own *blood*"

"made us kings and priests"

"they also that *pierced* him" (vs. 7)

"the firstborn"

"Lamb" (throughout the book, esp. Ch. 5, introduced as Lamb sacrificed, i.e. the cross)

"Voice of a trumpet" (blown on ceremonial and weekly *sabbaths*)

.....These terms are particularly *paschal* (i.e., relating to the Passover) in orientation.

²⁵ Note for interest the phonetically similar word "*sabaoth*;" "hosts," in Isaiah 44:6, the source passage for the immediate contextual quote, "I am Alpha and Omega."

²⁶ The sounding of the trumpet is reminiscent of the holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths on which it was blown. It supplies another evidence that the Lord's day was the Sabbath, and a sacred holiday as well. See *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3., p. 473, second column, #2.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

PASSOVER TERMS

Many have noticed that the introductory background theme, along with other scenes in the book of Revelation, springs from the Passover feast. And rightly so, because Jesus was slain on the Passover, as the Passover type. The above are only a few of the allusions, some noticed, for example in the following quote by G.E. Ladd, (p. 27)

"In the Bible, blood is a metaphor drawn from the slaughter of the sacrificial lamb to represent sacrificial death, particularly at the Passover, when God freed Israel from bondage to Egypt. . . . The connection with the Passover lamb is made clear in this verse. He made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father. At the Passover, God commissioned Israel to be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' Exodus 19:6."

Passover

What everyone seems to overlook, however, is that for all intents and purposes the Old Testament itself refers to the Passover as *the Lord's day*. The Passover is assigned an *exclusively unique* designation; i.e., a particular possession to the Lord. It is sometimes expressed in other contexts with the phrase; "It is the Lord's."

• In fact this unique expression as it is contained in Exodus 12:11 in reference to the Passover is essentially *not expressed like it anywhere else*. Hebrew: הוא ל יהוה

The exact phrase "to the Lord" is used in the following verses:

Exod. 12:11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover.

*Exod. 12:48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the **passover to the LORD**, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

The Lord's Day

*Lev. 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the **LORD's passover**.*

*Num. 9:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the **passover unto the LORD**. (cf. also Num 28:16)*

The only remaining uses of this expression "to the Lord" are in either (1) the sacrificial dedication of the firstborn, or (2) in regard to the sacred Sabbaths of the Lord:

1. *Lev. 27:26 Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the LORD'S firstling, no man shall sanctify it; whether it be ox, or sheep: **it is the LORD'S**.*

2. *Lev. 23:38 Beside the **sabbaths of the LORD**, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.*

THE PASSOVER AND THE SABBATH ARE CORRESPONDING-TYPES:

The Passover

"Remember this day" Ex. 13:3

"And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes. . ." Ex. 13:9

"Consecrate (sanctify) to me the firstborn. (Ex. 13:2)

"It is the Lord's" (Ex. 12:11) "It is to the Lord."

Preceded by a day of preparation/even to even (Jn 19:14)

Given in context of deliverance from bondage

The Sabbath

"Remember the Sabbath day" (Ex. 20:8)

"You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between you and me. . . that I, the Lord, sanctify you." Ex. 31:13

" I, the Lord, sanctify you." (Ex. 31:13)

"The seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord thy God." (Ex. 20:8-11) (Mark 2:27,28)

Preceded by a day of preparation* (Luke 23:54) (even to even)

Given in context of deliverance from bondage (Ex.20:2; Heb. 4:1-6)

*--Lit. "the" preparation [for the Sabbath](Luke 23:54); but in John's gospel clearly the preparation of the Passover (Jn. 19:14, "it was the preparation of the Passover").

The thematic parallels are striking between these two types of Sabbaths:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Possession-"My holy day", the ownership of the firstborn, set - apartness.* Redemption- Deliverance from bondage, rest from the bondage of sin* Memorialization- Remembrance |
|--|

The Lord's Day

* Sanctification- Preparation by purity and holiness
--

“THE LORD'S DAY” WAS LIKELY A CELEBRATION OF THE SAME DAY AND ITS ANNIVERSARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ORIGINAL PASSION WEEK PASSOVER.

Please consider the following points:

- The Passover of Jesus' death was a double or "high" Sabbath.

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Matt. 28:1 Οψε δε σαββατων,

Literally, "Now after the Sabbaths (**plural**) as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week . . ."

If Friday was *the* Passover holiday itself, it would have been kept sacred like the weekly Sabbath. But it was not. Judas went to meet the Jewish leaders to consummate his contract with them. The disciples thought he has gone to possibly buy bread. (Thursday evening; but according to the Jewish "even to even" custom the beginning of the preparation day). This would not be done on a religious Sabbath in front of Jesus himself or with Jesus' blessing. (Jn 13:27-30) The Jewish leaders also are in secular counsel to get rid of Jesus, but they express the wish that they barely achieve:

"The chief priests and scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death, But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people." (Mk 14:1,2)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Friday instead was the "preparation day"²⁷ (Jn 19:42; 18:28). Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples on Thursday evening, which was permissible because it was between the two evenings in which the Passover lamb was slain and part of the preparation day proper (Mark 14:12; esp. Luke 22:7); but most, no doubt, celebrated the Passover on the following evening, or Friday evening after the sunset that year. (The Gospel of John reports that the leaders had not yet partaken of the Passover when they were in process of Jesus' trials.)

The sequence appears as follows:

Nisan 14	Nisan 15	Nisan 16
Day of Preparation Thurs/FRIDAY	Day of Passover SATURDAY	Wave Sheaf SUNDAY

---Therefore it appears that the apostle mentions this expression, "the Lord's day" to reference an anniversary of this event; the vision given on this day, and thus the events of the Passover, now the Christian "Lord's day" are again memorialized.

--If an *average* Sabbath was the day on which the vision came, John would not have referred to it in this unique way. He would have simply called it a Sabbath. It is *so mentioned* because in this year, an anniversary of the timeline of the events of the cross were in the similar recapitulation. To John, who no doubt was rehearsing in his mind the events of Jesus' sacrifice, his burial, and his resurrection, Jesus appears as the paschal Lamb who was slain, but who is risen again, the victorious Lord.

--The Passover was now filled full with the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. These were the most important of all

²⁷ The preparation day in certain contexts is probably referring to preparation for the *paschal* ceremony rather than the typical Friday preparation for the weekly Sabbath.

The Lord's Day

Christian holy days and were celebrated in the early Christian era. The Eastern churches for some time after the days of the apostles celebrated this "Passover/Sabbath" on the Jewish holiday. Later, the Western churches moved the celebration to Saturday night, next to Easter Sunday.²⁸

*This then explains in part how the Lord's Day became regularly associated with Sunday, because it was part of the Passion/Easter weekend celebration. In later years, when the Sabbath was changed by human law to Sunday then the Lord's Day was illegitimately equated thereafter with Sunday, especially Easter Sunday, the celebration of the Resurrection.

TIME OF THE VISION

With this in mind, we are able, with only relative certainty, of course, offer a specific date for the giving of this vision. The writer of the Revelation is giving a gigantic indicator in this specific term for when exactly the vision was given: on the Passover Day. He is aiming to be specific and

28

"THE BISHOPS OF ROME BEGAN, VERY EARLY, TO DEMAND OBEDIENCE FROM ALL THE CHURCHES. OF THIS THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE EASTERN AND THE WESTERN CHURCHES RESPECTING EASTER IS A STRIKING ILLUSTRATION. THIS DISPUTE AROSE IN THE SECOND CENTURY. SAYS MOSHEIM: "THE CHRISTIANS OF THIS CENTURY CELEBRATED ANNIVERSARY FESTIVALS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. . . . THE DAY WHICH WAS OBSERVED AS THE ANNIVERSARY OF CHRIST'S DEATH WAS CALLED THE PASCHAL DAY, OR PASSOVER." LIKE THE JEWS, CHRISTIANS CELEBRATED "A SACRED FEAST, AT WHICH THEY DISTRIBUTED A PASCHAL LAMB IN MEMORY OF THE HOLY SUPPER." THE CHRISTIANS OF ASIA MINOR KEPT THIS FEAST ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE FIRST JEWISH MONTH, WHEN THE JEWS CELEBRATED THEIR PASSOVER, AND WHEN CHRIST IS SAID TO HAVE EATEN THE PASCHAL LAMB WITH HIS DISCIPLES. THREE DAYS THEREAFTER, A FESTIVAL WAS OBSERVED IN HONOR OF THE RESURRECTION. THE WESTERN CHURCHES, ON THE OTHER HAND, CELEBRATED THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST ON THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE JEWISH PASSOVER, AND OBSERVED THE PASCHAL FEAST ON THE NIGHT PRECEDING SUNDAY, THUS CONNECTING THE COMMEMORATION OF CHRIST'S DEATH WITH THAT OF HIS RESURRECTION." Note 9, page 447: *The Great Controversy*, p. 685, 686.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

informative. Strangely, later expositors have instead found the term ambiguous and even made it more so.

Tradition places the writing to the time just preceding the end of Domitian's reign (81-96 A.D.). However, further attention must be given to the time parameters in the following section.

At any rate the case has been made that John's vision came on an anniversary Passover Sabbath. This would be an appropriate day indeed for such a vision, in fact no day or weekend could be more appropriate.

Further, the apostle would refuse to work on such a day. This view also preserves the comments of the writer Ellen White that:

"It was on the Sabbath that the Lord of glory appeared to the exiled apostle. The Sabbath was as sacredly observed by John on Patmos as when he preached to the people in the towns and cities of Judea." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 581

The dating of the vision is not radically important, and no such date can be established with absolute certainty. However, by collating available data and by theologically examining the setting and purpose of the vision, it seems quite possible to offer this explanation as valid.

Not only does it unveil a reason for the use of the specific term, but it enriches the entire aspect of the setting of this important prophecy.

The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse

The debate over the time of writing for the book of Revelation leaves the reader weary. The evidence as to when the book is written is quite ambiguous. This is partly why the debate has continued from the early Christian centuries, even from the years just post its composition.

The debate is an interesting one, however, in that an unusual transposition has generally resulted between the stance of liberal and conservative scholars. Liberal scholars usually tend to date prophecy late, and conservatives often tend to date the work closest to the traditional author. However in this case, liberal scholars, often having preterist leanings, sometimes date the writing of the book early, perhaps during the reign of Nero (ca. 64-68 A.D.).

Conservative scholars follow the reports of tradition and date the book (later) during the time of Domitian (ca. 95 A.D.; reigned 81-96) when the church fathers report that John the Apostle was exiled on the Isle of Patmos.

Then, of course, certain scholars date the book much later, relegating it to the work of an unknown author or editor, who is thought in some circles to have “messed up” an earlier writer’s composition or is even thought to have devised the Revelation himself.

The consensus of many is that the date is a curious problem, but not at all important--- in that the message of the book itself is all that is to be sought, or that its contents are so dreamy and fanciful anyway that it could not matter.

I think the date is an important issue for the following reasons:

1. That the issue of the date is tied necessarily to the authorship of the book, and who the author is makes a tremendous difference to the importance of the message of the book.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

2. That the *time* of writing is essential to understanding certain passages of the book of Revelation.
3. That the general validity of the claims and counsel in the book are greatly undermined or altered when the setting and purpose in history are not properly recognized.

The chief problem that remains is between the two principle options: A date during or near the reign of the Emperor Nero or a date during the reign of Emperor Domitian. The enigma exists because cases can be made quite well for either side, and yet they cannot both be correct.

Recent works are making an intelligible case for the Neronic date. (E. Martin, etc.) While this option ignores the uniform testimony of tradition it analyzes internal and historical evidence of the book. The reasoning in some cases demands consideration.

The date adopted by almost every conservative commentary, is ca. 96 A.D., near the end of the reign of Emperor Domitian²⁹. This is based on an almost uniform and consistent recognition of tradition and repeated statements made by Christian writers that lived near the very time the book was probably written.

The principle statements are as follows:

Irenaeus, bishop Lyons in Gaul in the second century, wrote, "it (the Revelation) was seen not very long ago, almost in our generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian" (Against Heresies V.xxx.iii)³⁰.

Victorinus (third century A.D.) wrote, "*When John said these things, he was in the isle of Patmos, condemned to the mines by Caesar Domitian*" (Commentary on the Revelation 10:11).

²⁹ For an interesting description of Domitian and his reign see William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 2, pp. 140,141

³⁰ Another translation of Irenaeus: "For that was seen not very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign."

The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse

Eusebius places the exile of John in the reign of Domitian even though he does not support clearly that this was John the apostle.³¹

Jerome, later in time, says that John was exiled by Domitian and after that emperor's death returned to Ephesus.³²

I have been convinced by these statements for some time as probably most conservative scholars have. However, it may not be that simple or prudent to so readily accept these uninspired statements of the church fathers. To attempt to make sense of this dilemma I here intend to analyze the evidence a little further.

Arguments for an Early Date

1. The Syriac Edition's Subscript

Not much attention has been given to the fact that the Syriac version of the *Apocalypse* offers the information that it was written during the time of Nero. What is significant about this is that eastern texts such as the Syriac may represent very early testimony. I have also determined that the Syriac versions of many texts are in my opinion very reliable. While such a titular note would have been added by most anyone who had the notion, it is interesting that at such an early date, in the face of opposing tradition, such a belief existed.

2. Internal evidence in the book of Revelation:

³¹ (Eusebius: H.E. iii.18.1; 20:9; 23:1)(one citation in R.H.Charles, Vol. 1, p.xciii)

³² "In the fourteenth year after the persecution of Nero, John was banished to the island of Patmos, and there wrote the Revelation . . . Upon the death of Domitian, and upon the repeal of his acts by the senate, because of their excessive cruelty, he returned to Ephesus, when Nerva was emperor."---St. Jerome "Jerome says that John was banished in the fourteenth year after Nero and liberated on the death of Domitian (*Concerning Illustrious Men*, 9), This would mean that he was banished to Patmos about A.D. 94 and liberated about A.D. 96." William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1, pp. 14, 41.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Of particular note by those making the case for a writing in the time of Emperor Nero is the content of the book of Revelation and how it argues for an early first Christian century date. A couple of the most notable of these particulars are the references to the Jerusalem temple and the lack of recognition for the destruction of Jerusalem. Prophetically, the destruction of Jerusalem would have enormous consequence, yet this most significant event of then current Jewish history, as an accomplished event, is never mentioned in the entire New Testament. To overlook the significance of this event if it had already happened in the most important of prophecies seems to be virtually impossible.

Secondly, there are perhaps references to the existing earthly temple in Revelation 11:1ff. While argument can be sustained that the temple here described is an idealistic or heavenly temple, as visualized in the book of Ezekiel, there are some things that do not fit. For example, how could a heavenly temple be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles or have an outer court given to the Gentiles. Yet the temple of Jerusalem, if referred to in chapter 11 was already totally destroyed, there would be nothing left to measure, and much less a need to instruct John to “leave out the outer court,” and not measure it. The inference is that the temple, or at least the outer court is to be destroyed at the commencement of the forty-two months or 1260 days---apparently thus pictured in the future from the time of the vision. This all may create a problem for the case of a later date of writing, ca. A.D. 96.

3. The Relative age of the Apostle

There can be in my opinion no other writer for the Apocalypse but John the Apostle. This being the case, how old would John have been in A.D. 96 and even another few years, which this scenario requires of his lifespan? Tradition teaches that John was, with little doubt, the youngest of the apostles. But when Jesus called his disciples in about A.D. 28 it is unlikely that John could have been younger than about 17--- thus about 20 years old when Jesus was crucified ca. AD 31.

If this were the case John would have been about 85 years old at the time of the writing of the Revelation (AD96). He could hardly have been younger than this and would most likely be significantly older.

The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse

There is a problem with this. While it is entirely possible for John to have been this old when the book was written (e.g. Polycarp—was 85 years old)-- it seems unlikely. First, people did not usually live this long in the days of the Empire. Some writers believe the average life span to have been more like 40 to 50 years of age. The question arises how a man of this age could with quill and ink write such a masterpiece in exile conditions even if he did see the visions. Secondly, why was he sent to Patmos to work in the copper mines?³³ How effective could a 90-year old man be in one of the most physically demanding occupations possible, that of mining and smelting ore?³⁴ It is obvious from the references in the book that John was well aware of the copper refining process as one that experienced it firsthand.

4. The Cultural and Political Setting

There are some good arguments that the Revelation could not be written early. But in the opinion of some, the cultural and political setting of the time seems to fit the Neronian era better. For instance, how could Ephesus be said to lose its “first” love forty-five to fifty years after the church was founded. It could certainly lose its love at any time, but this much later, the love it loses, would not be that exciting and ardent first love. Any church would be expected to lose its early devotion by then.

Looking at Revelation 17 as having any then-current application to the Roman Empire cannot be made to fit without placing it in this time period. Other examples might be given.

5. The Questionability of the Ante-Nicene Statements

³³ *Victorinus* reports that John worked in the mines.

³⁴ (1) EUSEBIUS [*Demonstration of the Gospel*] unites in the same sentence John's banishment with the stoning of James and the beheading of Paul, which were *under Nero*. (2) CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S story of the robber reclaimed by John, after he had pursued, and with difficulty overtaken him, accords better with John then being a younger man than under Domitian, when he was one hundred years old. Arethas, in the sixth century, applies the sixth seal to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), adding that the Apocalypse was written before that event. (taken from *Commentary on the Whole Bible by Faucett and Brown*.)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

There are questions I have about the reliability of some of the traditional statements regarding the time of John's writing of the *Revelation*. First, these are all after the fact comments and are not written by complete contemporaries. Secondly, the uniformity in these statements can be attributable to the fact that they spring from virtually the same source and are simply copied and thus comprise really only one testimonial and not several. Thirdly, I have some real questions about whether or not these very statements are accurately translated from the original source either now or then. Of this we will have more to say shortly.

While arguments can be marshaled on both sides, I would like to suggest a partial solution. I realize that most commentaries hesitate to do this. But, in the interest of making somewhat of a commitment for the reader instead of leaving the matter full of question---like most, let us proceed with the following observation as to why the different traditions exist and how these could be reconciled.

To begin with, please note probably one of the most specific statements of tradition given us by Jerome. Two selected statements from chapter 1 and 9 are cited for context, mentioning first Peter, then John:

St. Jerome

De viris illustribus

(On Illustrious Men)

“Chapter 1. Simon Peter

[Simon Peter the son of John](#), from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee, brother of Andrew the apostle, and himself chief of the apostles, after having been bishop of the Church of Antioch and having preached to the Dispersion. . . pushed on to Rome in the second year of Claudius to over-throw Simon Magus, and held the sacerdotal chair there for twenty-five years until the last, **that is the fourteenth, year of Nero**. At his hands he received the crown of martyrdom.

Chapter 9. John

[John](#), the apostle whom Jesus most loved, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, the apostle whom Herod, after our Lord's passion, beheaded, most recently of all the evangelists wrote a Gospel. . . (and the three letters of John are quoted) are said to be the work of John the presbyter to the memory of whom another sepulchre is shown at Ephesus to the present day, though some think that there are

The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse

two memorials of this same John the evangelist. We shall treat of this matter in its turn when we come to Papias his disciple. **In the fourteenth year then after Nero Domitian having raised a second persecution he was banished to the island of Patmos, and wrote the Apocalypse**, on which Justin Martyr and Irenaeus afterwards wrote commentaries. But Domitian having been put to death and his acts, on account of his excessive cruelty, having been annulled by the senate, he returned to Ephesus under Pertinax and continuing there until the title of the emperor Trajan, founded and built churches throughout all Asia, and, worn out by old age, died in the sixty-eighth year after our Lord's passion and was buried near the same city."

Another translation³⁵ of the same passage (from Latin) has already been cited:

"In the fourteenth year after the persecution of Nero, John was banished to the island of Patmos, and there wrote the Revelation. . ." (quoted in Barclay, vol. 1, p. 14.)

1. Please note the disparity and awkwardness of these translations---
"After the 14th year of the persecution of Nero," etc. Is Nero mentioned only for the reason that he, like Domitian, was an abusive ruler; or is there further reason? How is the sentence to be ordered? Note that in one case the two names---NERO DOMITIAN appear together.

The 14th year after the persecution of Nero (A.D. 68) would be approximately 81 A.D. when Domitian began his reign³⁶, yes. But, was the book written then? No. Tradition makes it turn out that it was another 14 years after this that John supposedly writes the Revelation, which would actually be 28 years after the persecution of Nero. (Then John would end up serving at least a sixteen year exile. Tradition says he was

³⁵ The word order in the Latin is scrambled and therefore translations seem to vary. R.H. Charles, in his commentary on Revelation, vol. 1, gives us one version of the original Latin, cf. xciii.

³⁶ It seems we have several fourteens that all contribute to the confusion. Nero reigns fourteen years (54-68). About fourteen years elapse to the time of Domitian (or at least to the time when John might have been exiled). Then Domitian reigns about 14 years, 81-96.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

released perhaps a couple of years after the writing by Trajan). In addition, it appears by simple calculation, that the persecution of Nero (ca. A.D. 68) might also include Nero's 14th imperial year (His reign was 54-68).

Some statements of tradition make it appear that John wrote the Revelation perhaps a couple a years into his exile, yet even others that he was banished from Rome in the Neronian persecution that took the lives of Peter and Paul. This creates problems for establishing the later date, ca. A.D. 95. In short, some of the traditional statements cannot be considered entirely reliable or even understandable.

It appears that early on confusion could already have arisen about this matter, because the statements made by Jerome and others do not make complete sense even by themselves.

A suggestion is that some of these are repeated copies of an earlier statement, which I would call a "Q" source. No one but Jerome, for instance, gives us the "fourteen years." He gets this from a unique and unknown source. I would like to suggest that perhaps this statement became uniformly misunderstood. For example, the simple statement of fact at first might simply have been that in the fourteenth year of Nero, there was a persecution during which John was exiled to Patmos where he wrote the Revelation. Confusion arose when the later persecutions of Domitian repeated the earlier atrocities of Nero, and in the succeeding years, the memory became vague and melted together. The available testimony from Iranaeus and others represents second hand information anyway, none of these commentators being witnesses to the event.

The Name "Domitian"

However, how can this be when Domitian is mentioned? The answer is this: **Domitian was also part of Nero's name.**

Encyclopedia Britannica, (1993) provides us with Nero's full name and his father's full name. His father's name was: *Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus*. Nero's original name was: *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus*. Nero would naturally have had a family name, taken from his father. It is interesting, is it not, that the most convenient of these final names happens

The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse

to be “Domitius?” To be referred to as Nero Domitian would be a more specific way of designating him.

At any rate, I would like to suggest that some of the original sources used by the church fathers actually might have had little to do with the later emperor Domitian. Certainly Eusebius and others thought Domitian was the object, for Domitian was responsible also for a second and great persecution. But the original material might rather be referring to “Nero Domitian,” the famous Nero who initiated a persecution in Rome that well could have affected John the Apostle as it did Peter and Paul and others. Perhaps, as certain traditions state, it was at this time John was thrown into the traditional pot of boiling oil, yet because they were not successful in killing him he was banished to Patmos.

So reads Tertullian, who says that John was first punished in Rome,³⁷ and that he was “plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island exile.” *On Prescription Against Heretics*, 36; ANF 3:260.

This solution being valid, the writing of the book of Revelation could have been just after the very end of Nero’s reign (14 years), ca. A.D. 68. With this conclusion, nearly all the conflicting data from other sources can be harmonized more satisfactorily. It solves a multitude of historical and interpretational problems.

A Suggested Date of Writing

From our earlier assessment, we know that the first vision given to John for the book of Revelation was given on the day or weekend of the Passover in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was also probably given on a Sabbath rest day, for John might be working or compromised on any other day.

Such a date is roughly ascertainable by using astronomy. In what could be considered the fourteenth year of Emperor Nero, toward the end of his

³⁷ Cf. Maxwell, *God Cares* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985), Vol. II, p. 53.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

reign, A.D. 68, and on April 7 (Julian calendar)³⁸, Passover Day (or Friday eve and Saturday, Nisan 15), John likely saw this glorious vision. This day happens also to be in this year, the Saturday, Sabbath Day, and cannot be a Sunday.

Conclusion

Thus we suggest a solution that better fits all the data, we believe. The Revelation was likely written at the end of Nero's reign (ca. 68 A.D.) just in time to inform prophetic events that were unfolding in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The internal evidence is more harmonious, the historical setting makes more sense, John's age at the time of writing is more reasonable, and some interpretational problems find a more understandable conclusion.

While the later date, ca. A.D. 96, is traditionally valid, it seems that its acceptance is more problematic. Should it ever prove to be accurate it would not be overly troublesome to message and purpose of the book. But I feel the best purposes of the book are served in the earlier date. What is most important from the statements of the church fathers is the overwhelming testimony given in favor of Johannine authorship and the traditional place and circumstance for the writing of the book.

³⁸ *Please cf. "Corrections to Astronomical/Calendar Dates" in my work, The Clock of the Heavens. Most tables or calendars will show April 7, A.D. 68, for instance, to be a Thursday, but this is incorrect. The new moon was probably not yet visible till the evening of March 23, in A.D. 68, being only .06 % visible on the preceding evening; therefore we consider the first day of the month to have been March 24 and the fourteenth day of Nisan. Friday, April 6. [A.D. 69, does not yield in all probability either a Saturday or Sunday Passover day (likely a Tues or Wed)].

The Opening Vision

Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

Rev. 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Rev. 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

Rev. 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Rev. 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Rev. 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Rev. 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Rev. 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1



Divine Superlatives

The figure of Christ presented here is given to demonstrate his DIVINE CHARACTERISTICS. They are all superlatives. He is the strongest, brightest, grandest, oldest, purest, wisest, and greatest.

- His clothing of a ποδηρη and belt represents his *high* priestly ministry
- His face as the sun represents his unsurpassing glory
- His voice as the sound of many waters represents his divine authority
- His sword from his mouth represents his potent word of power and eloquence*
- His white hair represents his eternal, divine nature and his purity
- His eyes of fire represent his searching judgment and wrath
- His feet like fine brass represent purity, strength, and permanency.

The stars in his right hand represent his watch-care and universal authority.

* Paul the apostle knows that the word of God is represented by a sword:

"The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph 6:17)

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12)
(cf. the "searching the reins and hearts," vs. 2:23)

The Opening Vision

**For the color and significance of the refined brass³⁹ see footnotes below. The colors operative in the picture are purple⁴⁰ and primarily white⁴¹.

³⁹ Lenski is among the few who fortunately see that lexically there is probably here a genitive absolute-- χαλκολιβανος and πεπυρωμενης. "as in a furnace, (a furnace) having been fired up." To quote further--- "The sense is that the feet of Jesus resembled "gold-bronze," not as this is when it is cold, but as it appears when it is glowing in the intense fire of a furnace." Lenski, *Interpretation of John's Revelation*, (Augsburg Publishing House: Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1961), p. 66.

What this all can mean makes tremendous sense. For John was familiar on a daily basis of the smelting of copper (ancient brass) on Patmos, it being known that he was condemned to these very copper mines. This essentially means Christ's feet are translucent white surrounded by a certain aura of purple, for this is how copper refines. This relates to the divine figure; the sardine stone (pale, white) with the jasper (purple) of chapter 4. It also relates to the harlot clothed in linen (always pale white in Revelation) and having an outer garment of purple and scarlet color. And last it corroborates the pearly white city (purest gold we are told looks clear and white), also having an outer garment of light---purple (jasper) in effect.

The fine brass, or refined brass is best understood then as brass (copper) *as it is being heated* in a furnace. This was a familiar site to John, condemned to work the copper (brass) mines! I believe this would appear as white hot with streams of fire giving a distinctly purple surrounding. (This can be demonstrated.)

⁴⁰ "Bochart sees in *calkolibanos*, a hybrid formation, the combination of a Greek word and a Hebrew, *calkos*, and לבן= "la ban," to make white; brass which in a furnace has attained what we call "white heat." Quoted from R.C. Trench, *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, p. 58.

⁴¹ A man named Tony G. of Placerville, CA, relates this experience upon his true conversion to Christianity through the influence of his girlfriend. First explaining his spiritual journey through life he then tells an experience that was sparked by his girlfriend's kindness and forgiveness toward him. At this time he sensed in a special way God speaking to him. "Suddenly," he describes, "I felt the burning conviction of sin and His complete forgiveness. I began to cry. With my eyes closed, I turned my face from hers.

With my face still turned away, I opened my eyes. In front of me, suspended several feet off the ground, I saw a pair of feet. They had sandals on them. They weren't normal feet. They seemed to be made of light. They were translucent

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

It is useful to compare the characteristics of Christ in both chapter 1 and chapter 10:

Two Mysteries

<u>Chapter 1</u>	<u>Chapter 10</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>
Voice as much water	Lion's roar, thunder	Divine authority
Face as the sun	Face as the sun	Glory and power
Feet like fine brass	Feet as pillars of fire	Strength and presence
Stars in hand	Foot on land and sea	Universal dominion
Sword of mouth	Book in hand	Word of Truth
Clothed in white robe	Clothed in (white) cloud	Purity
A truthful witness	Swear, raising hand	Truthfulness
Mystery of seven stars	Mystery of God;	Cloud--Revelation of the hidden

white, and they seemed to glow. The sandals were white too. I could see the hem of a garment, and I looked up quickly.

As quickly as I could comprehend what I was seeing, I began to question. And as the being disappeared, I saw a flowing white robe and a sash. The light that came from it was dazzling. I could see forearms extending outward from the midst of the light. I saw a face made of the same dazzling white light. His face was long and slender. He had a high forehead and a large nose. His hair seemed to touch his shoulders, and I could almost see a beard.

There was so much light coming from him that the perimeter of his body was fuzzy. Only his eyes were different. They were a sparkling amber yellow, and they looked right at me. His face showed little expression. It seemed very firm and confident

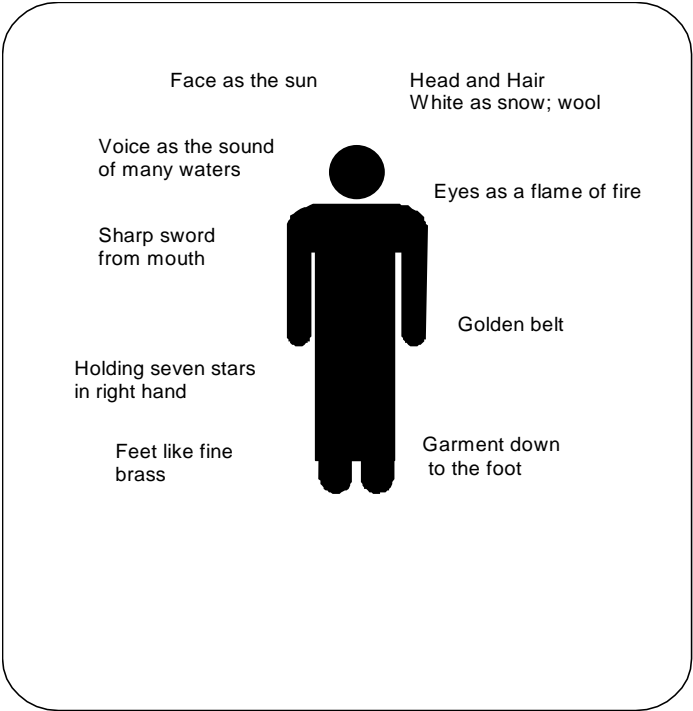
I know that the young woman next to me saw nothing. If it was Jesus Himself, or an angel, I cannot say with certainty. I can only say that since that moment, I have tried to live for Jesus."

E. Lonnie Melashenko and Timothy E. Crosby, *In the Presence of Angels* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1995), pp. 208,209.

The Opening Vision

Comes with clouds	Comes with clouds	Promise of His Coming
Eyes of fire	Pillars of fire	Fire
Faithful Witness-Amen	Rainbow	Covenant keeping God
Eyes of fire	Lion's roar	God's wrath; judgment

As is evident, and typical of the parallels throughout the book, we find a similar story written with similar symbols and vocabulary but different and unique to its context.



The Seven Stars

Traditional Understanding

In the very first vision in the Apocalypse there are seven stars held in the hand of the Lord of glory. These stars we are told represent the angels of the seven churches. The position of these stars in the hand of Christ simply represents the tender regard Christ has for the leaders of his churches. These lesser lights of God's glory are so represented in this regard by numerous commentators, and they are not incorrect in such a designation. But to leave the explanation there falls way short of the intended depth to which we can, if we wish, understand this fascinating symbol. It is not until one gives proper attention to the field of ancient astronomy that we begin to understand multi-dimensionally the significance of the reference to the seven stars.

The Seven Stars as the Pleiades in Astronomy

In actuality several of the most significant star clusters or constellations in the night sky seem to have seven visible stars. That part of *Ursa Major*, which is commonly known as the "Big Dipper" has seven principle stars. So does the *Ursa Minor*, the "little dipper." So does Orion in certain respects. And there are others. Seven can be demonstrated to be a basic number of the universe, both geometrically and numerically.

However, the specific expression "seven stars" is regularly associated in astrological lore with a cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus known as the Pleiades. Popularly known for centuries as the seven stars, or the seven sisters, this tightly knit group of stars is mentioned at least twice specifically in the biblical text as well. (Job 9:9; 38:31)

The Seven Stars

Modern telescopes reveal over five hundred stars in this grouping,⁴² but only about six are typically visible to the naked eye. Sometimes it seems like one may see eight, or more, but mysteriously no one typically can ever see seven. To this novel circumstance we will return momentarily. It may not be accidental.

The Seven Stars Were Thought of as Seven Sisters

According to a common reference we learn that the Pleiades were legendarily thought to be seven sisters, the daughters of Greek gods:

*Pleiades (mythology), in Greek mythology, seven daughters of Atlas and of Pleione, the daughter of Oceanus. Their names were Electra, Maia, Taygete, Alcyone, Celaeno, Sterope, and Merope. According to some versions of the myth, they committed suicide from grief at the fate of their father, Atlas, or at the death of their sisters, the Hyades. Other versions made them the attendants of Artemis, goddess of wildlife and of hunting, who were pursued by the giant hunter Orion, but were rescued by the gods and changed into doves. After their death, or metamorphosis, they were transformed into stars, but are still pursued across the sky by the constellation Orion.*⁴³

Therefore, in Greek and Roman mythology these stars were thought to be seven sisters. The modern star names often reflect these names. While in our view such beliefs or fanciful interpretations are absurd, biblically speaking, they are quite significant. What better description is available to this day than to speak of churches as sisters? Churches, holding common ties to this day are referred to as “sister churches.” In like manner the

⁴² (Dr. Stewart Custer, *The Stars Speak* (Greenville, South Carolina: Bob Jones University Press, 1977), p.59.

⁴³ "Pleiades (mythology)," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia* 2000. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

seven churches of Asia, bound together geographically and along a circular mail route, were sister churches.

The Seven Stars as a Representation of Binding, Corporation, or Unity

Asks the Scripture, “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?”⁴⁴ The fact that these stars are so tightly grouped is a visible representation of unity. This unity Christ wishes for his entire church, in seven-fold wholeness.

Stars in the Revelation stand for religious leaders, the pastors or apostles of the churches. Interesting enough, the ancient meaning for the word “Pleiades” given is “the congregation of the judges” or “rulers.”⁴⁵ The appropriateness of this meaning and how it is used in Revelation 1-3 cannot be the result of an accident!

The Seven Stars and the Center of the Universe

By some ancients it was thought that the Pleiades were at the center of the universe. Astronomical science has even thought so in more recent times. Thus the seven churches represent a larger “fullness” for the church at large. While there is great unlikelihood that this is the actual center, the symbolism is what is important.

Interestingly enough, there is a particularly large star near the center of this cluster known as *Al Cyone*, or according to the Arabic meaning, “The Center.” Is this not the picture of the living Christ standing in the midst of the seven lamp stands of light?” (And really, is this all just an unlikely coincidence? As observed in some of the author’s star books, even the heavens themselves seem to be “Christ-centered!”)

⁴⁴ Job 38:31

⁴⁵ E. Raymond Capt, *The Glory of the Stars* (Artisan Publishers), p.101.

The Seven Stars Are Associated With the Spirit

The Seven Stars also represent the Holy Spirit and its work. In his book, *The Clock of the Heavens*, the writer of this volume has developed this concept. Whenever some great work of Pentecostal Grace is shown to men there are appropriate astronomical markings near this group of stars. These stars were equated with “doves” in ancient folklore, the very symbol of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon Christ at his baptism.

They are known scripturally as the “sweet influences”(Cf. Job 38:31 KJV). Is there a better term for the work of the Spirit than this? It is the Spirit that binds the church together. It is the Spirit that is a “sweet influence.” These star/angels are known as the “Seven Spirits,” and when they are addressed in Revelation 2, and 3, there always follows the admonition, “He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches.”

The Seven Stars Are Cosmologically Positioned Similar to the Geographical Configuration of the Seven Cities/Churches

In addition to the themes mentioned above, being a novice astronomer, I have noticed another curious circumstance. The physical relationship of the stars in the constellation are very similar to how the seven cities of Asia are seen on a geographical map. Of course, the configuration is not exact, but similar enough to elicit surprise, and to wonder if at a particular time the resemblance was even more similar than it is today (see below). The stars are today gathered closely about a central star. Since the brightness and even the visible position of the stars vary over time we cannot be sure how the configuration was *observed* two thousand years ago. However, exactness of position is not necessary to draw attention to these possible significances.

This circumstance may even be a cosmological demonstration of the law of heavenly counterparts, a principle introduced in the hermeneutical section of this volume.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

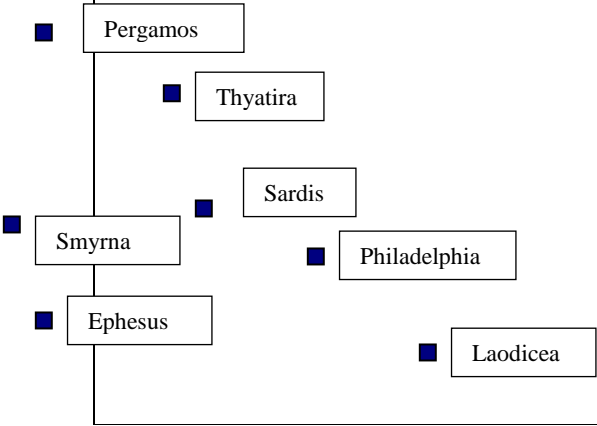
A Missing Star?

Finally, let us comment as to the seemingly missing seventh star. The Greeks were aware that there were not seven but six easily visible stars. In Greek mythological lore, one of the seven sisters was believed to be removed from her position, probably with dishonor, for some fanciful reason (Merope?). However, do we not here see shades the same meaning, when Jesus says of the church of Ephesus, that if she does not repent, that her candlestick (and thus her light, or star) would be removed from its place? And unfortunately, that day did come, for magnificent Ephesus and most other of the cities have since become ruins of lonely pillars and fallen stones. The lesson is obvious.

Conclusion

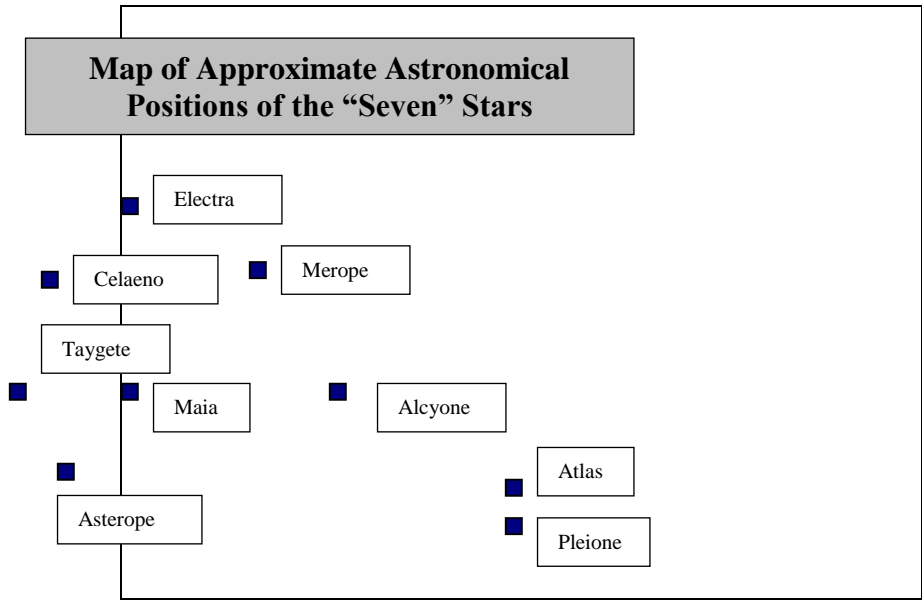
Therefore, we conclude and maintain, that the reference to the seven stars is not so ambiguous and vacuous as generally represented-- but is appropriately symbolic of the gathering of the leaders of the church around its principle leader and center, the risen Christ. Thus bound by the sweet influence of the Spirit in the bond of peace, the church in its fullness is to faithfully give light to universe through its sisterhood of faith.

**Map of Approximate Geographic
Positions of the Seven Churches**



THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Compare with the Stellar Configuration Below:



The Seven Spirits

Below are some texts of interest when considering the “Seven Spirit” figures in Revelation:

And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne” (1:4)

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.”

”And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.” (4:5)

(A Lamb) “having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (5:6)

“I saw the seven angels which stood before God.” (8:2)

Above are several references to the seven Spirits.

Who are these?

The traditional explanation of the “seven-fold Holy Spirit” does not make enough sense to be very informative or understandable.

Even though they are enumerated in a *trinitarian* formula in verse 1:4, they are elsewhere styled as “spirits” (plural) and “angels.”

Therefore, they are *related* to the Holy Spirit but *they are not the same* as the Holy Spirit; but are referred to as representative angels and are seen in “actor” roles throughout the Apocalypse.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Let the suggestion be made that part of the answer to this enigmatic expression rests on the basis of two fundamental considerations:

1. The law of heavenly counterparts
2. The little understood relationship between angels and the Holy Spirit.

1. The law of heavenly counterparts

First, it will be noted when discussing the identity of the seven stars in the right hand of the figure of Revelation chapter 1 that these stars are identified as **angels**; yet they can also be identified as "human angels" or **ministers**. In addition, when the message is given by the angel the hearer is enjoined to heed what "**the Spirit**" says to the churches.

Now these very ministers who read the messages to the congregations cannot be the very same as those spirits who stand directly before the throne of God. But by understanding the law of heavenly counterparts the ambiguity is largely erased; for what is seen in heaven represents what is found on earth; carrying on the same work.

- For instance, and angel is 14:6 is seen flying in heaven having the everlasting gospel. But in reality, angels or servants of God on earth are giving the gospel message.
- Or to give another example, a great red dragon is seen in heaven. Yet he has an earthly counterpart or a national instrument through which he works; namely the Roman empire. Thus the dragon can be consistently identified with both Pagan Rome and with Satan himself.

Consequently, in heaven are seen seven spirits or angels; representing those sent into all the world; yet on earth God has human instruments through which the Spirit speaks.

There is the **HOLY SPIRIT**

Who has **ANGEL** emissaries

Who in turn work through

HUMAN PROPHETS, APOSTLES,
and **MINISTERS**.

The Seven Spirits

(In this way Jesus spoke the vision through the agency of the Holy Spirit unto his angel and unto his servant John who also bore witness)

2. The Relationship of the Holy Spirit and Angels.

Many do not realize how closely intertwined are the ministries of the Holy Spirit and the angels of God. In fact, if one will carefully study this subject he will find the work of each so similar that there is essentially no difference. There is no permission to make the angels into the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is divine and has a personality of His own. But the work of the angels can be better understood by studying the work of the Holy Spirit. Below are listed but a few of these cooperative purposes:

1. The Holy Spirit is given the work of convicting of sin. (Jn 16:8). Yet note the following quote from the book *The Ministry of Angels*, by Irwin Evans, (pp. 88-101):

"Continually were the angels to work with men, inspiring them with right desires, cooperating with the Holy Spirit in leading them to love righteousness and to hate sin."

2. The Holy Spirit influences men to live righteously. (Jn 16:8) Yet, as noted in the above quote, angels also "inspire men with right desires." Particularly of note is the following and a favorite quote of the author's: (3T 363)

"You all have an influence for good or for evil on the minds and characters of others. And just the influence which you exert is written in the book of records in heaven. An angel is attending you and taking record of your words and actions. When you rise in the morning, do you feel your helplessness and your need of strength from God? and do you humbly, heartily make known your wants to your heavenly Father? If so, *angels mark your prayers*, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong and exerting an influence which will lead others to do wrong, your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you, and influencing your actions."--Ellen White

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

3. In addition the Holy Spirit is involved with interceding in our prayers and in answering through impressions and movements upon the heart. Yet the angels do this very work:

"The people of God are continually in touch with heaven. Wherever they may be, . . . they are through the ministry of the holy angels, *ever in the presence of God*, and whatever petition is sent to Him in faith will be answered according to infinite wisdom, for the best good of His people."

"Angels are constantly ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bring blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

4. The Holy Spirit is called a Comforter, and a Helper, yet the angels do this also. "The angels of God are our watchers and helpers." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. 1:14.

*"Ministering angels are waiting **about the throne** to instantly obey the mandate of Jesus Christ to answer every prayer offered in earnest, living faith."* 2 SM 377.

5. The Holy Spirit is all-seeing. Yet the seven spirits of God are typified as being seven eyes who patrol all that is transpiring upon the earth (Rev 5:6):

"We have an Advocate pleading in our behalf. The Holy Ghost is continually engaged in beholding our course of action. . . . The angelic agencies are messengers from heaven, actually ascending and descending, keeping earth in constant connection with the heaven above. These angel messengers are observing all our course of action. . . . And whenever souls yield to the softening, subduing influence of the **Spirit of God under these angel ministrations**, there is joy in heaven; the Lord Himself rejoices with singing." 1SM 96.

CONCLUSION

Though the precise work of these heavenly beings may not be in the realm of our understanding, it is fair enough to determine that these seven Spirits

The Seven Spirits

are heavenly representatives (seven being a representative number for prophetic purposes in the Apocalypse) of the work of *Holy Spirit* **and** by extension also the work of His emissaries, the *holy angels*. Like their earthly counterparts, they are the messengers of God's mercy, his plans, purposes, and His truth.

Since the Holy Spirit by nature cannot be expressed by any earthly form or substance, or prophetic symbol, His work, particularly the work of angels is here expressed through the agency of these seven angels.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Jewish tradition and literature feature often seven archangels, even giving them names: Uriel, Rafael, Raguel, Michael, Gabriel, Saiquael, Jeremial. Cf. *Enoch*, 20.

The Seven Angels' Messages

From prior consideration indication was given that the angels that are commissioned to each of the churches are really God's ministers:

"God's ministers are symbolized by the seven stars, which he who is the first and the last has under his special care and protection." AA581

The word "angel" (αγγελος) means "messenger."

But it was also noticed that according to the principle of heavenly counterparts that these angels are also seven angels commissioned from the heavenly sanctuary who cooperate with the divine agency of the Holy Spirit. This is why at the end of each message we find the call to heed, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Through the direction of God and his Spirit; angels carry the message that the living preacher relays to the hearer.

The meaning of the expression "he that hath an ear" is idiomatic, simply saying emphatically, LISTEN!! God is serious that we get the message and that we hear his voice speaking to us.

Each of the following sections, which look at each of the seven churches of Asia have an interesting pattern that is quite consistent. The few exceptions to this pattern or order is also significant. Merrill Tenney⁴⁷ provides the most attractive summary of the seven parts of each message:

Commission: Superscription or address

⁴⁷ Tenney, Merrill H., *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 51.

The Seven Spirits

Characterization: (of Christ) Symbol borrowed from vision of chapter 1.

Commendation: Usually the good things that Jesus "knows" about the church

Condemnation: What Christ has against the church

Correction: What they should do about their problem

Call: The appeal to listen to what the Spirit says

Challenge: The promise to the overcomer.

However, for convenience each church is subsequently discussed under four headings each:

1. The name and its meaning
2. Historical facts pertinent to interpretation
3. Phrase by phrase interpretation
4. Additional Notable Quotes

Bi-Sectional Parallels

The Churches

(1:1-3:22)

Side A	Vs.	Parallel Type	Vs.	Side B
A Revelation	1:1	To open	3:8	Open door
His Servants	1:1	Servanthood	2:20	My servants
Shortly (εν ταχει), come to pass	1:1	A Short Time	3:11	I Come Quickly (εν ταχυ)
The Word of God	1:2	Word of God	3:10	Word of My Patience
Testimony	1:2	Truthful Words	3:14	Faithful and True Witness
Reads	1:3	Public Proclamation	3:5	Confess name before. .
Seven churches; seven lamps; stars; Spirits	1:4, 12,16	Seven	3:1	seven spirits and seven stars
Which is, was, and is to come	1:4	Eternal; Everlasting	3:14	the Beginning of the creation
Before his throne (Spirits)	1:4	Before (position)	3:9	Before thy feet
Jesus	1:1,5	Jesus	3:14	The Amen, "I," etc.
First begotten	1:5	Creation; beginning	3:14	Beginning of creation
Prince of the kings of the earth	1:5	Absolute authority	2:26	Power over all nations
Kings of the earth	1:5,6	Kings	2:26	Power over nations; David (3:7)
Loved us	1:6	Love	3:7	Philadelphia--- brotherly love
Blood	1:5	Red/Purple Color	2:18	Feet like brass in a Furnace,* Tyre
Dominion	1:6	Reign or rule	2:27	rule with a rod of iron
Priests	1:6	Priests	3:7	Having the key of Dav.
He cometh	1:7	Second Coming	3:11	Behold I come quickly
eye	1:7	Eye	3:18	eyesalve
Shall see Him	1:7	Optical Discernment	3:18	That thou mayest see
Pierced Him	1:7	Wound or Pierce	3:19	Rebuke and <i>chasten</i>
All the kindreds of the	1:7	Whole inhabited earth	3:10	Upon all the world
Wail because of Him	1:7	Sorrow; Crying	3:17	art wretched,miserable
Wail because of Him	1:7	Shame; Dishonor	3:17	wretched, poor, naked

Bi-Sectional Parallels

Alpha	1:8	First; beginning	3:14	Begin. of creation
Omega; the end; last	1:8	Ending; Complete	2:26	keep works to the <i>end</i>
Almighty	1:8	Strength	3:8	little strength
Brother	1:9	Brother; Companion	3:7	Philadelphia=brother
Kingdom	1:9	Kingdom; nation	2:27	Power over nations
Patience of Jesus	1:9	Endurance	3:10	Word of <i>patience</i>
Tribulation	1:9	Suffering; Torment	2:22	Bed of pain; throw into tribulation
Isle of Patmos; rocky i	1:9	Island	2:18	Tyre: rocky island
Patmos	1:9	In the Sea	2:18	Tyre: was in the sea
Day	1:10	Unit of Time	3:10	Hour
Great voice like a trum	1:10	Sharp, Loud voice	4:1	First voice as trumpet
Behind me (Also hereafter 1:19)	1:10	After; following; behind	4:1	After this
Write in a book	1:11	Written Document; bc	3:5	Book of life
Churches; Church	1:11	Invited; Called	3:18	(Several X) churches called out ones
Golden candlesticks	1:12	Gold; Golden	3:18	buy of me gold
Candlesticks, lamps	1:12	Vessels	2:27	vessels of a potter
in the midst	1:13	In the midst; in between	3:16	lukewarm
Son of man	1:13	Humanity; human- like	3:14	Laodicea (people; laos); man (3:8)
Clothed	1:13	Clothed	3:5	Clothed in white
Patmos	1:10	Barren; nakedness	3:17	Poor, blind and naked
Garment	1:13	Garment	3:5,18	white garments
Girt at the chest with a belt	1:13	Surrounding; circumvent.	3:5	Clothed (lit. thrown around)
Girt at the chest with a	1:13	Girt at the chest	3:7	The key of the David*
head and hair white	1:14	White	3:5	White garments
Snow; manna (2:17)	1:14	Descending from heaven	3:12	City that cometh down
Flame of fire	1:14	Fire	3:18	gold tried in the fire
Eyes like a flame of fir	1:14	Fierce; wrathful	2:18	eyes like a flame of fire
Feet like fine brass	1:15	Fine brass in furnace	2:18	Feet are like fine brass
Brass refined in a furna	1:15	Refined	3:18	Gold tried in the fire
Furnace	1:15	Hot; great heat	3:18	Gold tried in the fire; hot (3:15)
Sound of many waters	1:15	Rumbling and Roaring	3:20	Door Knocking, voice

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Much water	1:15	Water; Great amount	2:24	The deep, deep places
Seven stars	1:16	Seven stars	3:1	seven stars
Seven stars, sun	1:16	Heavenly Luminaries	2:28	morning star; stars (3:1)
Right hand	1:16	Position of favor	3:21	set in throne like Jesus
Out of his mouth	1:16	Proceeding from mouth	3:16	spew from mouth
Sharp sword	1:16	Sharp object	2:27	rod of iron
Sword	1:16	Made of iron	2:27	rod of iron
Two-edged sword	1:16	Duality	3:1	Sardis; two towns in one
Countenance was like the sun	1:16	Bright; Dazzling	2:28	Morning star
Fell at his feet	1:17	To fall	3:9	worship at feet
Fell at his feet	1:17	Worship; give glory	3:9	worship at feet
As dead (one who is d	1:17	The dead	2:24	Those knowing the depths of Satan
one dead	1:17	Malodor	3:16	Lukewarm; sulfurous water
He that liveth	1:18	Living, having life	3:1	A name that you live
Keys of Hell and Death	1:18	Symbol of Authority	3:7	Key of David
Hell	1:18	Darkness	2:24	Deep places of Satan
Death	1:18	Death	2:23	Kill children w. Death
Dead . . . and am alive	1:18	Dead <u>and</u> Alive	3:1	name that livest, and art dead
Hell	1:18	Deep; Subterranean	2:24	The Depths of Satan
Hell (cf. Syn par.)	1:18	Cold	3:15	Wish they were cold (water)
Mystery	1:20	Divine Manifestation	2:28	Morning Star
Angels	1:20	Angels	2:18	angels of churches, holy angels, etc.
holds 7 stars in hand	2:1	In the hand	2:27	rod of iron (3:1 seven stars)
Walks	2:1	Locomotion: Walking	3:4	Walk in white
Walking	2:1	Standing	3:20	I Stand at the door
labor and works	2:2	Works; Labor	2:19	Works and labor
hast borne	2:3	To bear or carry	2:24	no other burden
Tried them	2:2	To test or try	3:10	try them that dwell...
Apostles	2:2	Twelve	3:3,10	hour
Liars	2:2	Deception	3:9	which do lie
My name's sake	2:3	Name honor	3:8	Hast not denied name

Bi-Sectional Parallels

Hast not fainted	2:3	No rest; unceasing	3:2,3	Be watchful; watch
Left thy first love	2:4	Leave; forsake	3:12	Go no more out
Remember... from where thou art fallen	2:4	Remember	3:3	Remember therefore how. . . seen and. . .
remove candlestick	2:5	To snatch up or away	3:11	no man take thy crown
tolerate; bear	2:2	Tolerate: Allow	2:20	sufferest woman Jezebel
To eat of tree, eat idol food	2:7,14	Eating	2:20	eat idol food
eat of tree of life, idol food	2:7,14	Food	2:20	idol food
tree of life	2:7	branch; tree; green pla	2:27	rod
paradise	2:7	heaven: the place	3:12	down from heaven
paradise	2:7	four-dimensional	3:12	city from heaven; (Key of David too)
Smyrna (myrrh)	2:8	Aromatic; sweet- smelling	2:18	Thyatira*
poverty	2:9	Poor; having need	3:17	poor, blind, and naked
But thou art rich	2:9	Plenty: full: rich	3:17	I am rich & increased
which say are Jews	2:9	Jews	3:9	which say are Jews
Synagogue of Satan	2:9	Synagogue of Satan	3:9	Synagogue of Satan
Synagogue	2:9	To gather	3:9	Synagogue
Satan, them which are	2:9	Evil powers	3:9	Satan, Jezebel, etc.
Cast into prison	2:10	To throw or cast	2:22	cast her into bed
Prison	2:10	Detention	2:25	hold fast (3:11)
Crown of life	2:10	Crown; headgear	3:11	Crown
Crown of life	2:10	Life	3:5	book of life
Crown of life	2:10	Symbol of victory	3:11	Crown
Second death	2:11	Another, a second	2:24	Another burden
not hurt of 2nd death	2:11	To hurt or destroy	2:27	As vessels of potter are shattered
Pergamos, <i>height</i>	2:12	High or exalted	3:1	Sardis (position)
Per-gamos (gamos= we	2:12	Celebration; festivity	3:20	Come and sup
Satan's seat (throne)	2:13	Throne; sitting place	3:21	Set in Father's throne
Faith	2:13	Faith	2:19	Faith
First and last	2:13	First and Last	2:19	the last to be more than the first
Antipas	2:13	Evil King/Queen	2:20	Jezebel
Faithful martyr	2:13	Martyrdom	3:14	Faithful; true martyr
Who was slain	2:13	Murder; killing	2:23	kill child. with death

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

few things against thee	2:14	Little: few	2:8	a little strength
cast a stumbling block	2:14	Under the feet	2:27	the vessels of a potter
Children of Israel	2:14	Children; offspring	2:23	Kill her children
Idols	2:14	Image: likeness	2:20	idols
to commit fornication	2:14	Immorality; uncleanness	2:20	To commit fornication
Balaam	2:14	False prophet	2:20	Jezebel calleth herself one
Teaching of the Nicolaitans	2:14	Teaching	2:20	To teach and seduce
Fight against them (war)	2:16	War	2:27	power-nations; go out no more (3:12)
hidden manna	2:17	Sweet taste	3:15	cold water?
White stone (stone of judgment)	2:17	White stone	2:28	Morning star* (stone of judgment)
White stone	2:17	Made of stone	3:12	pillar
Name written or inscribed	2:17	Inscribed; etched	3:12	write on him name
Several churches; where dwellest	2:13	Dwelling place	3:10	earth; them that dwell
New	2:17	New: Unknown	3:12	My new name
a dead man	1:17	Pale	3:1	Sardis
Feet like brass	1:15	Strong; Permanent	3:12	pillar
Churches are each judged	sev.	Reflexive Judgment	2:23	Will give according to works
Cannot bear evil	2:2	holy	3:7	He that is holy
White robe; white hair, etc.	1:14	Pure; clean	3:18	white raiment, holy angels (3:4,5)
The Last	1:11	Remnant	2:24	rest; Sardis 2:2, things that remain
Fell as one dead	1:17	Prostrate position	3:9	worship before feet; si
Alpha and Omega	1:8	Perfect: Complete	3:3	Have not found your works perfect
Myrrh (Smyrna)	2:8	Healing: remedy	3:18	eyesalve
Myrrh	2:8	bitter taste	3:16	Lukewarm, sulfurous water
Paradise (Eden)	2:7	Eastern orientation	2:28	Morning star
Clouds	1:7	Innumerable; numberless	3:5	his angels
Clouds	1:7	In mid-heaven	2:28	morning star; holy city? (3:12)
Etc.				

Bi-Sectional Parallels

Eastern U. S. Cities as Illustrative Counterparts of the Seven Churches

Ephesus

New York

Smyrna

Boston

Pergamos

Washington, D.C.

Thyatira

Pittsburgh

Sardis

Baltimore

Philadelphia

Philadelphia

Laodicea

Miami

Ephesus

Rev. 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Rev. 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Rev. 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Rev. 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Rev. 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Rev. 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

To the Angel of the Church of Ephesus. . . .

SIGNIFICANCE OF NAME:

Unbelievably most modern writers ignore the meaning the names of the cities in their commentaries. This is reprehensible. The meaning of the name is so important that the meaning of the message to the church cannot be properly elucidated without it. The name is part of the symbolism.

The name "Ephesus" means: "desirable"⁴⁸

- Really it probably has a stronger force of expression for which we would use the term: "greatly desired or loved." In this context has the ring of passion and yearning we find in the expression "the beloved city." (Rev. 21) This is an allusion to that city.

- In addition there is an affinity in the verbal sound of the Greek word *αφεσις* which is a form of the word *αφημι*. Meanings include: to "forgive, allow, tolerate, and here particularly; "leave behind, forsake, neglect, let go" (Dict. to UBS *Greek New Testament*; Kurt Aland, ed.).

Combining these two different meanings; one lexically based and one the nearest verbal affinity and an interesting result appears:

Forsaking or leaving behind-----love.

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

- It was called the "first city of Asia"

- It was probably the greatest commercial center of the region; it was a coast city

⁴⁸ Thus Jacques B. Doukhan. *Secrets of Revelation* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), p. 29, and some other worthy commentators.

Ephesus

- It had the temple of Diana, the greatest of the female deities, the moon goddess:

- This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world
- It took 220 years to build; had marble of every color
- They sometimes used gold instead of mortar
- The temple proper had 120 columns, 60 ft. high

- Diana of the Ephesians was called "the mother of God" or the savior goddess. Later we find similar terms applied to Mary and readily accepted because the people were used to such things and paganism was easily translated into Christianity.

- The Christian church flourished in Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla were among the first converts there. Their first convert was Apollos.

- When Paul first visited there he reorganized the church with a membership of about 12. Later, John the apostle lived there and tradition has it that Mary the mother of Jesus lived there also--for Jesus had left her in his care.

- Timothy died a victim of Mob violence there because he protested against the licentiousness of the festival for Diana. Supposedly this happened sometime just after the writing of the Revelation. It is thought very possible that he was the pastor of the church there at the time of the writing and would be the "angel" of that church.⁴⁹

- Today the city lies in ruins and lies some distance from the sea because silt from the nearby river which later changed its course⁵⁰ has filled in the harbor.

INTERPRETATION:

⁴⁹ Cf. 1 Timothy 1:3.

⁵⁰ See W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), pp. 151-171.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; (candlesticks=lampstands) In the words of another, the church is the only institution upon which he bestows his supreme regard⁵¹. Jesus is always walking in the midst of the churches.⁵²

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Seven times the patient endurance of the Ephesian church is repeated as an emphatic expression. These character traits are even spoken in symmetry. The original Greek Text (Aland) makes one inversion (switching the phrases second and third from the last) spoiling the perfect chiasm, or first to last Hebraic form; however the King James Version for one wonderfully preserves it:

⁵¹ White, E.G., *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 12; *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p.396.

⁵² "Christ walks in the midst of His churches through the length and breadth of the earth. He looks with intense interest to see whether His people are in such a condition spiritually that they can advance His kingdom. He is present in every assembly of the church. He knows those whose hearts He can fill with the holy oil, that they may impart it to others. Those who faithfully carry forward the work of Christ, representing in word and deed the character of God, fulfill the Lord's purpose for them, and Christ takes pleasure in them." (RH May 26, 1903) (7BC 956)

I know thy works and thy labor (κοπον)
 and thy patience (υπομονη)
 and how thou canst not bear (βασταζω)
 (them which are evil)
 and thou hast tried them which say
 (they are apostles and are not)
 and hast found them liars
 and thou hast borne (βασταζω)
 and hast patience (υπομονη)
 and for my name's sake hast laboured and not fainted
 (κοπιαω)

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Just as in the meaning of their name they have lost their zeal, something missing from the last church also, Laodicea. Works are not the certain indication of true church form. Love is. Said Jesus, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples." The warning is that delayed repentance will result in suddenly (i.e. quickly, in a short time) being lost and forgotten. ***But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*** The Nicolaitanes, lit. "overcoming the people," are those who teach that regardless of works the candlestick is assured of its place⁵³. (More will

"The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect; that by "believing" we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned" (EGW in ST Jan. 2, 1912). (7BC957)

"Those who are teaching this doctrine to-day have much to say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ; but they pervert the truth, and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner's credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfils the law for us,

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

be said of these Nicolaitans when examining the church of Pergamos). *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

"Is not this the experience of the Ephesian church repeated in the experience of the church of this generation." (6T 421-23)

"I am instructed to say that these words are applicable to Seventh-day Adventist churches in their present condition. The love of God has been lost, and this means the absence of love for one another." RH Feb. 25, 1902.

and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. This class claim that Christ came to save sinners, and that he has saved them. "I am saved," they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah?--No; for the garments of Christ's righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception, and Christ becomes to these persons a stumbling-block as he did to the Jews,--to the Jews because they would not receive him as their personal Saviour; to these professed believers in Christ, because they separate Christ and the Law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience. They separate the Father and the Son, the Saviour of the world. . . ." (E.G.W., ST 2-25-97).

Smyrna

Rev. 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Rev. 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Rev. 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Rev. 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

To the angel of the Church of Smyrna write. . .

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME:

Intrinsic in the name is the famous aromatic substance: MYRRH

Therefore the name means: “sweet-smelling”⁵⁴
Myrrh was used for:

1. Healing
2. Embalming the dead

“Smyrna is synonymous with myrrh, which was an aromatic substance used sometimes for healing ointment but more especially for the embalming of the dead. According to Psalms 45:8 and Canticles 3:6, myrrh seems to have been the special perfume of Christ as King and Bridegroom. One of the chief ingredients of myrrh was made by crushing and bleeding a plant of the same name. This thorny plant, or tree, grows about eight or nine feet high, and is found in Arabia and to some extent in Palestine. It is very bitter to the taste but has a fragrant odor, and the more the plant is crushed and bruised the greater the fragrance. The name Smyrna, therefore, indicated suffering and persecution which prove a blessing. Smyrna would be crushed by cruel persecutions, but as a result of her sufferings would be anointed for a death and burial that would end in a resurrection and renewal of life. Although the afflictions would be bitter to the victim, they would result in releasing to the world the perfume of heaven.”⁵⁵

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

⁵⁴ I feel that Smyrna may also have intrinsic in its name the number “10.” Inasmuch as the Greek word for ten thousand is “*myrioi*,” likewise we find the same syllable, “mur” in “smurna.” But I am not as yet able to prove this. The phonetic similarity, however, may leave us at least a symbolic allusion to the number ten.

⁵⁵ (Taylor Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), pp. 130-131.

Smyrna

- Smyrna was the next city in importance to Ephesus and was situated about 40 miles to the north.
- It was the birthplace of **Homer**
- Mount Pagus, a conical-shaped mound more than five hundred feet high was located in the center of the ancient city. "Because of its splendor and its garland of magnificent buildings, this hilltop was known as **The Crown of Smyrna**. Circling the base of the mount "like a necklace on a statue" was one of the finest streets of the ancient world, called the **Street of Gold**.⁵⁶"
- Ancient Smyrna was destroyed by the Lydians and for hundreds of years was essentially non-existent as a city. It was later, by the time of The Revelation a significant and prosperous city.
- "Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only two of the seven churches that receive no reproof or condemnation, and they are the only two of the seven cities that retain anything of their former importance and glory⁵⁷."

INTERPRETATION:

Rev. 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Strabo relates that the Lydians destroyed the city of Smyrna, and that for four hundred years there was no city. Smyrna literally "became dead and yet lived."⁵⁸

Rev. 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

⁵⁶ (Ibid, p. 133)

⁵⁷ (Ibid., p. 142)

⁵⁸ (Cf. Ramsay, p. 196)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Jews in this case are symbolic of the true people of God, spiritual Israel. Synagogue is similar in meaning to "church" meaning "gathering" or "assembly."

Rev. 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Smyrna is often considered the church of suffering and persecution. "Unto death" includes primarily death from martyrdom.

Ten days has a typical prophetic answer for historicists in the ten major persecutions of the early Christian centuries or the approximate 10 years of perhaps the worst of these, the persecution during the reign of the emperor Diocletian. (303-313 A.D.) There were namely 10 persecuting emperors⁵⁹.

Ten is more significantly and convincingly used in scripture as denoting completeness for **earthly** and **judicial** trial. It represents an adequate amount or a sufficient probation for testing:

- There are "ten" commandments by which men will be judged.
- Abraham appeals for Sodom down to ten. (Gen. 18:32)
- Israel has tested God ten times and his patience is exhausted (Num. 14:22)
- There were ten generations from Adam to the flood. (Gen. 5)
- Boaz seeks 10 elders from the city as an adequate witness and tribunal for the taking of Ruth. (Ruth 4:2)
- Hezekiah sees the sundial change 10 degrees as a test or sign. (2 Kings 20:9)
- Ten times is adequate notice between the wall builders and their antagonists. (Neh. 4:12)
- Job has been reproached ten times; enough in his opinion (Job 19:3)

⁵⁹ These were Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian. (Bunch, p. 140)

Smyrna

- Daniel and his three friends are tested for ten days (Dan. 1: 12-15)
- Israel had 10 days of repentance immediately preceding the day of Atonement.

(cf. also to 1 Sam. 25:38, Eccl. 7:19; ten talents (Matthew 25:28), ten virgins (Matthew 25:1 ff.)

Therefore Smyrna will receive a fair and full trial of their faithfulness.

Rev. 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

For the second church there are two rewards:

1. A crown of life (victory crown or garland)
2. They are not subject to the **second** death.

REFERENCES:

"The humblest and poorest of the true disciples of Christ, who are rich in good works, are more blessed and more precious in the sight of God than the men who boast of great riches. They are more honorable in the courts of heaven than the most exalted kings and nobles who are not rich toward God." 2T 682

According to Strabo (Geography 14.1.37) the one defect in the situation of Smyrna was that the lower part of the city was difficult to drain. This was aggravated by the winds that pushed the water back from the shore, and prevented the discharge from making it to the sea. It is believed that this was a problem in ancient times, causing an unpleasant malodor over the city when the west wind prevailed. This is the case in modern times, even though the level through accumulation of soil has risen. (Ramsay, p. 190). This would not be a popular fact for Smyrneans to advertise, being the virtual opposite to their "sweet-smelling" name.

The Rewards of the Faithful

Ephesus:

- Eat of the tree of life 1

Smyrna:

- Crown of life
- Not hurt of the second death 2

Pergamos:

- Hidden manna
- White stone
- New name inscribed 3

Thyatira:

- Spared an additional burden
- Power over the nations
- Enemies shall be broken
- Morning star 4

Sardis:

- Walk triumphantly (in white) with Jesus
- Clothed with white robes
- Name kept in the book of life
- Name confessed before the Father
- Name confessed before the angels 5

Philadelphia:

- Kept from the hour of trial
- Make him a pillar
- Go out no more
- Write on him God's new name
- Write on him "New Jerusalem"
- Write on him Jesus' new name 6

Smyrna

Laodicea:

- Jesus will give purified gold
- Jesus will supply white garments
- Jesus will supply eyesalve
- Jesus will come in to him
- Jesus will eat with him
- He will eat with Jesus⁶⁰
- He will reign with Jesus

7

Total = 28
(4 X 7)

⁶⁰ It is possible that the three rewards: i.e., receiving Jesus, eating with Jesus, and Jesus eating with the overcomer is to be considered instead *one* reward. If so two other “rewards” mentioned could perhaps be added: (1) a loving rebuke; (2) a chastening of love. If this is not satisfactory then one can reckon that to receive Jesus in (the door) and to have supper fellowship are two separate rewards; and to sit with Jesus, and to sit with the Father are two more rewards, also totaling seven. Whatever the reckoning, I think the author’s intention supposed a total of seven rewards.

Pergamos

Rev. 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Rev. 2:13 I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Rev. 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Rev. 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Rev. 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Rev. 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Pergamos

TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS WRITE . . .

SIGNIFICANCE OF NAME:

1. Many commentators provide the apparent meaning of the word as "elevation, height, or tower"⁶¹.

This meaning was born out in the geographical situation of the metropolis around and upon a large, impressive hill. The city was set upon a high and rocky throne typical of the political and sovereign role it played for centuries as the seat of government and the court of imperial justice.

2. Also significant is the presence of the Greek word for a wedding or marriage; *gamos*. This is not accidental to the purpose of this prophecy which denotes the era and character of Pergamos as a marriage between church and state, the compromise of pure doctrine and practice with paganism and idolatry. Throughout the Old Testament this illicit mingling of the true with the false is parabolized as "adultery," "whoredom," or "harlotry."

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

1. Pergamos was named for the lofty hill on which it stood, rising 800-1,000 ft. above the plain. The imposing hill was straight up on three sides.
2. Lysimachus put his treasure there (10,000,000) because he thought it was the safest place in his kingdom⁶².

⁶¹ *Pergamos* means "height" or "elevation." Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*; p. 372.

⁶² (T. Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ*, p. 145)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

3. Pergamos was an illustrious city like Ephesus and Smyrna, but did not equal them as concerned commerce. It was not a port city. However its prestige was essentially equal because of other distinctions.

- It had been the political capital of this part of Asia for hundreds of years. It assumed the same position under Roman domination.
- It was the educational center of Western Asia.
- The library contained: 200,000 volumes

One of the kings of the time had secretly wooed the librarian at Alexandria to come and set up a better library at Pergamos. When this was discovered the Egyptian ruler (King Ptolemy V) put an economic sanction on papyrus. He wouldn't let any paper leave his country.

Therefore the Pergamenes came up with a better product, animal skins, which lasted a lot longer and soon replaced papyrus. The word for parchment (parchment is English, not at all related) "pergamena," pergamena; came from Pergamos⁶³.

The rivalry ended when Mark Antony gave the library of Pergamos to Cleopatra as a present. No doubt the city fathers of Pergamos were not a little upset by this turn of events.⁶⁴

- Pergamos boasted several famous temples, for one the temple of Zeus with its altar, (40 ft. high) one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and at the time the largest in the world. Some naturally equate this with the throne of Satan mentioned in the message to the church in Pergamos.
- In addition, Pergamos had other temples. Probably the most famous was the temple of the God of healing, Asculapius (from whence comes the word "scalpel). People came to this temple to be healed. Asculapius was called "The great physician, and the savior." There

⁶³ (M. Maxwell, *God Cares*, Vol. 2, p. 103)

⁶⁴ (Bunch, p. 146)

Pergamos

was a medical school in Pergamos too, but it was more into magic in some ways than medicine. The medical symbol of a serpent on a pole was used here. Aescalapius was a serpent god. They are purported to have actually kept a live serpent in the temple which they worshipped.⁶⁵ Many people believe that Pergamos was the heir apparent to the Babylonian system of false religion.

- There were also several temples to Emperors, and as the seat of government Pergamos became a center of emperor worship. This naturally caused considerable problems to native Christians who if faithful refused to worship the emperor. Some, however, did worship, and this compromise called forth the counsel of the One owning the judicial sword to resist spiritual harlotry and the allurements of the state religion and its immoral practices.

INTERPRETATION:

Rev. 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Rev. 2:13 I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

The interpretive meaning of this verse has been almost entirely missed by those works which attempt to explain the book of Revelation. Consequently an entirely new viewpoint is proffered in the following explanation:

Who was Antipas?

Typical translation of passage from the Greek:

"Even in the days (of) Antipas----- my faithful martyr".

⁶⁵

(Ibid., p. 148)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

- His identity considered a mystery—or considered a “legend.”
- But is it really?
- The whole book of Revelation intended to be understood.

Reading from the Greek text we find:

2:13 (και εν ταις ημεραις Αντιπας ο μαρτυς μου) or, literally:

“Even in the days (of) Antipas-----martyr, (my); faithful, my”

(The Greek language, by nature of its typical expression, scrambles the order)

THEREFORE:

Instead, I propose it should probably be translated as follows:

“Even from (or ever since) my faithful martyr--in the days of Antipas”

This changes the meaning entirely. Suddenly a more appropriate meaning is determined:

At the time of Christ and the Apostles there were several “Herods” who ruled from the Hasmonean family dynasty.

The Herods of New Testament times:

We know of Herod Agrippa before whom Paul testified. He ruled after the original Herods. Before him there was:

- Herod the Great: Died soon after Jesus’ birth
He divided his kingdom to three sons:
 - Herod Phillip
 - Archelaus
 - **Herod Antipas**...and concerning him...

Pergamos

Antipas: The name distinguishes him from the other Herods.

- Tried Jesus
- MORE SIGNIFICANTLY HERE: he beheaded John the Baptist.
 - Thus: “My faithful martyr”
 - Singled out because of his special relation to Jesus
 - Technically the first “Christian” martyr
 - Otherwise why would the Pergamene Antipas have honorable mention over probably hundreds if not thousands of other current martyrs?

PERGAMOS--Antipas

Continued. . . .

- Tradition has John the Baptist held and murdered at the fortress of Machaerus, one of Herod’s outposts beyond Jordan, “in the midst” of Perea or Perga: i.e. Pergamos,⁶⁶ opposite the Dead Sea.

66

NOTE Re: PEREA:

The district of Perea, commonly designated as the region "beyond" (*peran*) Jordan is not used in the Testaments but is well-known from secular literature. It was significant, however, in the history of Israel and Palestine.

"The name Peraia is found frequently in Josephus, but it occurs nowhere in the NT except in a variant reading of Luke 6:17. Instead of the expression "beyond the Jordan" (*peran tou Iordanou*) is found, a translation of an Aramaic or Hebrew form." *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 729

A case is therefore here made, (obviously not by a grammarian, but rather by a novice Hebrew scholar) that however the Hebrew form was composed, the pronunciation would not feature two quiescent "a" sounds, or a repetition of the same verbal expression of the Hebrew *aleph*.

The name Peraia (Greek), is awkward at best for transliteration, but it seems very likely that in the Hebrew, the first "aleph" being in the middle of the word may have required a "guttural" rendering rather than quiescent, since it is

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

- This same region is where Israel camped and ran into problems with Balaam and his seduction. (Moab)
- This area was also desolate wilderness or “abussos” where Satan was purported to live,⁶⁷ i.e.: “Where Satan dwelleth.” Jesus went into this general area following his baptism “to be tempted of the devil.” Matthew 4:1 The uninhabited regions are later shown to be Satan’s abode during the 1,000 years as scapegoat (Rev.20).
- John the Baptist was **both** a “witness” and a “martyr.” The Greek expression here is *martus* (μαρτυς) which is translated either “martyr,” or

followed by one or two more vowels, the final of which is another "aleph" represented above by the Greek alpha. Since the Hebrew or Aramaic *aleph* is sometimes quiescent and sometimes guttural ("throat-letters") (cf. J. Weingreen, A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew, Clarendon Press; Oxford, 1959, p. 18,19) the possibility is suggested that the normally weak guttural "aleph" took a harder sound in such a case as this (mid-word) and was not far distant from the modern "G."

This therefore would simply mean that Perea actually was pronounced "perga" which occurs as a common place name in New Testament times. As is seen in our discussion of the city of Pergamos in Asia, context and geographical characteristics make for us direct allusions to this very region of Palestine. According to Jewish history, Perea was "during the time of Jesus. . . under the control of Herod Antipas," and was the site of the "Herodian fortress of Machaerus, the scene of the execution of John the Baptist." (*IDB*, Vol. 3, p. 729, 728). It was in this district that the Moabites tempted Israel, and the wilderness of Perea corresponds to Jewish traditional locale for the domain of Satan. After coming to John, who baptized in the Jordan bordering on this area, Jesus went up into the wilderness "to be tempted of the devil."

⁶⁷

Demons were said to inhabit waste places and ruins. (Lev. 16:10; Isa 13:21; 33:14) In Mesopotamia sources indicate a similar belief, as also Ugaritic texts which describe demonic animals appointed by El to lure Baal to his doom who are born in the desert (*Ras Shamra* 75 i. 20-32). The universal idea was that the sea and the desert were the habitat of demons. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, *Demon*, 5., p. 821. (Abingdon: Nashville, 1962, George Buttrick, editor).

Pergamos

“witness.” John the Baptist both lost his life and gave faithful witness not only for Christ but against sin. He is repeatedly described as one who “bears witness” (John 1:6-8) in the Gospel account.

- John the Baptist particularly stood up to the very same sin of immorality which was the downfall of Israel centuries before in the time of Balaam.
-

Conclusion: THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A MARTYR AT PERGAMOS NAMED ANTIPAS BUT I FEEL THIS IS NOT THE CASE. It appears that later writers tried to supply this martyr rather than authenticate his existence.

To quote:

“Little is known of this early martyr apart from the reference in Revelation. The name is found in a third-century inscription in Pergamum (Deissman, *Bible Studies*, p. 187), and he is mentioned by Tertullian (*Scapul.* 12). The legend appears in later hagiographers (Simon Metaphrastes, the Bollandists) that he was slowly roasted to death in a brazen bull during the reign of Domitian.”⁶⁸

Conclusion:

Therefore the story of John the Baptist and his encounter with Herod and his "wife" Herodias, as well as the story of Balaam, is used as background to challenge the church in Pergamos to a faithfully resist immorality and compromise, even in the palaces of kings or in the

⁶⁸ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 97.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

temples of the emperors and false gods with which they were surrounded.

Rev. 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Rev. 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

When the children of Israel camped in the wilderness the surrounding nations were very much threatened by them and wanted them destroyed. Balaam, a false prophet (probably a true prophet turned bad), was hired by Balak the king of Moab to curse Israel. However, this did not succeed, in fact all Balaam could do and in much frustration to himself was bless Israel instead. (Numbers 22-24) With God's protection about their camp the people of Israel were untouched by these evil instruments of Satan.

Since the cursing didn't work another plan was devised (Num 25:1-3; 31:16). Through a carefully wrought plan the men of Israel were invited and participated in the licentious and idolatrous practices of the suddenly friendly Moabites, especially the friendly Moabite women. Thousands were soon drawn into drunken revelry and debauchery. It all started, no doubt, in friendly innocence. But the end was the near downfall of all of Israel and a plague resulted bringing to their grave some 20,000 of the children of Israel.

Thus the doctrine of Balaam is clearly the admixture of Christianity with the world. The two issues that the Christians of Pergamos faced at the temples of Jupiter and Venus, idolatry and sexual immorality, were the same issues which ruined Israel at Baalpeor. Paul wrote of the same to the church in Corinth known for its similar problems of compromise with paganism through eating meals offered to idols and done in temples

Pergamos

serving the full range of human appetite.

The names of Balak and Balaam:

Balak= Destroyer

Balaam= Overcoming (Deceiving) the people

Balaamites and Nicolaitans

William Barclay for one notes that the expression Nicolaitans⁶⁹, and those who hold the teaching of Balaam⁷⁰ are in fact one and same, the result of a word play:

"The name Nicolaus, the founder of the Nicolaitans, could be derived from two Greek words, *nikan*, to conquer, and *laos*, the people. Balaam can be derived from two Hebrew words, *bela*, to conquer, and *ha'am* the people."

Rev. 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Rev. 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

⁶⁹ William Barclay, *The Revelation of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), vol. 1, p. 66.

⁷⁰ R. C. Trench noted in *Vincent's Word Studies*, Vol. II, supports the view that the Nicolaitans were never really a sect but are rather those people of John's time who repeat in their actions the teachings of Balaam. p. 439. This is consistent with the other symbolism represented in the chapter, i.e. Jezebel, Balaam, etc.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Hidden Manna:

The lost manna in the ark of the covenant whose eating (by Rabbinic legend) would give eternal life. (It didn't deteriorate)

The White Stone

The word used is "*psephos*." There are several possibilities for understanding this stone, but clearly in the context it refers to a stone of judgment; one which gave favor.

The same root is found in the word "count" (the number of the beast 13:18). The meaning is "to calculate, to determine."

The interpretation of the white stone has always been enigmatic. Probably the difficulty lies in the fact that white stones had several uses and nearly parts of all of these uses are alluded to here.

For instance, in modern times the act of giving flowers can express several different things, but giving them is always an expression of caring. A lover can give them to his beloved. Yet flowers are also seen at funerals; not at all a similar circumstance. Yellow roses might be given to ask for forgiveness and understanding. Or other bouquets might simply mean, "get well."

Thus we find concerning white stones. They were no doubt used as lottery tickets and as judgment ballots. But they were also used as gifts, as seals, as admission tickets, and as tokens. From the root word one might conclude they were used as mathematical tools to keep track of calculations much as the beads are used on an abacus. Therefore to limit the interpretation to one meaning would most probably destroy some of the author's intent for using the symbol. At least the following can be determined with certainty:

1. It is a stone of favorable judgment, favor and good fortune. White is always positive and throughout the Revelation is the color of heaven and

Pergamos

of good. The same word etymology is found in the expression in 13:18, ψηφισατω, "to calculate, or determine." The thought comes close to "divination," as well.

Therefore it is indeed *like* a stone of acquittal, where the judgment falls in favor of the one who draws the "white" lot. Pebbles would have been used for this purpose rather than coins like we use today so often, because they were available. It is possible that the soldiers who cast lots for Jesus' garments used similar means. No doubt the personal seals of individuals were also used, having upon them the specific name of the gambler making the draw even more specific; unless as this passage hastens to indicate there were two people with the same name. This can never happen again in heaven's kingdom, for every man has his own unique name, known by no one else, therefore the reward is guaranteed to be exclusive and specific to him or her.

Sanctuary/Priestly Article

Of necessary note is the "white stone's" association to the priestly adornment used in the Levitical system. The white stone is connected to the stones placed upon the high priests garments containing the names of the tribes. These were carried on the shoulder and on the breastplate. If one is careful to investigate he will find that every detail of the high priest's garb is alluded to in the first three chapters of Revelation. Therefore, here is the place where this part of the regalia is featured. The verb meaning "to give" also means "to make," or "reward;" and therefore the promise is that Jesus will carry that person's name with favor and honor in his ministrations.

The idea that the "Urim" is this <u>particular</u> white stone ⁷¹ is too narrow, but the knowledge of such definitely stands beside the passage in this way:

⁷¹ Morris gives us the information that a manuscript exists which reads "Urim" instead of "white stone." With that the information stops. We would like to know why such a significant variant is not noted by more scholars. A sampling of commentaries does reveal an ardent distaste for any equation of the white stone with the Urim, and the denigration of Trench's suggestion of it. (Lenski, p. 111,

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

1. The Urim was a white stone (onyx) (Trench thinks a diamond)
2. The Urim was used as a lot
3. The Urim has a literary counter-part in the sign/seal/judgment theme in following testimony to the churches and in other parts of the book of Revelation.
4. The churches section is usually speaking of Hebrew O.T. sanctuary symbolism more distinctly than the common practices of Roman times.

"The High Priest bore with the *choschen* or square breastplate of judgment, this being doubled back upon itself, to the end that like a purse it might contain the treasure committed to it." (Exod. xxviii. 15-30; Lev viii. 8)" *Commentary on Revelation*. Richard Chevinix Trench (New York: Charles Scribner, 124 Grand St., 1862), p. 178. There exists evidence that the "Urim" and the "Thummim" were carried in the breastplate much like a pouch and could be removed for lot casting. (cf. L. Hardinge, *With Jesus in His Sanctuary*, p. 306.)

To conclude, it seems appropriate to see in this symbol all of the above considerations in that a white stone will be given as a gift to the overcomer. This stone stands for approval in judgment just as the seal of God placed upon the believer indicates the same thing. The new name indicates the special privilege and unique ownership of heaven's blessings, and the stone like the signet of God constitutes a ticket of passage into the heavenly courts.

The New Name

Mystery names were given for the purpose of exclusivism. This name, though no doubt, is not so much unknown to anyone else in terms of knowledge, but rather the emphasis in the kingdom will be upon the

etc.) Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*; Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 69.

Pergamos

character name given exclusively from Jesus himself⁷². There will not be two Peters, two Johns, two Marys.

Particularly then the name is given with emphasis of uniqueness to oneself, not principally as a mystery name.

⁷²

(Trench feels that this should be translated "saving he that receiveth this stone," and not referring to he that receives the name. pp. 179-181. But at this point I feel that it is indeed each person that receives the new name, not just that Jesus on the stone reveals to the said individual his secret name).

Thyatira

Rev. 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Rev. 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Rev. 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Rev. 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Rev. 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Rev. 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Rev. 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the

Thyatira

depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

Rev. 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Rev. 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Rev. 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Rev. 2:28 And I will give him the morning star.

Rev. 2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

***To the angel of the church of
Thyatira. . .***

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME:

The name is a combination of two words:

1. “thui” “sweet smelling”

Related to other words in the Apocalypse:

- Incense, “thumiama” (Rev. 5:8; 8:3,4; 18:13)
- Aromatic wood, “thuinon wood;” (Rev. 18:12)

2. “teira”, that is “Tyre” (the City of Tyre).

THUS: “A Tyre that is sweet-smelling”

THE TRADITIONAL MEANING OF THE NAME; “SWEET SAVOR OF LABOR,” DOES NOT MAKE COMPLETE SENSE. COMMENTATORS HAVE MISSED AN ENORMOUS HINT BY NOT SEEING IN THE NAME AN ALLUSION TO THE GREAT CITY OF TYRE IN PHOENICIA AND ALL THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES CONCERNING IT.

WHEN THIS IS DONE SEVERAL INTERPRETIVE ANOMALIES LARGELY VANISH AND THE LESSON IS TAUGHT IN THE MESSAGE TO THIS CHURCH IS DRAWN FORTH MUCH MORE CLEARLY. THESE ARE ADDRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS.

AS PERTAINS TO THE NAME, IT IS EASY TO IMAGINE WHAT SMELLS EMANATED FROM ANCIENT TYRE. IT WAS MOST FAMOUS FOR ITS “ATTIRE” MADE WITH PURPLE. THE DYE WAS TAKEN FROM A MOLLUSK OR SHELLFISH. ANYONE FAMILIAR WITH THE ODORS OF SUCH ORGANISMS, ESPECIALLY WHEN DEAD; OR FOR THAT MATTER ANYONE WHO IS FAMILIAR WITH WORKING WITH DYES KNOW THE OLFACTORY SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROCESS.

ON THE CONTRARY THERE WAS ANOTHER CITY IN ASIA MINOR ALSO KNOWN FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PURPLE. LYDIA, A NOBLE WOMAN A PROSELYTE INTRODUCED TO THE APOSTLE PAUL, WAS FROM THYATIRA, AND WAS A SELLER OF PURPLE. IN CONTRAST TO THE PROCESS USED BY ANCIENT TYRE TO DYE A GARMENT PURPLE, THE THYATIRANS USED THE MADDER ROOT, REALLY A WILDFLOWER THAT GREW IN THE AREA. THESE FLOWERS, IN QUANTITY, GIVING OFF A SWEET AROMA WOULD OFFER A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERCEPTION TO THE NATIVE AS WELL AS TO THE GUEST.

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

- According to Strabo, a Greek geographer at the time of Christ, the city of Thyatira was about 25 miles southeast of Pergamos and was a little to the left of the main road."⁷³

(This describes it well--a little to the left—liberal; off a bit)

- Thyatira is best known for being **unimportant**. This is supplemented, literarily, however, by borrowing significance from the more famous Phoenician Tyre.
- Thyatira was an industrial, hard-working city. It is known historically as a craftsman's city, noted for its trade guilds.

Jesus is pictured to them as one whose feet glowed like bronze:

"This language was very familiar to people who labored in the foundries with their flaming furnaces. where fine brass, bronze, and other metals were manufactured into all sorts of articles for the market."⁷⁴

TYRE:

To properly understand the message to the church of Thyatira it is necessary to note the characteristics of the Palestinian city named Tyre. Some of the pertinent facts in regards to this city provide light for the interpretation of the counsel to the church of Thyatira.

1. Tyre was built on a **rocky** island, which afforded it unusual security. It took Nebuchadnezzar 13 years to take the city. Later, under siege by Alexander the Great, a causeway (1/2 mile long) was built and since then the city has been connected with the mainland.

⁷³ (T. Bunch, p. 160)

⁷⁴ (Ibid., p. 161)

Thyatira

The word "Tyre" is related to the Hebrew רוץ , "rock."

2. Tyre was the hometown of the Phoenician princess, **Jezebel**. Her father was Ethbaal, the King of Tyre and its sister city on the mainland, Sidon (1 Kings 16:31) (see 4 *IDB*, p. 722). Ethbaal was also the priest of Astarte.

3. Tyre was famous for its production of pottery, glassware, and especially **purple**. In the heart of the sea it was naturally a seaport and maritime commercial center *extraordinaire*.

4. With it's demise the prophecies concerning it (esp. Ezekiel 26:2-29:18) came true. It was "brought down to the deep" and to "know the deep places of Satan" (26:20; cf. 26:12 last part; 27:34; 28:8).

In fact recently archaeologists have particularly noted that its remains have literally sunk into the mire of the ocean floor so that it can hardly be found. (Cf. art. *Biblical Archaeology Review*)

This condition was prophesied in the Old Testament:

Ezek. 26:12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

Ezek. 26:20 When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;

Ezek. 27:34 In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.

Ezek. 28:8 They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

INTERPRETATION:

Rev. 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

For the eyes like a flame of fire (God's wrath and scrutiny), and the fine brass (purple/blue flame; copper in its refining; (not already refined brass); see notes on the introductory vision. This white with purplish/blue color would have been often seen in Thyatira both in the refineries, but in the purple textile products produced there also.

Rev. 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

The hard labor, the works-oriented religion of this church was noticed. These works had even improved over time. Seven times the Lord emphasizes the good deeds to emphasize their characteristic focus. Their spiritual works seem to equal their menial industry. Though zeal and ceremony can be good, however, they are of little use when the power of the true God is missing, as was demonstrated by the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel.

Rev. 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

The phrase "that woman Jezebel" is preferred by some scholars over the phrase "your woman Jezebel." However, the pronoun "your" is found in some manuscripts and in the opinion of this author is the correct one. Now with view of the connection noted above to the ancient city of Tyre, the home of Jezebel, the allusion it is entirely appropriate. It also lays to rest the doubtful idea that Jezebel was a literal person who lived at Thyatira, or was the pastor's wife, for instance. The use of the *persona* of

Thyatira

Jezebel is entirely allegorical, providing a fit symbol of the customs of paganism and idolatry which were always seeking to invade the kingdom of Israel, and now the Christian church.

Rev. 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

This "space" is clearly as others have noted, when reviewing the Elijah story, 3 and 1/2 years, or 1260 days. This becomes important when interpreting later sections of the book, and in establishing the historical/prophetical application of the message to the church in Thyatira.

Rev. 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Rev. 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

- bed: κλινην, from whence derived the word "clinic." This bed is really a stretcher on which the sick and injured were carried. A fitting punishment for an adulterer.
- "death" in this context includes disease and sickness. (Otherwise "kill with death" is superfluous).
- "reigns" the bowels, believed to be the seat of the will and the emotions.

Therefore, like the Jezebel of old, this church, if unrepentant will experience judgment by disease and sickness, her children (adherents) will die. Historically this happened in the Middle Ages (Thyatira is the middle church, the church of the middle ages, the church of the 1260 years). How specifically this all took place can be seen clearly in history of Europe, and in the "black death," etc.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Rev. 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

Rev. 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

The "rest" in Thyatira, are the holy "remnant" that are still alive. Much has been speculated about the "deep things of Satan" being a reference to the mystery religions. The incursion of these doctrines were indeed the very things which compromised Christianity in this era and others. But first, the primary meaning of the depths of Satan is best understood above in the prophecy regarding ancient Tyre. The "depths" or "depths" of Satan is the pit, the abyss, the underworld and the place of death. To "know them" is biblically to be in them--- *to be dead*.

Thus to those who are yet alive, and who have survived the ordeal in which the forces of evil sought to overcome them, an appeal is made:

Rev. 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Rev. 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Rev. 2:28 And I will give him the morning star.

The rod and the star are explained in the following section:

The Morning Star

“The Morning Star” is probably the most enigmatic expression in the seven churches section.

Most commentators explain and identify with Jesus himself.

Revelation 22:16—*“I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star.”*

This is inadequate for several reasons:

In 2:28 the morning star is a specific gift to the overcomer:

- G.E. Ladd says: “—many commentators feel that Christ himself will be given to the victor, but this is a difficult idea.”⁷⁵

There are two important source texts that must be understood before this expression can be better understood:

1. Psalm 2:7-9
2. Numbers 24:17

These are quoted below:

⁷⁵ G.E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972, p. 54.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

A Prediction of the Davidic Messiah:

*"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son**; this day have I begotten thee.*

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:7-9)

And...

A Prediction of the Star of David:

*"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a **Scepter (rod)** shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Num. 24:17*

An interpretive anomaly presents itself in this passage in the following respects:

- How do we explain how Jesus can himself be the morning star and yet be shown to give something objective and specific beyond himself (the morning star) to the overcomer?
- How is this object intended to give victory and sovereignty to the overcomer?
- What is it that Jesus received from His Father?

The Morning Star

First note two corresponding symbols that are grouped together often in scripture and what they represent. . . .

Two Corresponding Symbols:

1. Scepter or Rod

- A scepter or rod in its simplest form was a shepherding instrument, but it was adapted later as a symbolic representation of kingly power and control.

-The rod was used to inspect sheep as they in a splayed position "passed under the rod." (Ezekiel 20:37)

-It often had a crook used to hook the neck of the sheep to pull them into line and to guide them.

-It was used as a weapon, and the rod of iron had a sharp steel point on one end.

-Kings used ornate rods or scepters as symbols of authority. (Today a judge for instance uses the gavel) (Esther 5:2)

2. The Star

-Commentators note that the star is a symbol of sovereignty and dominion. Why in part this is will be shown subsequently.

-However, the star and rod are associated together because both are symbols of **dominion** and **judgment**. (Num 24:17)

Stars represent:

- Angels (Revelation 12:4)(1/3 of angels etc.)
- Ministers (Revelation 1:20)
 1. (Cf. EGW)
 - Prophets and Apostles (Rev 12:1)

Note: the church has a crown of 12 stars. The churches greatest lights are symbolized by these stars (thus represent notability—beyond the

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

common).

Stars are associated with prophetic guidance (Astrology, telling the future, being guided by the stars, navigation, etc.)

Conversely, evil angels are “fallen” stars. False ministers are likened to “wandering stars.” Jude 13.

Angels= messengers (lit. Greek meaning)

To find an explanation to this “morning star” enigma we must:

1. Exegete Psalm 2:7-9 more precisely
2. Explore the symbol inferred there
3. Support this from other passages and related material.
4. Then interpret the specified meaning and message.

Here is quoted the passage under consideration:

Revelation 2:26-28

*"He who conquers and keeps my works until the end, **I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father; and I will give him the morning star.**" (RSV)*

The source of the words in bold above is clearly Psalm 2:8,9.

The key to understanding the morning star promise then, should be in the same context.

An Examination of Psalm 2

The Morning Star

In the previous context in Psalm 2 is found a particular expression:

vs. 8= "Ask of me". . . . "And I will make or give...."

Ask= From the Hebrew word שאל (*shaal*). In other contexts translated as "inquire." There are two principle words used with similar meaning: "shaal" and "darash." (דרש) "To inquire."

Example: "David enquired of God, saying, Shall I go up." (1 Chron. 14:10) (*shaal* is used)

David's military victories came this way. He consulted God first through *inquiry*. See the following passages: 1 Sam. 10:22, 22:10, 13,15; 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2 Sam. 2:1 5:19, 23; 1 Chron. 14:10, 14.

DAVID WAS THE MOST CONSPICUOUS USER IN ALL THE O. T. OF THE ORACLE, OR THE EPHOD. THE EPHOD CONTAINED THE URIM AND THE THUMMIM. (In a way it gave him *victory over the nations*)

THE SPECIFIED USE OF URIM AND THUMMIM:

1. When Israel "went out" to battle it was to be sought. Numbers 27:21. (Also Judges 20:18, 23; 1 Kings 22:15.)
2. To decide matters of question and importance in the camp or kingdom of Israel (dividing the land, etc.).
3. To select leaders or identify even culprits such as Achan.
4. Selecting animals of sacrifice in the sanctuary

I BELIEVE THE "MORNING STAR" HAS SOME CONNECTION WITH

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

THESE PRIESTLY GEMSTONES. PARTICULARLY IT IS TO BE IDENTIFIED AS SIMILAR TO THE URIM⁷⁶. THE FOLLOWING TREATMENT IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF JUSTIFYING THIS PREMISE:

Morning Star References:

1. The *Urim*, or the "yes" stone is philologically associated with the "dawn" or the "morning." Clear and white precious stones to this day are commonly designated as "stars" or associated with them.

אִירָא (Urim 7X) is derived from the common Hebrew word: (אָר) [spelled and pronounced "oar," meaning "light." (Originally from "fire", etc.)] It is strangely in the plural form, "lights." The actual meaning of "lights" is not clear⁷⁷, but what is evident is its association with:

a) the **dawning of the day** ("אָר," so translated in 1 Sam. 14:36)

•the word survives in modern vernacular in such words as "aura," "aurora borealis" etc.

b) the **east**⁷⁸ (Isaiah 24:15; below) ; in parallelism "**urim**" is equal to "east")

⁷⁶ (What is difficult is that neither the Scriptures, the ancillary writings such as the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha, the church fathers, or secular literature denominate the *urim* in these terms. However several additional lines of evidence follow which bring almost overwhelming certainty that reference is thus being made to the oracle of the Levitical high priest)

⁷⁷ The plural form for "Urim:" "lights" and "Thummim"; "perfections" might be explained this way: To this day when "lot casting" one does not say: "head" or "tail" but "heads" or "tails," (plural) even though the coin only has one head and one "tail." Similar wordings result sometimes from the use of dice and cards as well.

⁷⁸ Urim meant also "east", the region of light. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Moody Press; Chicago, 1980), p. 26.

The Morning Star

"Therefore in the east (urim) give glory to the Lord; in the coastlands of the sea (west), to the name of the Lord. . . ."

Note: A very interesting possibility also arises when one compares the consonants of a typical Hebrew word for morning (*boqer*) with the consonants for the word translated "enquire" in 1 Kings 16:15, Psalm 27:4 and Ezra 7:14. They are the same. (*Youngs Analytical Concordance*, p.301) This would make "morning" and "inquire" root cousins.

2. Contextual appropriateness of a "sanctuary" and "Aaronic" symbol.

In chapter one Jesus is pictured in the sanctuary. Several sanctuary objects are mentioned, i.e. lamp stands, robe down to the foot (High Priests robe; ποδηρη), the hidden manna, the white stone)

In this portion there appears two more lost and eschatologically-coveted Israelite tools of judgment: the rod (Aaron's was in the ark--with the manna) and the breastplate (particularly with the *Urim* and *Thummim*), the loss and absence of which brought much consternation and grief in the days of Ezra (Ezra 2:63, Neh. 7:65).

The overcomer is thus promised access to wisdom and guidance as he assumes his reign. He has the necessary tools of judgment. He can now rule with both his "ruling and divining rod" and with his "light stone." (Counterfeit=crystal ball) He can now be a KING and a PRIEST. As Jesus received these items as the Messianic Son-King of Psalm 2 and as our Great High Priest (Melchizedek=Priest and King) so he in turn extends them as gifts to those who will set down with him in his throne even as he overcame and is set down on his Father's throne.

3. The use in the *Apocalypse* of the concept of the "Alpha" and the "Omega."

The Eastern text of *Revelation* uses the Hebrew Aleph and Tau; (see

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Hardinge, *With Jesus in His Sanctuary*, p. 305)

"Some ancient sages aver that upon the stone called the Urim the Hebrew letter *aleph* was engraved, while on the Thummim the letter was *tau*. . . .Urim does commence with *aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, while Thummim starts with *tau*, its last."
(Hardinge, p.305)

This would explain how Jesus can be both the "morning star" and yet can give the morning star as a reward.

- First, He is the alpha and the omega---the divine answer to all the things, (an A-Z encyclopedia), one all wise and all-knowing who can judge perfectly.
- But furthermore, he gives the overcomer who reigns with him the tools of wisdom and judgment also. They have access to all wisdom through the bright and precious stone of the morning. In the end this, of course, is Jesus anyway.

4. Secular identification of the morning star with the planet Venus, the brightest of all "stars."

The interesting thing about the planet *Venus* is that it is both the **morning star** (about 6 months=therefore *Alpha*; beginnings) and the **evening star** (the other 6 months=*Omega*; endings).

Secular identification in New Testament times of Venus was *phosphorus*; a term commonly understood by even modern astronomers to refer to Venus. This same term is used in 2 Peter1:19:

"And we have the prophetic word made sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."

The Morning Star

Even though the Urim and Thummim are not directly mentioned or usually considered as associated with this passage we find *safe* and *predictive* certainty associated with the morning star. The morning star is likened to a prophetic light arising in the predawn sky, like a lamp in the darkness (cf. Psalm 119:105). As the morning star accurately predicts "the day," so the sure word of prophecy stands like a light, that is a lamp, a *Urim*, to predict in the present darkness the approaching dawn of the eschatological "day of the Lord." (The use of the *Urim* was the safest most reliable prophetic and predictive tool there ever was. The spiritual (and "astrological," if you please) knowledge found in understanding prophecy is the closest thing we have to the *Urim* and the *Thummim* today)

5. Similarity with the "seal of God."

To receive the light of the Urim was to receive divine approval of a plan. If God approved of a plan, the *Urim* was clothed in a bright light. If the plan was in disfavor, a cloud of darkness shrouded the *Thummim*.⁷⁹

In a similar sense a seal or signet was used. In fact these particular stones (*Urim* and *Thummim*) were engraved "as the engravings of a signet." To receive God's approval is to receive his seal⁸⁰. Jesus is said to have received this seal:

"For on him has God the Father set his seal." John 6:27

- Seals were usually made of precious stones. Likewise precious stones are often likened to stars. To receive a star, even today is equivalent to special approval.

⁷⁹

White, *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 183-84; (also *PP*, p. 351).

⁸⁰

J. Massyngherde-Ford reports an interesting comment in the Rabbinic writings concerning the *aleph* and the *tau* , in the stones of the breastplate. To quote: "Resh Lakish said, "*Taw* is the end of the seal of the Holy One. . . ." (Shabbath 55a) --commenting on Ezekiel 9:4-6. (The Anchor Bible, *Revelation*, J. Massyngherde Ford (Doubleday & Company, Inc.: Garden City, New York, 1975).

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

In Revelation 7:1 and following an angel is seen rising from the dawn, the sun rising, the east. He has the seal of God. And what one thing still appears in the aura of the morning? The *morning star*. It seems highly likely that what the angel holds in his hand is the morning star, the symbol of God's approval of the faithful.

Ellen White describes seeing the sealed wearing on their foreheads, in this case a place of prominence, "a glorious star, containing Jesus new name." It is the seal of the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending.

The Thummim

Is Jesus also connected with the *Thummim* (or the *tau*), or "omega?" We easily associate him with "YES" but how can we associate him with "NO"?

If the *Thummim* said "no" was it necessarily negative in aspect?

The *Thummim* certainly determined a "no" answer, but the significance of the "no" is not emphasized. Rather the concept of resignation, completeness, ending, and Amen is emphasized.

Tammim means literally "completeness." The LXX translates the reference to these complimentary stones as "Lights and Perfections," (Ezra 2:63) or as Luther chose "Light and Right."

Paul's Writings:

Though all of the commentators I have resourced fail to note any reference to the Urim and Thummim in 2 Cor. 1:15-22 I feel the concept stands behind

The Morning Star

Paul's appeal for understanding in this passage. In his letter to the Corinthians he makes apology for what may have seemed to them a breaking of his word. Paul explains that he had originally planned to visit them but the plan had changed somewhat. Had he not kept his word? His appeal seems to indicate that the reason for his change of plans was the guidance of the Spirit.

God had through revelation said "No" to the original plan, but as Paul explains it was for the best, for God always knows best. Paul echoed the "Amen." Therefore whether God said "yes" or "no," Paul reasoned God's ways are always "yes"--- because they are always best. Paul made his plans, but when God intervened he gladly surrendered his own plans for what God had in mind. Sometimes it was "yes" (*URIM*) and sometimes it was "no" (*THUMMIM*). Sometimes it is "yes--Amen- i.e., *true*" and sometimes it is "no--Amen--*resignation, the end.*" But both answers can constitute God's will, and receive God's seal.

Interestingly enough, the last two verses of this *pericope* of Paul's focus on *God's seal*. (vs. 21,22). Like the white stone and the black stone, both yes and no are used to arrive at God's will. There were two lots. Whatever the resulting determination is; it is God's will, and it receives God's seal of approval. And in this context, the *Urim* and *Thummim* are, as it were, the workings of the Holy Spirit on the heart and indications of providence.

The *Urim* and the *Seal of God* are probably not exactly the same thing. But they are similar in that like a white stone or a white robe, they are symbols of "approval." God's people don't have "THE Urim" in their foreheads, but they have a shining star or gem just like it, a *signet* and sign indicating God's ownership of them and his approval of them⁸¹.

81 "Jesus and the saints defend the holy city from the wicked: "Jesus was also with them; his crown looked brilliant and glorious. It was a crown within a crown, seven in number. The crowns of the saints were of the most pure gold, decked with stars. Their faces shone with glory. . . ." Ellen White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, p. 34.

"When the Lord makes up his jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be looked upon with pleasure. Angels are employed in making crowns for such ones, and upon these star-gemmed crowns will be *reflected, with splendor, the light which radiates from the throne of God.*" E.G.W., *Maranatha*, p. 309.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Conversely, the wicked receive a mark also (different word; *charagma*). This too is a mark of ownership, but it is not a mark of approval. It is a mark of slavery and the domination of malice.

6. Isaiah 11:1 ff. The star and the rod (shoot) may again be directly associated:

This is "because in Jer. 23:5, 33:15, Zech. 3:8, 6:12, verses which refer to the *shoot of Jesse*, a word is employed which may mean either "shoot" or "dayspring."⁸²

Note: The idea of *signet* and *staff* are found together on numerous occasions. In another instance, Tamar takes in pledge Judah's rod and signet, two items of authority, value, and identification. (cf. Gen. 37)

(On "Dayspring" see also Luke 1:78)

SUMMARY

There are therefore *two* dimensions then that must be understood when considering the reference to the "morning star:"

1. The Morning Star as Applied to Jesus Directly
2. The Morning Star as a Gift to the Overcomer

The Morning Star as Jesus Directly

The Morning Star

In Revelation, Jesus is co-identified with the Messianic Star of Balaam (=prophetic and priestly messenger) and the Scepter or Rod (=kingly descendant of Israelite nation) of prophecy (Numbers 24:17). Jesus was this prophesied "star of hope" for Israel, the Dayspring from on High. A star is a harbinger and sign of approaching events, as well as a signal of the approach of the day. Jesus is the best and the brightest, the Star of Israel, the Messiah Prince.

However there is more to the idea of the *morning star* than this. Jesus is also the grand light of perfection, the Alpha and the Omega, the "Urim and the Thummim," the divine answer to all things. He is the "yes" and the "no," the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

The Morning Star/and Rod as a Gift to the Overcomer

The "morning star," though, is also speaking of a definite article⁸³, particularly a sanctuary article that was lost but would be restored with the coming of the Messiah. This was, in fact, the "Urim" found on the high priest's breastplate; a white stone (onyx), that when lighted was a symbol of God's approval and guidance. Faithful rulership could be administrated with the use of "Urim" and "Thummim" and with a "Scepter of Judgment." These symbolic gifts Jesus himself received as prince at God's right hand when he was rewarded in heaven as Prophet, Priest, and King.

He in turn not only promises co-rulership on the throne in heaven (3:21), but he also will reward his co-regents with the tools and privileges of the office. They will be "kings and priests" also.

Thus we supply an interpretation consistent with the passage and context and hopefully that is understandable and makes sense.

⁸³ Note: There is also an "historical" application of the morning star. This is dealt with in the section regarding the historical reckoning of the seven churches near the end of this book section.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

Allusionary Parallels Between the Church of Pergamos and Thyatira:

Important allusionary parallels complete a picture between the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira. These come as a result of our extended exegesis:

The Morning Star

PERGAMOS AND THYATIRA

Allusions and Comparisons

Pergamos

Evil, weak-charactered King
Balak (and allusion to Herod Antipas)

Evil, and adulterous wife
(allusion to Herodias)

False Prophet
Balaam

True Elijah Prophet
(allusion to John the Baptist)

Marriage of church and state
Pergamos—Gr. “gamos”

Faithful prophet persecuted

Faithful fed in wilderness
Israel, manna (hidden)

Thyatira

Evil, weak-charactered king
(allusion to Ahab)

Evil, and adulterous wife
(Jezebel)

False Prophet
Jezebel (calls herself one)

True Elijah Prophet
(Elijah himself)

Marriage/Church/State
Israel under Ahab

Faithful prophet persecuted

Faithful fed in wilderness
(Elijah---3.5 year space, etc.)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL- Vol. 1

John the Baptist was considered to be “Elijah,” and was so identified by Jesus himself (Mat 11:14; Mark 9:11-13; Mal 4:5). John wore even the garments of Elijah; camel’s hair; and ate the same food; locusts and wild honey (2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4). He may have even lived at times near where Elijah was fed by ravens.

Some of the additional parallels are:

- The sins of fornication and the eating of food offered to idols
- Corresponding symbols of judicial authority: The sword and the rod; and both made with iron
- White stones used for the purposes of decisions and judicial determination; the “psephos” and the “morning star.”
- The wilderness experience and the children of Israel, etc.

Further note:

Part of the reason for so many parallels is that by considering the bi-sectional parallels, the mid-point of the churches sub-section comes between Pergamos and Thyatira. *This also the physical center of the churches section.* A change is noticed in the “he that hath an ear” appeal in that it appears as the *final part* of each church’s message from Thyatira on. It is probably for this reason.

Thus, for a further example, there is before this center/divider a rocky, barren island (Patmos; root form meaning “rocky.”). After this line we find Thyatira, or reference to the allusory “Tyre” which means “rocky,” and which was also an island, and so on. (See Bi-sectional parallels).

Another pattern is developing as well through the churches section. This has been noticed by others but is worthy of note:

The Morning Star

Progression of Second Coming References Through the Churches:

“I will come to you quickly” (2:5)

“I will come to you quickly” (2:16)

“Hold fast what you have until I come” (2:25)(Thyatira)

“I will come like a thief” (3:3)

“I am coming quickly” (3:11)

“I stand at the door and knock” (3:20)

Sardis

Rev. 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Rev. 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Rev. 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Rev. 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Rev. 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Rev. 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Sardis

To the Angel of the Church of Sardis, write. . . .

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME:

Writers such as Taylor Bunch and Uriah Smith tell us in their commentaries that Sardis means "those escaping," or "that which remains," a name which makes perfect sense in the context though the writers leave us no clue how this etymology was determined.

What is more compelling is to notice that the meaning that survives in even English dictionaries for "sard" is "yellow," or "pale."

Pliny tells us that the sardine stone was pale yellow or yellow-green. This pallid tone, likened no doubt in this context with the friable and deteriorating rock upon which Sardis was built is symbolic of the color of death. More particularly it may relate to the sick, near death pallor, of a man on his deathbed. References to paleness appear throughout the book (see Synonymic Parallel: Paleness) and in the "yellow sands of Sardis" we would certainly find the best and appropriate symbol for this section of the book. Therefore, even though Sardis has a root meaning that they are alive and remain; that is, they survive; they are closer to death than they are to life. They look like they have one foot in the grave.

History corroborates the glory and decline of this city, a city which tried vainly and desperately to hold on to its glorious youth, but declined to insignificance. Sir William Ramsay said of Sardis that "nowhere was there a greater example of the melancholy contrast between past splendour and present decay."⁸⁴

Sardis, being, the fifth church, is significant and intentional. For the fifth is always characterized by prolonged misery; continuance yet unfulfillment. Nothing could be more appropriate in this regard than the meaning and history of Sardis.

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

- Sardis in its glory days was the capital of the famous Lydian kingdom and had been one of the greatest cities in the world.
 - The city was built on impressive rock citadel 1,500 feet above the valley floor. It had sheer faces on all sides, except where it connected to the mountain massif. However even this back side was somewhat precipitous and carefully fortified.
 - Sardis also had a lower town below the escarpment and the Greek name of Sardis, *Sardeis*, is plural, meaning "Two Sardis."
 - Sardis was known for its riches, likened to the yellow sands of the River Pactolus that ran near its base (The yellow sands were not auriferous). Its most famous king was Croesus, from whence is still commemorated the proverb, "as rich as Croesus."⁸⁵
- Directly across from the ancient city was the necropolis or graveyard of Sardis known as the place of 10,000 tombs. This fact is part of symbolic picture painted of the church in Sardis.

Sardis is notorious in history partly because of the following story:

Croesus, fled to the safety of Sardis after being defeated by the Persians in battle. In 549 B.C., Cyrus (the same king who conquered Babylon⁸⁶) laid siege to Sardis but it seemed impossible that it could be taken. The general offered a reward to any soldier or battalion that could find the weakness and open Sardis and conquer it.

The siege had lasted only fourteen days when a soldier name Hyeroeades noticed a Sardian soldier accidentally drop his helmet over the battlements,

⁸⁵ (Barclay and Ramsay)

⁸⁶ (Cf. Bunch, p. 177.)

Sardis

then climb down and retrieve it. Hyeroeades reasoned that there must be a crack in the rock there and knew that it was possible for an agile man to climb up. That night he led a party of Persian troops up by the fault in the rock. When they reached the top they found the battlements completely unguarded!⁸⁷ The city was easily taken because they did not "watch."

Several hundred years later (330 years) history repeated itself. Antiochus the great, one of the claimants to power upon the death of Alexander the Great holed up his rival at Sardis. After a years siege, and man named Lagoras led a band of soldiers up the steep cliffs and took the fortress.⁸⁸

INTERPRETATION:

Rev. 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Rev. 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Rev. 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

These verses are made quite clear by the historical context and by the meaning of its name; also the color association and its having a reputation of declining into death and decay.

⁸⁷ (Barclay, p. 114)

⁸⁸ (Barclay, p. 114,115)

Rev. 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

The wearing of white was the customary dress for celebrations of honor, for festivity, rejoicing, and for weddings and important events. To walk with Christ would be the greatest honor.

But walk where, and in what setting? *This can be best understood by the intended association of two parables concerning weddings and wedding garments: the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25: 1 ff.), and the parable of the wedding garment (Matthew 22:1-14).*

Obviously from the latter it was expected that the invited would wear the garment (the white garment of Christ's righteousness) to the wedding. The bridegroom is Christ, and according to near-Eastern custom, the privileged wedding party accompanied the bridegroom in festive apparel from the bride's house to the grooms and they were admitted into the wedding feast.

The city of Sardis was caught sleeping and unready on the aforementioned historical instances. Similarly, the five foolish virgins in the parable experience the same disaster. Sardis is warned to not be found sleeping. Those who are spiritually prepared are eligible to accompany the bridegroom to the wedding supper of the Lamb. Though the righteous as overcomers can be pictured as walking in a general parade-like victorious procession with Christ, the finest metaphor available is to make this allusion to the stories Christ told regarding the Great Wedding⁸⁹.

The parable of the ten virgins is the parable of prolonged time and watching (delay). The "fifth" church has the same need, to stay prepared through the long delay. Then comes the marriage supper of the Lamb.

⁸⁹ (See E.G.W. refs. at end of this section where all three passages are thematically related)

Sardis

Rev. 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

As in the above passage, the subject is the bestowing of **honor**. To confess ones name was to herald publicly the honor of that person, much as Haman was constrained to lead the robed Mordecai through the streets saying, "thus shall it be done to whom the king delights to honor."

The opposite is described in Rev. 14:10 where the beast worshippers are tormented with fire and brimstone "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." Here is described great dishonor, embarrassment, and shame.

Rev. 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

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Wise or Foolish, Which?
#02

"How important it is that we understand our privileges, that we know that the Holy Spirit will work in our behalf, and that we gladly receive the golden oil from heaven, which is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus will communicate his grace to every repenting, believing soul. We need to become better acquainted with the terms upon which salvation will be ours, and better understand the relation which Christ sustains to us and to the Father. He has pledged himself to honor his Son's name as we present it at the throne of grace. We should consider the great sacrifice that was made in our behalf, to purchase for us the robe of righteousness, woven in the loom of heaven. He has invited us to the wedding feast, and has provided for every one of us the wedding garment. The robe of

righteousness has been purchased at infinite cost; and how daring is the insult to Heaven when one presents himself as a candidate for entrance at the wedding feast, when wearing his own citizen's dress of self-righteousness! How greatly he dishonors God, openly showing contempt for the sacrifice made on Calvary! Of such a one it is written, "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." No one will taste of the marriage supper of the Lamb who has not on a wedding garment. But John writes, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Then before it is eternally too late, let each one go to the heavenly Merchantman for the white raiment, the eyesalve, the gold tried in the fire, and the oil of heavenly grace. Let no one put off the day of preparation, lest the call be made, "Go forth to meet the bridegroom," and you be found as were the foolish virgins, with no oil in your vessels with your lamps." E. G. White.

"Advent Review and Sabbath Herald"

07-09-08

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PR- 02

“The expression, "He that overcometh," **indicates that there is something for every one of us to overcome.** The overcomer is to be clothed in the white raiment of Christ's righteousness, and of him it is written: "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." O, what a privilege it is to be an overcomer, and to have our names presented before the Father by the Saviour himself! And when, as overcomers, we shall be "clothed in white raiment," the Lord will acknowledge our faithfulness as verily as in the days of the early Christian church he acknowledged the "few names even in Sardis" who had "not defiled their garments;" and we shall walk with him in white, for through his atoning sacrifice we shall be accounted worthy.”

S.D.A. Bible Commentary , Vol. 7

REV14

Revelation

PR- 06

Sardis

PG- 958

"In Sardis many had been converted through the preaching of the apostles. The truth had been received as a bright and shining light. But some had forgotten the wonderful manner in which they had received the truth, and Jesus found it necessary to send reproof."

In Heavenly Places

"Strength for the Weak"

p. 294

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" (verse 4). Because of their faith this honor is bestowed on them. In this life they did not boast, nor lift up their souls unto vanity. With intensity of desire, with a pure, holy faith, they grasped the promise of eternal riches. Their one desire was to be like Christ. Ever they kept the standard of righteousness uplifted. To them is given an eternal weight of glory, because on the earth they walked with God, keeping themselves unspotted from the world, revealing to their fellow beings the righteousness of Christ."

"Advent Review and Sabbath Herald," 08-20-03, "A Worldwide Message," #21

"In the message to the church at Sardis two parties are presented--those who have a name to live, but are dead; and those who are striving to overcome. Study this message, found in the third chapter of Revelation. "These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Who are meant by those that are ready to die? and what has made them thus? The explanation is given, "I have not found thy works perfect before God." "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard. . . ."

S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, REV14, #3, p. 959

(Matt. 22:14). A Few Faithful Ones in Sardis. --"The church of Sardis is represented as having in it a few faithful ones among the many who had become, as it were, careless and insensible of their obligations to God. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Who is so favored as to be numbered among these few in Sardis? Are you? Am I? Who are among this number? Is it not best for us to inquire into this matter, in order that we may learn to whom the Lord

refers when He says that a few have not stained their white robes of character.” (MS 81, 1900).

“This apparel will make them beautiful and beloved here, and will hereafter be their badge of admission to the palace of the King. His promise is, ‘They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.’ Revelation 3:4.” *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 524

Philadelphia

Rev. 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Rev. 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Rev. 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Rev. 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Rev. 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Rev. 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches

The Key of David

To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write. . . .

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME:

“Brotherly love”= Gr. *phileo*; love, *adelphos*; brother

- (Supposedly Eumenes was thought to be dead so his crown was given to his brother, Attalus, the founder of the city named Philadelphia. When Eumenes turned up alive, Attalus returned his crown to his brother, one of the many gestures which gave him the name *Philadelphus*, lover of his brother.)

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

- Philadelphia was founded for the purpose of being a missionary city of Greek culture.
- It was known for its frequent earthquakes. Most unnerving were the aftershocks whose cumulative effect eventually caused panic to its inhabitants. Some of the citizens remained outside the city living in huts and booths, the more courageous stayed within the city trying to support and strengthen the walls of their dwellings.
- Tiberias Caesar gave help to Philadelphia and other cities damaged by the quakes. In gratitude and commemoration Philadelphia received a new name; “Neocaesarea.” The new name vanished after several years and old name emerged again (A.D. 42-50).
- “The history of the Philadelphian church was distinguished by the prophetess Ammia, who flourished apparently between A.D. 100 and 160. She was universally recognized as ranking with Agabus and the four daughters of Philip, as one of the few in the later time who were truly gifted with the prophetic power. She remains a mere name to us, preserved in Eusebius’ Church History (5:17.2).”⁹⁰

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

The Key of David

INTERPRETATION:

Rev. 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

(For the meaning of the key of David a special section is devoted following the comments on these verses.)

Rev. 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

The church of Philadelphia was apparently small and poor.

As the gateway to the valley the inhabitants of Philadelphia were familiar with the association of being likened to a door.

Prophetically, the door opened for Philadelphia which "no man can shut" necessarily must be a door in heaven, and is so specified and explained in chapters 4 and 5.

(More will be said as regards the historical application of this and the other churches in later sections)

Rev. 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Rev. 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

The word of my patience (endurance) is particularly equated with the “ten commandments”⁹¹.”

Some are anxious to point out that Jesus promises to keep the overcomer in the hour of temptation and not from it. This promise is specifically worded, like so many in the book, so that the meaning can be appropriate according to the application made of the passage. In this case it may be intentional ambiguity.

However, this phrase can also mean that Philadelphia will be spared the hour of temptation. The hour of testing which comes on the whole world can only be in the context of eschatology none other than the great time of trouble, that the last church, Laodicea, naturally would go through and not Philadelphia. Those who lived during the time period of Philadelphia (up to ca. 1850) have already been spared the final eschatological woes.

Of course, the application that “secret rapturists” make of this passage is false and terribly wrong, that the righteous who live at the final moments of the earthly dispensation are taken before the plagues, etc. They break several hermeneutical rules in so teaching.

Rev. 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

•Pillar--

This is a symbol of strength and permanence; endurance. Note how pillars are the last thing remaining in ancient cities of the past⁹².

⁹¹ Cf. treatment in Reference section at the end of the chapter.

⁹² "It (Philadelphia) was almost totally destroyed A.D. 17. Most of its citizens fled from the city, and many never returned. Others lived for weeks and months in tents and temporary dwellings. *Amid the wreckage stood a lone*

The Key of David

The pillar is best taken as pure metaphor, "I will make him a pillar." For in the following verses it says that "he shall go no more out." As others have noted, the victor will experience permanence in God's new order "like a peg fastened in a sure place." His life will have constancy and regularity in contrast to pulling up stakes constantly and fleeing from the frequent hazards of invaders and earthquakes.

- **"Go out no more--"**

The people dwelt "outside the city" because of the earthquakes.

- **Also, this is a reference to military conquest, WAR.** To go out and come in was often used in the context of war. (see footnote below⁹³ and at the end of the chapter) Philadelphia's position was strategic militarily as a "doorway," as well.

Those of the new Jerusalem, (Jerusalem= "foundation of PEACE.") There will be war no more.

- **How do we explain the "my" expressions in the promise to the church in Philadelphia?**

Temple of *my God*,
Name of *my God*,
City of *my God*,
Heaven. . . from *my God*---

column; it was still standing in the eighteenth century." Roy Allan Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, p. 38.

⁹³ Often *going out and coming in* is associated with war. Solomon admits to God in his prayer (1 Kings 3:7) that he does not know how to go out and to come in. Solomon was not a warrior like his father David; he did not know the art of war. His name meant peace.-- As for Joshua in later life he reports: *Josh. 14:11: As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, *for war, both to go out, and to come in.*

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

These expressions are awkward for us because of the English translation. The idiom is relational; one of possession or belonging: Literally, they say: "God to me." As we say in modern vernacular, "he is like a brother to me."

Written upon the faithful is this seal:

"belonging to God, belonging to his city, belonging to Jesus." The idea is "ownership" and "relationship."

The High Priest's forehead or miter had a name-plate which said, "Holiness to the Lord." Holy means "special" or "set apart." It meant: "I belong to the Lord, the Lord belongs to me"

Thus: "I am God's possession and He is my God"

The name, address, and occupation (name, rank, and serial #) of the victor is equivalent to the SEAL OF GOD. (See EGW quote)

•BELONGING TO GOD'S TEMPLE..... makes him a PRIEST.

•BELONGING TO GOD'S BY NAMEmakes him God's
FAMILY & PROPERTY

•BELONGING TO GOD'S CITYmakes him a
local CITIZEN

•BELONGING TO GOD'S HEAVENmakes him a
NATIONAL CITIZEN

We might also notice that the possessive expression: "to me" recurs SEVEN times.

What is described is really the "content" of the seal of God written on the forehead. These things are written on the forehead of the eschatological believer⁹⁴.

⁹⁴

The following statement supports the equation of the seal of God with the description of its contents as given in the message to the church in Philadelphia:

The Key of David

Jesus' New Name

Though this name is considered a mystery, I would like to suggest that we can know what the elements of that name and what it would be like. The answer is in Isaiah 9:6:

"And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

It is really a **SEVEN-FOLD** name. (Translators have run the words together)

Included in this title are all the attributes which make Jesus what no other person in the universe can be:

WONDERFUL	All Awesome
COUNSELOR	All Wise (Omniscient)
MIGHTY (the mighty one)	All Powerful (Omnipotent)
GOD	All Authoritative
EVERLASTING (the ever. one)	All Eternal
FATHER	All Paternal (Loving, Guiding;
priestly also)	
PRINCE OF PEACE	All Righteous

What is the condition of those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus? If in families there are those who are refusing obedience to the Lord in keeping His Sabbath, then the seal cannot be placed upon them. The sealing is a pledge from God of perfect security to His chosen ones (Ex. 31:13-17). Sealing indicates you are God's chosen. He has appropriated you to Himself. As the sealed of God we are Christ's purchased possession, and no one shall pluck us out of His hands. The seal given in the forehead is God, New Jerusalem. "I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God" (Rev. 3:12). 15MR, p. 225

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

Rev. 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The Key of David

REFERENCES:

"The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus new name." EW pp. 15-19.

The Expression "To go out:"

Naturally the term "to go out" is a very general prepositional phrase and can apply and does apply generally in hundreds of places of Scripture. The following, however, are just a few verses given to demonstrate that "to go out and to come in" was also understood to refer to military action:

*Exod. 17:9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and **go out**, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.*

** Num. 27:17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. (**Joshua chosen**)*

*Deut. 24:5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not **go out to war**, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.*

*Deut. 28:25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt **go out** one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.*

*Deut. 31:2 And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; **I can no more go out and come in**: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.*

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

Josh. 14:11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, **for war, both to go out, and to come in.*

*1Sam. 8:20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and **go out before us, and fight our battles.***

*1Kgs. 3:7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not **how to go out or come in.***

*1Kgs. 8:44 If thy people **go out to battle** against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name:*

*1Chr. 7:11 All these the sons of Jediahel, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, were seventeen thousand and two hundred soldiers, fit to **go out for war and battle.***

*1Chr. 14:15 And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt **go out to battle**: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.*

*1Chr. 20:1 And it came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time that kings **go out to battle**, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.*

*2Chr. 20:17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow **go out** against them: for the LORD will be with you.*

*Ps. 60:10 Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not **go out** with our armies? (KJV)*

The Key of David

Typical explanations are brief and inadequate:

- Explained as merely a symbol of power and authority
- Thought at times to represent the “key” to David’s throne
- Also thought to be the key to the “kingdom of heaven.”

The Old Testament source of this idea is in Isaiah 22:16-25. The interpreter must probe for a deeper answer by an analysis of this passage and others:

Isaiah 22:15-24

Isa. 22:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto **Shebna, which is over the house**, and say,

Isa. 22:16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

Isa. 22:17 Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

Isa. 22:18 He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

Isa. 22:19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

Isa. 22:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call **my servant Eliakim** the son of Hilkiah:

Isa. 22:21 And I will clothe him with thy **robe**, and strengthen him with thy **girdle**, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and **he shall be a father** to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

Isa. 22:22 **And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**

Isa. 22:23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a **sure place**; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

Isa. 22:24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all **vessels** of small quantity, from the **vessels of cups**, even to all the vessels of flagons.

HOW DOES ONE INTERPRET ISAIAH 22:15-25?

- What is the “House of David?”
- What is it that Eliakim will do?
- Why would a key hang from his shoulders?

A superficial look at this passage and one will miss the whole point-----

There is an historical background which demands investigation. The story is that of Shebna, who is “over the house,” and who is to be replaced by Eliakim. Expositors tell us Shebna was simply a overseer or *major domo* and therein destroy the significance of this passage.

Not all can be explained about this passage but enough can be discovered to answer the basic interpretive questions posed above.

First, what is. . . .

The House of David (?)

This designation can refer to his *personal* house or lineage.

However it can also refer to the house David desired to build for God--the **Temple**.

- For instance, look at the superscription to Psalm 30-

"A Psalm and a song at the dedication of the house of David."
(KJV)

The Key of David

- **And observe 2 Sam. 7** (1 Chronicles 17=parallel passage).

David was king who was settled in his own personal house but wished to build a house for the Lord. Through Nathan the prophet David has a conversational response from the Lord, something of a word-play:

David: "I will build a house for the Lord" (vs. 4)

God: (I didn't ask you to, however Solomon your son will build it-- (but since your heart is in this matter....)

"I will build you a house." (vss. 11, 27)

"and the house of thy servant David will be established before thee." (vs. 26)

•This establishment of David's house or royal lineage had this promise:
--- "And your house shall be made *sure*⁹⁵ forever before me, your throne shall be established forever." (vs. 16)

•**Note the priestly, sanctuary references:**

1. The **robe**
2. The **girdle** or belt
3. The term **"father."** Means a religious figure. (pope)
4. **Cups, flagons**, are temple articles

•**And. . . .**

A MOST INTERESTING REFERENCE OCCURS IN THE WRITINGS OF JOSEPHUS concerning the FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROPHECY:

“. . . money was brought in. . . and Shaphan the scribe, and Joah the recorder, and Eliakim the high priest, curators of the temple. . . . In the eighteenth year of his reign, he sent to Eliakim the high priest, and gave order, that out of what money was overplus, he should cast cups, and

⁹⁵

(It is apparent that Shebna presumes on this sure place his administration possesses but which God threatens to tear down. Perhaps Shebna was guilty of not bringing in the offerings necessary to maintain the temple services, but instead was appropriating funds to himself for his future security or comfort (Isa. 22). Josiah's reform, the context of this story, was preceded by neglect of true worship, including access to the temple and its offerings).

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

dishes, and vials, for the ministration [in the temple;]. . . but as the high priest was bringing out the gold, he lighted upon the holy books of Moses.”⁹⁶

During Josiah's reform, possibly the most significant of post-exilic reforms, the **Bible** names **Hilkiah** as the high priest. Of “key” significance in solving part of this riddle is the name which **Josephus** gives this high priest. He clearly states that this priest was ELIAKIM. (Apparently he went by another name than his father; Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, Isa. 22:20--but in the Biblical account he is called Hilkiah [2 Kings 22:4,8,10,12,14; 23:4, 24; 2 Chron. 34:9,14 ff.]--i.e. note similar consonants).

•THEREFORE THE ONE WHO HAS THE KEY OF HOUSE OF DAVID IS THE **HIGH PRIEST!**⁹⁷ This significant finding no one has told us.

•In addition; THE “HOUSE” HE IS OVER IS THE **TEMPLE**.

The "key" that opens and closes the mysteries of God would be none other than the ephod, or more specifically the **breastplate**. The high priest is the only one who has *keys* to the entire house of the Lord. It was the high priest who alone could enter the most holy place.

But the key in Isaiah 22 is worn on the shoulder! What key is this?:

*"Jesus then clothed himself in precious garments. Around the bottom of His robe was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. A breastplate of curious work was **suspended from His shoulders**. As he moved, this glittered like diamonds, magnifying the letters which looked like names written or engraved upon the breastplate."* White, *Early Writings*, p. 251.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Antiquities of the Jews*, X. iv. 1,2. or Whiston, p. 215. Several instances identify the actions of the high priest, Eliakim, who in every way fulfills the role of the biblical *Hilkiah*, the “overseer.”

⁹⁷ Note: A faithful high priest was attentive to the needs of the temple and the treasury of the temple. (Cf. Jehoida/Joash. 2 Kings 12:4-16; 2 Chronicles 24:7-14). It might be that Shebna (Isa 22) was misusing temple tithes, even to secure his own honor in death with a paid funeral package.

⁹⁸ Cf. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 251. (see Ex. 28:15-30, esp. 25-28)

The Key of David

INTERPRETATION:

Jesus is pictured here as the great high priest who wears the high priest's special garments and bears the BREASTPLATE. He has the necessary access privilege to go into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement. (In chapter 1, that is the beginning of his heavenly ministry, he wears the simple "foot reacher," and golden belt in which Aaron first presented himself for himself and his family) The "door" through which he passes is obviously the second veil.

There is further significance.....

•THE CONTEXT OF JOSIAH'S REFORM:

Josephus specifically mentions that Josiah directed Eliakim the priest to cast new vessels, cups, and flagons for the temple services. This indicates a return to law keeping and proper sanctuary worship. Josiah's reform was one of the most far-reaching in that era. This passage and its allusions has great significance for the second advent movement. There are many similarities between the former and later reform movements:

JOSIAH'S REFORM

Faithful High Priest is found: Eliakim

Sanctuary worship is restored

Book of Moses Law is discovered

Led by woman prophet (Huldah)

ADVENT MOVEMENT

Faithful High Priest found: Jesus

Sanctuary truth is revealed

Law of God is "rediscovered"

Led by woman prophet

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

PROPHET--PRIEST--KING

JESUS the great high priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 and Seventh-day Adventists have long considered this passage (Rev. 3: Philadelphia) refers to this event. Others, of course, in fact many so-called Adventists criticize this view as it relates to the "shut door" and what they feel is opportunistic interpretation of the verses in question. However, this exegesis fully exonerates the traditional view. They (critics) are fulfilling the prophecy in trying to shut what no man can shut.

Therefore, not only is the Priest/Messiah of Isaiah 9 fully God; Not only is this Messiah the kingly Son of David, He is the great High Priest who is to have the "government upon his shoulder," and of whose government there shall be no end. He now lives to make intercession for us.

No Man Shut. . .Open= Definitely defines a HEAVENLY work, A door in heaven out of reach of man.

REFERENCES:

WHAT IS THE WORD OF PATIENCE?:

"The Home Missionary"

11-01-93

Christ Our Helper in the Great Crisis, #15

"In the time of trial just before us, **God's pledge of security will be placed upon those who have kept the word of his patience.** If you have complied with the conditions of God's word, Christ will be to you a refuge from the storm. He will say to his faithful ones: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejecters of his grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of cloud will speak terror and wrath to the transgressor of God's law, but light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept his commandments. The Arm, strong to smite the rebellious, will be strong to deliver the loyal. Every faithful one will surely be gathered. 'He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' "

"Advent Review and Sabbath Herald"

06-19-00

Kept in Trial, #14

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience." Does this apply to the men who persecute those who conscientiously **keep the commandments of God**, who refuse to bow down to an idol sabbath and worship an institution of the papacy? Who is **keeping the word of God's patience**? This is a question of intense interest,--a question which none of us can afford to ignore; because God has said of those who do keep the word of his patience, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation."

"Advent Review and Sabbath Herald"

05-02-93

Results of Casting Away the Law of God, #12

"The voices of those under the altar who have been slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, are still saying, "It is time for thee, O Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law." To the people who will be **keeping the commandments** of God when under the hand of oppression, will come these words of comfort: "Because thou hast kept the **word of my patience**, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name."

Laodicea

Rev. 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Rev. 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Rev. 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Rev. 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Rev. 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Rev. 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

Rev. 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Rev. 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Rev. 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Laodicea

To the Angel of the Church of Laodicea write. . . .

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME:

Laodicea:

- λαος; people
- δικεω; to judge

Therefore it is correctly designated by others as: **"judging the people"**

Also δικεω comes from the same root as "to justify, or make righteous." The word for righteousness is *dikaïos*. (Revelation 22:11; he that is righteous, *dikaïos*, let him be righteous still, etc.)

Therefore it can possibly mean: "righteousness of the people," or "good people."

Nothing could be more fitting than this designation for the self-righteous Laodiceans who boast of their rich and sufficient condition. People righteousness, or human righteousness is what Laodicea has. This is, no doubt, part of the meaning intended.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

HISTORICAL PROFILE:

- It was the wealthiest city in Phrygia⁹⁹
 - When it was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 60, Tacitus could say the city "without any relief from us, recovered itself by its own resources."¹⁰⁰
- "Six miles north across the Lycus was the city of Hierapolis, famous for its hot springs which, rising from the city, flowed across a wide plateau and spilled over a broad escarpment directly opposite Laodicea. The cliff was some 300 ft. high and about a mile wide. Covered with a white incrustation of calcium carbonate, it formed a spectacular natural phenomenon. As the hot, mineral-laden water traveled across the plateau, it gradually became lukewarm before cascading over the edge."¹⁰¹ This was "perpetually visible in Laodicea."¹⁰²
- It is also known that Laodicea had no water wells and that its water supply was via an aqueduct that came from some distance. Laodicea would be familiar therefore with "lukewarm" water for this reason as well.¹⁰³
- It was known for its production of a BLACK glossy wool.
- Laodicea was a medical center known for its hot springs, and eyesalve, literally Phrygian powder mixed with oil and sold in "little rolls," kollurion.
- The city was laid out in the form of a square.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ (Mounce, p. 123)

¹⁰⁰ (Morris, p. 83)

¹⁰¹ (Mounce, p. 125)

¹⁰² (Beasley-Murray, p. 105)

¹⁰³ (see Ramsay)

¹⁰⁴ (Ramsay, p.?)

Laodicea

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

INTERPRETATION:

Rev. 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

The **Amen** is a term for **truthfulness** and **genuineness**. When Jesus said "Truly, truly I say unto you," he actually said, " Amen, Amen, I say unto you."

How appropriate is it that the final church is the church addressed by the CREATOR? Like no other generation godless evolution is the prevailing philosophy today.

Rev. 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Rev. 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Rev. 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

"**thou** is emphatic (article is before wretched) meaning, " thou art the wretched one"¹⁰⁵." That is, the wretched one, among the churches.

"The Greek of this verse literally rendered is, "I am rich, and I have gotten riches." Not only did the church boast in her supposed spiritual well-being, she boasted that she had acquired her wealth by her own efforts."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵

(Morris, p. 83.)

¹⁰⁶

(Ladd, p. 66)

Laodicea

Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

"The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich." 4T 88

*"The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner."
4T 88*

"The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between good and evil, and to detect sin under any guise." 4T 88

Rev. 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

"He is knocking, where the present tense signifies not a perfunctory rap, but a knocking of continued hope of response."¹⁰⁷

"If any man hear my voice"
-----"The Lord entreats, then, as well as knocks."¹⁰⁸

Supper is the "*deipnon*," the festive evening fellowship meal. In symbol, this is the marriage supper of the Lamb.

¹⁰⁷ (Morris, p. 84)

¹⁰⁸ (Smith, p. 401)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL—Vol. 1

Rev. 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

REFERENCES:

"God has given the message time to do its work. The heart must be purified of sins which have so long shut out Jesus. . . . When they subdue those sins which God hates, Jesus will come in and sup with them and they with him." 1T, 186,188. (Also cf. 3T 253 where the sins of covetousness, withholding tithe, lack of Bible humility, patience, love, self-denial, watchfulness and sacrificial spirit are mentioned)

"God will prove his people. Jesus bears patiently with them, and does not spew them out of His mouth in a moment. Said the angel: "God is weighing his people." 1T 186

"It would be more pleasing to the Lord if lukewarm professors of religion had never named His name. They are a continual weight to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are a stumbling block to believers." 1T 188

"Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost." COL 118.

"To be half a Christian and half a worldly man makes you about one hundredth part a Christian and all the rest worldly." 2T 264

"I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time. . . . It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel." 1T 186

Laodicea

The Historical/Prophetic Application of the Seven Churches

Most academic commentaries ignore the fact that there are valid historical parallels and fulfillments in the messages to the Seven Churches. In denying this prophetic scenario those particular commentators are robbed of some of the greatest meaning intended in the book, and are bereaved of some of the greatest evidence of the books inspired value, as well.

However, with an eye on the general history of the Christian Dispensation and another on the Apocalypse it is not difficult to trace, in perfect order, the unrolling the scroll of prophecy.

Since this is done effectively in certain traditional commentaries it is not necessary to comment extensively on the historical fulfillments here. One can usually do this for himself, anyway. But in the following synopsis a brief summary of the unfolding of history as it relates to the messages to the seven churches of Asia is given.

Ephesus

Ephesus, being the first church, simply applies to the apostolic church and the problems that the church faced beginning with the ascension of Jesus. False apostles are referred to, and since an apostle had to be one who claimed to have seen Jesus, this church can only be the early church of Christianity.

Appendix C

At Pentecost the Church rode forth boldly with great zeal and the church quickly grew with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But not long thereafter a declension occurred, the church lost its first love.

Jesus is pictured in the midst of the candlesticks (lamp stands), his new place (holy place) of ministry upon his ascension. The church of Ephesus is warned to repent of their backslidings, especially as regards the heretical Nicolaitans.

Smyrna

For a few years the church was relatively free from persecution, but history clearly bears out how quickly this changed. The first persecution at the time of Stephen's death scattered the church from central Palestine. However, this was followed by about ten years of trial until A.D. 43-44 when Herod as representative of the Romans killed James. At this juncture persecution was again more generally renewed, and periodically throughout the early Christian centuries, with persecutions from Neronian to Domitian and that of Diocletian. In these multiplied thousands of Christian martyrs shed their blood. One of the bloodiest was that of Diocletian which lasted close to 10 years (303-313). The ten days (day for year principle) of Smyrna are often associated with this persecution.

Pergamos

Since Pergamos contains within its name, "marriage," this period of history for the church is clearly known to be one of marriage between the church and the state. Particularly famous were the acts of emperor Constantine, who baptized his army by marching them through a river, and who by law enforced and encouraged the amalgamation of Christianity and paganism. Pergamos of old was the seat of the Roman state and its pagan religion. Inspiring the bloody persecutions of the first centuries, Satan found he could not destroy the church. He then changed his approach, and made the church popular and world-pleasing. Satan now had a throne, in Rome, with a bishop pretending to be God.

Thyatira

The "middle" church was the church of the "middle ages." In fact this church, like Jezebel, was given a *space*; 3 and 1/2 years to repent. This corresponds perfectly with the 1260 days mentioned later in the book of Revelation. Like the days of Jezebel, the church was corrupted almost completely with paganism.

Spiritual fornication was rampant. The worship of the sun (Sunday), the organization of the "priests" of this false religion, the use of images, works substituted for faith, and many other spiritually impure practices brought a spiritual draught upon the Christian world. "The noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world." The children of Jezebel, were especially struck down with disease, notably the terrible "black death," which killed about a third of Europe. The church was finally split by schism, and in the Great Schism or the "Babylonish Captivity," (Luther's term) the church ailed on her sickbed. About this time came the "morning star" of the Reformation, John Wycliffe, and others (Huss and Jerome, etc.), who gave a ray of hope to the languishing spirituality of those times. The Bible was translated into the native English tongue by Wycliffe, who incidentally is identified even in secular dictionaries as the "Morning Star."

Sardis

The fifth part of anything in the book of Revelation signifies incompleteness and prolonged suffering, torment and waiting. This characterizes well the church of Sardis, the church which hangs on and remains; that is almost dead, and has the color and pallor of death. Like the sleeping bridesmaids of the parable, the church is warned to not give up watching, but to come awake to their position and duty.

There are a few who are faithful. This is certainly the Reformation church described, where a few notable persons, known even today as household names began the work of restoring the gospel and the truth to modern generations. Such work was begun by Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, and others.

Appendix C

Philadelphia

The church of Philadelphia describes perfectly the church of the post-Reformation and the churches of the great awakenings. It is the church that brought back the Bible to the people and began in earnest to take the gospel, using missionaries, to the world. The work of this church culminated in the great Advent awakening of 1844. The Philadelphian letter gives a view of a great high priest, ministering with the key of David, and entering the door into the most holy place of the *heavenly* sanctuary. The accuracy and appropriate order of the prophetic history of each of the churches is simply astounding.

Laodicea

Hardly anything needs to be said about the condition of the last church as any reader can clearly see by his own experience. The message to the church of Laodicea is for the church of *today*. The church is now lax, materially prosperous yet spiritually bankrupt. Jesus *stands at the very door* of eternity, calling his beloved to awake, to listen, to open the door and experience fellowship with him at his Coming. It is his voice that is the voice of the seventh angel. Those very days are now upon us. Let us respond at this moment, while his voice entreats!

Appendices

Appendix A

Luther's and others comments on Revelation:

- "...Martin Luther rejected the book as "neither apostolic nor prophetic" and Reformers John Calvin and Huldreich Zwingli regarded it with suspicion." Jeffrey L. Sheler, "Christ's Second Coming," *U.S. News & World Report*, December 10, 1990, p. 72.
- From Krodel: "orthe verdict of Luther, who dismissed it as unedifying for the ordinary believer" (Krodel, *Revelation*, pp. 14-23) quoted from Robert F. Wall, *New International Biblical Commentary: Revelation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), p. 3.
- In Luther's *Preface to the New Testament*, 1522, Luther speaks of "the true and noblest books of the N.T.." These are such as the Gospels, 1 John, Paul's letters; (esp. Romans), Galatians, Ephesians; and 1 Peter. "These are the heart and core of all the books...." Then there are others, specifically four which Luther would have left out of the New Testament if only his own judgment was consulted; these being such as James, Hebrews, the Revelation, and Jude.

Of Hebrews he has some praise; finding some gold and silver even though "some wood, straw, or hay is mixed in with it." But such books Luther felt were in a different class from the true and noble. "They [Revelation, James, Hebrews, and Jude: supposedly a cheap copy of 2 Peter] have from ancient times had a different reputation" and do not belong to the "true and certain chief books of the New Testament."

Of these, and now speaking in particular of Revelation, Luther further writes that he can find "no trace" of evidence that it (Revelation of John)

Appendix C

"was written by the Holy Spirit." He classes it with the Fourth Book of Esdras, and puts it with Jude, James, and Hebrews at the end of his Bible. Of James he says, "Therefore I do not want him in my Bible." *The Theology of Martin Luther*, Paul Althaus, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, pp. 83-85.

- "My spirit cannot fit itself into his book. (Revelation) There is one sufficient reason for me to not think highly of it, ----- Christ is not taught or known in it Therefore I stick to the books which give me Christ, clearly and purely." *Preface to the Revelation of St. John* (II), 1522. *Works of Martin Luther*, Vol. VI., (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania: A. J. Holman Company and the Castle Press, 1932), p. 489.

Appendix B

The Importance of the Book of Revelation

"To John the Lord opened the subjects that He saw would be needed by His people in the last days. The instruction that He gave is found in the book of Revelation. Those who would be co-workers with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will show a deep interest in the truths found in this book. With pen and voice they will strive to make plain the wonderful things that Christ came from heaven to reveal." 8T301

"The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those "that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." TM114

"The instruction to be communicated to John was so important that Christ came from heaven to give it to his servant, telling him to send it to the churches." E.G. White, Ms 179, 1905 (8T 301) "Review and Herald," Aug. 31, 1897.

*"In the Revelation are portrayed the deep things of God. The very name given to its inspired pages, "the Revelation," contradicts the statement that this is a sealed book. A revelation is something revealed. The Lord Himself revealed to His servant the mysteries contained in this book, and He designs that they shall be open to the study of all. Its truths are addressed to those living in the last days of this earth's history, as well as to those living in the days of John. Some of the scenes depicted in this prophecy are in the past, some are now taking place; some bring to view the close of the great conflict between the powers of darkness and the Prince of heaven, and some reveal the triumphs and joys of the redeemed in the earth made new. E.G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 584.*

Appendix C

The Symbolic Use of Numbers

There is a sacred significance in numbers: not cabalistic, not fanciful; but proceeding from the very nature of things, well settled in Scriptures, and universally acknowledged in all the highest and deepest systems of human thought and religion.

The unit, **one**, is the source and parent of all numbers. It therefore stands for God, in the most hidden absoluteness of His being, in which the whole Godhead, and all things, stand. "There is one God, and there is none other but He." {Mark 12: 32} One expresses commencement, and God is the commencement. The unit underlies all continuation, and by God all things consist. And nothing can so well express the absolute First Cause, At the number ONE. . . .

But Godhead, as let forth to the contemplation of rational beings, is a Trinity . . . In this Trinity, the Son is the second. **Two**, therefore, stands for Christ, and is significant of incompleteness, or something wanting. . . . It is the; productive number, but it is only complete when the product is added. . . . Man and wife are two-one, but the product of dual unity is needed to complete the family.

Three is the number of individual completion. It is composed of three numbers, each of which is in itself one, and which multiplied together still make only one. Three, therefore, represents the Trinity, each number of which is God, and yet the Three together are still only one. . . . It is the first and fixed compound unit of mathematical science. It therefore properly stands for the Trinity and individual completeness. . . .

Four is the worldly number It proceeds from three, and includes three. And as three represents the Trinity--the highest, and the perfect four designates that which proceeds from the Trinity, and is dependent thereon; the creation, the universe. . . . The points of the compass are four: north, east, south, west. There are four seasons, four winds, four grand divisions of the earth. The great world powers of history and prophecy are four. The living beings, supposed to represent the forces of providence, are four. Ezekiel's vision of God's providence in the world revealed four cherubim, four wheels with four sides, four faces, and four wings. The waters in Eden were four. The fourth commandment, and the fourth clause in the Lord's Prayer, refer to the earth. The square and the cube, those important ground-forms of common geometric relations, are fours. And to the Oriental

philosophers, four is always the figure of the universe, especially of the world. There is therefore no mistaking of this number.

Five represents progress, but incompleteness. It is the perfect three, with the imperfect two. On the fifth day life was created in the sea, but there was yet no life on land. Five toes, or five fingers, are but half of what pertain to a complete man. Under the fifth seal the martyrs are impatient, but are told to wait yet a season. They are enjoying some of the fruits of their faith, but their crowns are deferred. The fifth vial is poured upon the seat of the beast, . . .

Six is the Satanic number. As the darkest hour immediately precedes the dawn, and the darkest years are the last before the millennial Sabbath, so the number immediately preceding the complete seven is the worst of all. . . . The sixth epistle to the Churches tells of an hour of universal trial and suffering; the sixth seal brings destruction and death; the sixth trumpet destroys the third part of men; and the sixth vial introduces the unclean spirits who gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world to the war of the great day of God Almighty. Antichrist's number is three sixes; six units, six tens, and six hundreds; 666; the individual completion of everything evil. And Christ was crucified on the sixth day, which is still the common execution day, and is popularly regarded as the most unlucky of the seven.

Seven is the number of dispensational fullness. It is the complete in that which is temporary; not the finally complete. It carries with it the idea of sacredness in that which relates to this world. It is the Trinity and the created in contact the divine Three with the worldly four. . . . The instances, at any rate, are too numerous to mention. The Bible is full of them. And the Apocalypse, which is the book of the consummation of all God's dispensational dealings with mankind, is, above all, a book of sevens. It consists of seven visions, . . .

Eight is the number of new beginning and resurrection. The eighth day is the beginning of a new week. The Jewish child was circumcised the eighth day, which was its birth into covenant relations. Noah was "the eighth person," and his family consisted of eight, and they started the new world after the flood. Christ rose from the dead on the eighth day. David was the eighth son of Jesse, and he established a new order for Israel. In the eighth year, the Jews were to sow the ground again as the fresh beginning of a new septenary. The eighth head of the beast was the revival of the seventh. Our Sunday, which celebrates the new creation which began in the Saviour's resurrection, is the eighth day, the first of the new week. . .

Ten is the number of worldly completion, especially in the line of worldly evil. The great beast of worldly power, in its final form, has ten horns. The body of

Study Guide

man, in earthly completeness, has ten fingers and ten toes. The moral law, as applicable to man in this world, has ten precepts. . . . The tribulation spoken of to the Church in Smyrna was for ten days.... The Church, in its mixed earthly condition and slumbering, is represented by ten virgins. It is the union of the worldly four and the Satanic six; . . .

Twelve is the number of final completeness. Hence the twelve months in the year, the twelve signs in the zodiac, the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve apostles of the Lamb, the twelve stars in the crown of the woman clothed with the sun, the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, the twelve fruits of the Tree of Life, etc.

Quoted from ---J.A. Siess, *The Apocalypse; Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1964), pp. 59-62.

Study Guide

Why This Book? (Introduction) (5)

1. Why is the book of Revelation disliked by some?_____
2. Is everything in the *Revelation* understood? _____
3. Will the book be completely understood before the close of time?_____
4. What does it mean that the book of Revelation “should occupy first place” in the minds of God’s people?_____

Hermeneutical Principles Used in This Study (14)

List as many important principles of interpretation as you can; (Perhaps add some of your own.):

5. Explain what is meant by the “direct” application of symbols_____
6. What is the relationship of a later prophet to the writings and work of a former, or biblical prophet?_____

Study Guide

7. Give examples of “synonymic parallels:”

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

7a. For interest trace one or more of the following parallels:

- Something found in the “east.”
- Something that smells “sweet”
- A loud, roaring sound
- Something “deep.”
- To tread or trample under the foot.

Find at least one in each major section: (Churches; 1:1-3:21)(Seals; 4:1-8:6)(Trumpets; 8:7-11:19)(Great Controversy Vision; Ch. 12)(The Plagues 13:1-16:21)(The Laments; 17:1-19:16)(The Restoration; 19:15-22:20).

The Broad Curriculum of the Apocalypse (24)

8. List at least five separate occupations, disciplines, or subject areas alluded to in the book of Revelation: _____

The General Organization of the Book (30)

9. How many parts does the book divide into? _____ Is there an exact mirroring of ideas when considering the whole book? _____

The Salutation and Purpose (33)

10. How is the *Revelation* a “revelation of Christ?” _____

11. What is the stated purpose of the book of Revelation? _____

Introduction and Prologue (37)

12. What does the word “signified”(1:1; KJV)mean: _____

13. What does the Jesus being “pierced” have to do with the expression; “Alpha and Omega?” _____

The Lord’s Day (42)

14. What day is called “the Lord’s Day” in the Old Testament?

_____.

15. Show at least four ways this day is like the Sabbath:

The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse (52)

16. Is there adequate information to be quite sure that the writer of the book is John the Apostle? _____

17. Which date: the Neronian date, or the reign of Domitian do you think has the best evidence? _____ Does it really make any difference? _____

The Opening Vision (62)

18. In what chapter of Revelation do we find a picture of Jesus similar in many ways to the one found in Revelation 1: _____

19. What is the significance of his white hair? _____

The Seven Stars (67)

20. List at least three ways in which the seven stars can be seen as a good representation of the seven churches:

Study Guide

The Seven Spirits (74)

21. Do you think the seven spirits are simply another way to refer to “THE” Holy Spirit? _____

The Seven Angels’ Messages (79)

22. How many separate parts comprise each message to the churches?
_____.

Bi-Sectional Parallels (81)

23. Explain what is meant by “bi-sectional parallels:” _____

Illustrative Cities (87)

24. What town or city is most like where you live? _____ Which church is most like your church? _____

Ephesus (88)

25. What does the name Ephesus signify: _____

Smyrna (94)

26. What did a “crown” have to do with Smyrna? _____
_____.

Rewards (99)

27. What is the total number of rewards promised to all the churches?
_____.

Pergamos (101)

28. What two things are associated with the word “Pergamos:”

29. Who was Antipas and why is he mentioned?:

30. Why are new names promised to the overcomer that no one else “knows”? _____

Thyatira (116)

31. What city’s name is found in the name Thyatira? _____

32. What is the double meaning of the Morning Star?

Sardis (143)

33. What parable stands behind the counsel to the church of Sardis?

34. What is significant about Sardis being the “fifth” church mentioned?

Philadelphia (152)

35. What indication is in the message to Philadelphia that would indicate it is not the last church in history? _____

36. Why is it significant that Jesus opened a door at this particular time in history? _____

The Key of David (163)

37. What is the “Key of David?” _____

38. What does it mean to “go out no more?” _____

39. What woman prophet figures in the story? _____ Why is this significant? _____

40. What specifically is the “word of patience?” _____

Study Guide

Laodicea (171)

41. What does the name Laodicea mean? _____
42. Why is it significant that Jesus is identified as the “beginning of the creation of God” to the church of Laodicea? _____

The Historical/Prophetic Application of the Churches (180)

43. What is the “space” that Jezebel is given to repent? _____

Appendix A—Luther’s Comments Regarding the Book (184)

Why did Luther take such a harsh attitude toward the book of Revelation? _____

Appendix B—The Importance of the Book of Revelation (186)

44. What will be the result if God’s people study this book as they should? _____

Appendix C—The Symbolic Use of Numbers (187)

45. What is the significance of the number “four?” _____